

# Academic Performance Review Policy

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## *Ball State University*

### *Department of Social Work*

**The following policy statement relates to social work student professional behavior. It is established to meet CSWE accreditation standards and the Ball State University senate bylaws:**

Beginning Spring semester, 2012, social work students at BSU will be expected to adhere to the following policy, NASW Code of Ethics, and NASW Cultural Competence standards, both in the classroom and in the field practicum and related experiential learning.

In professional programs such as social work, professional and scholastic performance comprises academic standards. This policy is intended to provide guidelines that will enhance the Department's ability to identify behaviors that suggest that a student may require assistance in order to meet current standards of professional social work practice or address behavior inappropriate for social work practice.

This policy is an attempt to balance the commitment of the Department of Social Work (the Department) at Ball State University to support and assist students in preparation for social work roles in which they will have responsibility for, and can directly impact, vulnerable or disadvantaged individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

#### **UNIVERSITY STANDARDS**

University discipline is limited to student misconduct which adversely affects the University community's pursuit of its educational objectives. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the objectives and purposes of the University.

Any student whose conduct is improper in that it exhibits a lack of integrity touching upon educational objectives and requirements of the University must be disciplined appropriately in the interest of safeguarding and upholding the standards. University policy regarding "dangerous" students will be followed.

The full student code of rights and responsibilities can be found at the following link:

<http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentRights/PoliciesandProcedures/StudentCode.aspx>

Examples of misconduct for which students are subjected to university discipline are defined as follows:

- a. Dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, impersonation at an examination or knowingly furnishing false information to the University;
- b. Forgery, alteration, or use of University documents, records or instruments of identification with intent to defraud;

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- c. Intentional obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures, or other University activities, including public service functions, and other authorized activities on University premises;
- d. Malicious abuse of any person on University premises or at University-sponsored or University-supervised functions or malicious conduct which threatens, endangers, or harasses any such person;
- e. Theft from or deliberate damage to University premises or theft of or deliberate damage to property of a member of the University community on University premises;
- f. Failure to comply with directions of members of the University administration or of the teaching staff acting in the proper performance of their particular duties;
- g. Violation of published University regulations, including regulations relating to entry and use of University facilities;
- h. Violation of published rules governing the University residence halls;
- i. Deliberate alternation or misappropriate use of computer records, data, software, etc of the University or member of the University community.

The Department of Social Work within the College of Health adheres to University policy and University Policies will take precedence over Departmental Policies. Departmental student policies are created in order to permit the Department of Social Work to manage student behaviors relevant to enrollment in the Social Work Program, not enrollment in the University. Thus, the Department supports its own policies and procedures in regard to student conduct. University standards will be followed regarding student records.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING INFORMATION**

The Department recognizes that the safety, confidentiality and self-determination of students or others who have been subjected to unprofessional conduct under this policy must be a priority. In developing a response to a problem, the Department must balance confidentiality against its duty to protect existing and future students or persons who might otherwise be placed in jeopardy by a student who is acting in an unprofessional manner under this policy.

Information disclosed during student meetings with Instructors, Field Coordinator, Academic Advisors, and/or the Chair of the Department or his designate will not be kept confidential if the information raises concerns about a student's capability of assuming the professional responsibilities of social work practice. Instructors, faculty, field instructors, administrative coordinator, the field coordinator, and/or the Chair will share pertinent information with each other in a respectful and professional manner for the purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns. The Department reserves the right to share information with the Dean of the College, General Counsel, the Student Rights Office, or third parties as required by law.

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### BEHAVIOR THAT MAY RESULT IN A REVIEW

Given the nature and scope of professional social work practice, it is imperative that students be knowledgeable of the various standards that regulate their behaviors. Students are introduced to these standards through their social work courses and, in particular, when they are admitted to the major. At that time, they are provided with access information to the BSU Code of Conduct and the NASW Code of Ethics. The student signs an agreement that they will abide by BSU and NASW standards. Below is an illustrative but not exhaustive list of problems that might result in an Academic Performance Review, based on the program's Academic Performance Standards.

Students are seen as violating the Program's Academic Performance Standards and might be subject to performance review when they:

- fail to demonstrate professional integrity in meeting the objectives of the social work program and in fulfilling all program requirements.
- perform at levels of C- or below in course and/or field work
- breach the standards for academic conduct, including but not limited to plagiarism, the giving or falsifying of any academic documents or materials, cheating, and the giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in tests, examinations, or other assigned school work. Ball State's policy on academic and classroom misconduct is defined in the student handbook, found online at: <http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentRights/PoliciesandProcedures/StudentCode.aspx>
- are excessively absent from class, as defined in the instructor's syllabus.
- are consistently irresponsible in meeting classroom and program requirements; for example, they are involved in a high frequency of the following: tardiness and absences, absences on exam days, assignments are turned in late, required field experiences or group meetings to prepare for group projects are missed.
- do not meet the grade-point requirements that have been established at different points in the program.
- continue to reject social work values as they proceed through the program or who do not comply with the *NASW Code of Ethics*.
- fail to engage in ethical behavior in the community commensurate with the professional role.
- are found to be in serious violation of BSU Code of Conduct Rules, as determined by the BSU Office of Student Rights and Community Standards
- are convicted of a violent crime or other felony.
- are under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the classroom or field settings, which causes them to function in an impaired manner, exhibit inappropriate behavior, or demonstrate negligence or unprofessional conduct, as defined in the *NASW Code of Ethics*.
- violate Ball State's Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, as advanced online at <http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentRights/PoliciesandProcedures/SDFCampus/schoolsact.aspx>, which outlines Disciplinary Offenses related to the use, possession, distribution, sale, and manufacture of alcoholic beverages and/or drugs....on property owned or controlled by BSU, at any BSU-sponsored event, or as part of any activity of BSU.
- are unable to pass a drug screen, as required by the program or the field practicum.
- behave in ways that are inappropriate to the field of social work, as defined in the *NASW Code of Ethics*, BSU policies, or Program policies.

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- are unable to demonstrate willingness to grow toward professionalism by responsibly and satisfactorily reconciling differences between personal and professional values/ethics in order to practice in an ethical and a professional manner, as required by the NASW *Code of Ethics*.

### *FOR BSW STUDENTS:*

- Regarding BSW students: Students must have a 2.0 overall GPA and 2.50 GPA in Social Work courses in order to gain formal admittance into the program as a social work major. In order to enter the capstone field practicum during the senior year, BSW students must meet the same GPA requirements as for admission to the program and, additionally, must successfully complete all required social work courses with a C or better. BSW students may repeat only two required social work courses in which they received a grade of C- or below, and students who earn a grade of C- and below in the senior field course may NOT repeat the course.

### *FOR MSW STUDENTS:*

- Regarding MSW students: Students must maintain a 3.0 overall GPA in order continue in the MSW program. Students may repeat only two required courses in which they received a grade of C or below, and students who earn a grade of C or below in any field practicum course may NOT repeat the course.

## THE REVIEW PROCESS

The intervention efforts with students demonstrating behaviors that are contraindicated in the program are based upon a “level” system. These interventions range from one-on-one meetings with an instructor, to the calling of a meeting of the “Student of Concern Committee.” The level of review depends upon the seriousness of the allegation of a breach under this Policy. The following procedure will act as a guideline should a breach of any of the relevant policies, bylaws, Code of Ethics, Cultural Competence standards, or standards of practice occur. Depending on the nature of the infraction, the Department reserves the right to proceed with a review at any level that is deemed to be appropriate. This policy is applicable to students who have declared the Social Work major. The key aspects of this process are as follows:

### ***Student of Concern Committee (SCC)***

The Student of Concern Committee (SCC) will include at least 4 faculty members from the department. A faculty member is elected to serve as the Chair of the committee. The Department Chair serves in an ex-officio capacity.

### ***Responsibility of the Committee***

The Student of Concern Committee will be involved with problematic performance situations that have either not been resolved at Stage One or Two, or are deemed so serious that immediate attention is required by the Student of Concern Committee. Each student has the responsibility for discussing academic/behavioral performance difficulties with his/her instructors, faculty field liaison, and advisor, as appropriate to the situation. The committee chair shall see that all necessary information is compiled and available for committee use in deliberations.

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### ***Roles of Committee Chair and Referral Person(s)***

The committee chair is responsible for convening the committee, informing the student in writing that a concern has come forward, gathering information, recording the review process, and communicating information to the student regarding committee action and decisions. The referral person(s) is viewed as the person(s) most knowledgeable about the situation under review and is therefore responsible for presenting pertinent information on the nature of and facts about the problem under review.

### ***Documentation***

At any stage of the review process there should be clear, concise documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that these concerns have been discussed with the student and attempts have been made to ameliorate the concerns, where appropriate. Documentation regarding level one or level two reviews should be kept in the files of faculty who are consulted if there is a concern, as well as the student file in the department. If a level three review occurs, there will be a notation that a level three review occurred in the student file. Specific information regarding level three reviews (agenda, supplementary materials) should be kept in a separate locked file in the department. Recordkeeping will follow University standards.

Students should be notified of a SCC meeting in writing at least five calendar days before the review. They will also be notified within ten days of the decision rendered.

### ***Level One Review***

**Classroom instructor and student.** When a classroom instructor has concerns about a student's professional behavior that instructor should:

- (1) discuss those concerns directly with the student, via face-to-face, phone or video, and seek to work with the student to resolve the concern
- (2) document dates and content of all meetings with the student; and, if warranted,
- (3) notify the Department Chair and SCC Chair that the review process is being undertaken.

**Site supervisor and student.** When a site supervisor has concerns about a student's professional behavior, he/she should contact the Faculty Liaison and follow the procedures # 1 & 2 above, document the dates and behavior and discuss the concerns with the Practicum Coordinator following the procedure outlined in the *BSW Field Handbook* or the *MSW Field Handbook*.

In many instances, meetings between the parties resolve the concerns and do not lead to further reviews. The faculty member involved in the situation shall record, in writing, the discussions at the meetings and the resolution of the matter at this time. If the concerns are not resolved at this stage, the parties may proceed to the next level.

### ***Level Two Review***

**When a level two review is deemed necessary,** either the chair of the Student of Concern Committee (in the case of concerns arising from the classroom) or the Practicum Coordinator (in case of concerns

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arising from the practicum) in agreement with other faculty involved will determine the nature of the concerns and gather sufficient information to convene a meeting. The following outlines the protocol if a meeting is warranted:

### **Classroom Instructor and Student.**

- (1) The SCC Chair will notify the Department Chair that the next stage of review is being undertaken. The SCC Chair will invite the student, in writing, with at least five days' notice, to attend a meeting. The SCC Chair will copy the instructor and advisor (Faculty Advisor for BSW students, Academic Advisor for MSW students) on the invitation.
- (2) The Instructor, the Chair of the SCC, and the Advisor (Faculty Advisor for BSW students, Academic Advisor for MSW students) will meet with the student to discuss the concerns. In the event that a faculty member is serving as Chair of the SCC and is also the instructor bringing forth the concern about the student, an *ad hoc* Chair for the SCC will be appointed by the Chair of the Department. This *ad hoc* Chair appointee will take on that responsibility through all necessary stages of the process. The student may elect to bring an advocate to the meeting. If so, he/she must notify the Chair of the SCC or *ad hoc* Chair, in advance, of the identity and relationship of that person (to the student);
- (3) It is the student's right to bring relevant information in his/her defense to the meeting;
- (4) The instructor shall record, in writing, the date, attendees, information shared during the meeting, and the determination. In appropriate cases at this level of review, the parties are not precluded from arriving at a written plan to address the concerns, which may include the student being required to modify his/her behavior. With that in mind, the determination can take the following form:
  - a. A written plan establishing the conditions and requirements that the student must meet to continue in the major; including course withdrawal or re-taking course
  - b. A recommendation for a more thorough review by the Student of Concern Committee;
  - c. A determination that the student would not be recommended when applying to the major
- (5) The Chair of the Department is notified of the meeting.

### **Site Supervisor and Student.** When a Level Two Review is deemed necessary:

- (1) The SCC Chair will inform the faculty field liaison and the Practicum Coordinator that the next stage of review is being undertaken relating to the practicum concerns. The student will be invited, in writing, with at least five days' notice, to attend a meeting. The SCC Chair will send the meeting invitation and copy the Practicum Coordinator, the Advisor (Faculty Advisor for BSW students, Academic Advisor for MSW students), and the field liaison;

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- (2) The student's advisor (Faculty Advisor for BSW students, Academic Advisor for MSW students) will meet with the student, the faculty field liaison, the Practicum Coordinator, and the SCC Chair to discuss the concerns. The field instructor may be invited to this meeting as well. In the event that a faculty member is serving as Chair of the SCC and is also the field instructor bringing forth the concern about the student, an *ad hoc* Chair for the SCC will be appointed by the Chair of the Department. This *ad hoc* Chair appointee will take on that responsibility through all necessary stages of the process. The student may elect to bring an advocate to the meeting. If the student plans to attend the meeting with an advocate, he/she must notify the Chair of the SCC or *ad hoc* Chair, in advance, of the identity and relationship of that person (to the student).
- (3) The Practicum Coordinator shall record, in writing, the date, attendees, information shared during the meeting, and the determination. In appropriate cases at this level of review, the parties are not precluded from arriving at a written plan to address the concerns, which may include the student being required to modify his/her behavior. With that in mind, the determination can take the following form:
  - a. A written plan establishing the conditions and requirements that the student must meet to continue in the major; including course withdrawal or re-taking course
  - b. A recommendation for a more thorough review by the SCC;
  - c. A recommendation for site reassignment;
- (4) The Chair of the Department is notified of the hearing.

This process is designed to assist students in dealing with identified concerns that have an impact on their performance in the social work program. Disposition may also include a referral to the Dean of students or the Counseling Center for assessment and possible recommendation for further services. Follow up and monitoring of the written plan will be done by the Academic Advisor or Practicum Coordinator, if the issues occurred in field. The Academic Advisor or Practicum Coordinator monitors progress with the assistance of other parties and maintains documentation as needed.

### **Level Three Review**

Generally, a Level Three Review occurs when concerns have not been resolved in the prior levels of review, the issues are serious and at the discretion of the Chair of the SCC require formal intervention, or the issues are serious enough that the student is being considered for termination from or discontinuance in the program or suspension or expulsion from the University.

Intervention at this level will require the following:

- (1) A meeting of the Student of Concern Committee to determine whether the student should be dismissed from the program. What constitutes an appropriate case rests with the discretion of the SCC Chair.
  - a. In appropriate cases of formal disciplinary action for academic or non-academic misconduct at this level of review, the parties are not precluded from arriving at a

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written plan to address the concerns, which may include the student being required, in writing, to modify his/her behavior and/or suggest appropriate help. As a stipulation, a student in disciplinary status may need to seek help and provide documentation of such.

- (2) The Student of Concern Committee will meet with the student (via face-to-face, phone, or video) to discuss the concerns. In the event that a faculty member is serving as Chair of the SCC and is also the instructor bringing forth the concern about the student, an *ad hoc* Chair for the SCC will be appointed by the Chair of the Department. This *ad hoc* Chair appointee will take on that responsibility through all necessary stages of the process. The student may elect to bring an advocate to the meeting. The student can also bring relevant information to the meeting. If bringing an advocate, he/she must notify the Chair of the Student of Concern Committee or *ad hoc* Chair, in advance, of the identity and relationship of that person (to the student).
- (3) Student is notified in writing of the commencement of the student review, with the date, time and place, the facts and occurrences that have given rise to the concern, the nature of the student review, the student's right to attend the review and bring an advocate, and the student's right to bring to the committee's attention relevant information concerning these facts and occurrences that the student wishes the committee to consider. The SCC Chair will send the written notification.
- (4) During a Level Three meeting, the following will occur:
  - a. An agenda will be outlined;
  - b. Student will be given opportunity to present;
  - c. Committee members will have opportunity to ask questions of student;
  - d. Student will have opportunity to rebut;
  - e. Committee will explain deliberation and determination to student and how and when they will receive determination
  - f. Committee members will deliberate.
- (5) Student will be notified in writing of the determination along with a summary of reasons for the determination. The determination can take the following form:
  - a. A written plan establishing the conditions and requirements that the student must meet to continue in the major;
  - b. A temporary suspension of the student from the program;
  - c. A decision to ask the student to proceed with a Medical Withdrawal or Late Withdrawal;
  - d. A determination to discontinue the student from the program



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Students who do not respond or fail to attend the meeting will be dismissed from the program. Students deemed by the SCC to have committed an infraction, but will not admit to the infraction, will be dismissed from the program.

- (6) Student will sign a statement that they will adhere to the committee's decision. Students who do not comply with agreed-upon remedy will not be permitted to complete the program or will not be recommended to the major.
- (7) Student's actions are followed up by the Faculty Advisor (BSW students), Academic Advisor (MSW students) or Practicum Coordinator, if the issues occurred in field. The Advisor, Practicum Coordinator, or person who made the complaint may call for a follow-up or non-compliance review.
- (8) Students who are not permitted to continue in the program are informed of such by mail. If a student has already registered for social work classes for the next term, they will be dropped from the courses.

### **Appeals**

- (1) Appeals relating to any decisions made by the Student of Concern Committee can be made at any time by the student. Since a Student of Concern Committee review is not a student disciplinary hearing, the level of appeal shall be heard by the Department Chair.
- (2) Students who have been terminated from the BSW or MSW program can appeal such a decision on the basis of "capriciousness." The term capriciousness is limited to one or more of the following:
  - a. A decision to terminate a student on some basis other than academic or professional performance;
  - b. A decision to terminate a student on more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the program;
  - c. A substantial departure from the standards and procedures contained in the either the *BSW or MSW Student Handbook*.
- (3) Appeals made on the basis of capriciousness are made to the Chair of the Department of Social Work. The student must appeal in writing, identifying the grievance(s).
- (4) The Chair is the final level of appeal within the University.

### **Recordkeeping**

University policy regarding maintenance of records will be followed.

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## ADDENDUM TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW POLICY

### AUTOMATIC DISMISSAL

#### A. Criteria for Automatic Dismissal

1. Failure to earn at least a "C" in SOCW 325 and each of the 400 level Social Work courses in the BSW program and in all courses in the MSW program.
2. Failure to maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA in Social Work courses in the BSW program or a 2.0 overall GPA while pursuing a BSW degree.
3. Failure to raise cumulative GPA in the MSW program to a 3.0 after completion of nine credit hours on probationary status.
4. Physical aggression, verbalizing threats or implied threats of harm to any faculty, staff, or students at Ball State University.

#### B. Notification Procedures

The following procedures are used in the event a student falls under any of the criteria for Automatic Dismissal:

1. If a student is to be dismissed for any of the above, the Department Chair will be notified.
2. Within 5 business days of receiving the above notification, the Chair of the Student of Concern Committee will send by certified mail a written statement to the student indicating that she/he has been discontinued from the program and explain the due process procedures, including information on appeals and a recommendation to meet with the Academic Advisor to update their plan of study at Ball State University. Copies of the letter will be forwarded to the student's advisor and student file.

### APPEAL PETITION FOR READMISSION

If a student wishes to be reinstated after automatic dismissal, the student has the option to present a substantive written statement for an appeal to the Chairperson of the Department of Social Work within five business days of receiving the above notification.

#### A. Appeal Process

Within five business days after receiving the student's Appeal Petition, the Department Chair will set a date for a meeting with the student. In addition to the appeal petition, the Chair will be given records of the information to assess the appeal.

#### B. Appeal Meeting with Department Chair

1. The student will have an opportunity to present their petition and present information to support their appeal to be reinstated to the program.
2. The Department Chair will review the materials and make a decision based upon:
  - a. Consideration of all the factors in the present and past performance of the student
  - b. Merit of the issues present in the Appeal Petition

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- c. Assessment of the plan presented by the student to resolve the performance problem(s).
3. The Department Chair shall prepare a written statement of the decision to the student within five business days following this meeting.

### **C. Notification**

Within five business days after the appeals meeting, the Department Chair's final recommendation will be sent in writing to the student. A copy of this decision will be sent to the Student of Concern Committee members, the Academic Advisor, and the student file.

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8/25/21 Revised