

**DETAILS AND EXPLANATIONS REGARDING THE CHANGES WITHIN
AMENDED STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

**School of Social Welfare
University at Albany – State University of New York
Standards for Social Work Education**

Introduction

All students are expected to meet and maintain the academic standards established by the School of Social Welfare. The academic standards established by the School of Social Welfare are comprised of expectations regarding both scholastic performance and professional behavior. Students are expected to meet and maintain these standards in the classroom, in field, and in other contexts where the student is acting as a social worker or social work student. Adherence to these standards will be the basis upon which students will be evaluated by faculty, including field instructors, responsible for evaluating student performance in the classroom and field. Meeting the criteria for scholastic performance is necessary but is not the sole measure to ensure continued enrollment in a program. Students must also demonstrate professional competency and an understanding of and a commitment to the values and ethics of the social work profession. Advancement through the program is a privilege, not a right.

The School of Social Welfare evaluates the academic performance of its students in four core areas: Basic Skills Necessary to Acquire Professional Competence; Coping Skills; Professional Performance Skills; and Scholastic Performance.

Criteria for Evaluating Academic Performance

1. Basic Skills Necessary to Attain Professional Competence

Communication Skills

The social work student must demonstrate sufficient written and oral skills to:

- Communicate ideas and feelings clearly, effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals
- Understand and articulate the content presented in the program and to complete adequately all written and oral assignments
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to others.

Interpersonal Skills

The social work student must demonstrate interpersonal skills to relate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals. These include flexibility, empathy, nonjudgmental attitude, respect, and the abilities to listen, communicate and negotiate.

Cognitive Skills

The social work student must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and apply it to situations in the classroom and field and other professional situations. The student must demonstrate the ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and apply that knowledge to social work practice.

Appreciation of Diversity

Social work practice requires understanding, affirmation and respect of another individual's way of life and values. The social work student must demonstrate respect and sensitivity toward other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals and others who are different from him/herself regardless of the person's age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, race, religion, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, or value system.

2. Coping Skills Necessary for Performance in the Program and Professional Practice

The social work student must demonstrate the capacity to interact positively and effectively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals ~~at all times~~ and to execute sound judgment and performance in the program. The student must demonstrate appropriate coping skills in the face of personal or other circumstances, including seeking counseling or other sources of support and assistance, to ensure that such circumstances do not:

- compromise academic performance
- interfere with professional judgment and behavior
- jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility.

3. Professional Performance Skills Necessary for Work with Clients and Professional Practice

Professional Commitment

The social work student must demonstrate a strong commitment to further social and economic justice and to serve persons who are vulnerable, marginalized or oppressed.

Professional Conduct

The social work student must act professionally and responsibly in matters of punctuality, attendance, appearance and presentation of self.

The social work student must be able to advocate for her/himself in an appropriate and responsible manner. The student must be able to receive and accept feedback and supervision and apply such feedback to enhance professional development and self-awareness. The student must demonstrate the capacity to recognize and maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries and appropriately use self-disclosure.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is a key component of social work practice. The social work student must be aware of how his or her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect his or her thinking, behavior and relationships with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals, including those in authority. The student must be able to accurately assess his or her own strengths,

limitations, and suitability for professional practice. The student must be able to examine and appropriately modify his or her behavior when it interferes with his or her professional work.

Ethical Obligations

The behavior of the social work student must adhere to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice as delineated in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.

4. Scholastic Performance

Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate social welfare majors must meet the academic standards defined in the Undergraduate Social Welfare Program Student Handbook and the Field Education Handbook, Undergraduate Program of the School of Social Welfare

Graduate Students

MSW students must meet the academic standards defined in the Graduate Faculty and Student Handbook and the MSW Field Education Handbook of the School of Social Welfare.

Procedures for Addressing Violations or Failure to Meet the Standards for Social Work Education by Students at the School of Social Welfare

Allegations of violations or failure to meet the Standards for Social Work Education (the “Standards”) by students enrolled in the MSW program or as social welfare majors in the undergraduate program shall be reviewed by the Committee on Standards for Social Work Education, a standing committee of the School of Social Welfare (the “School”). The Committee shall be comprised of five (5) members of the voting faculty, elected by the faculty. ~~Three members,~~ at least ~~three~~ two of whom must be tenure-track faculty. ~~are voting members of the faculty, elected by the faculty. The remaining members must hold a professional social work degree, shall be appointed by the Dean, and may include full-time or part-time faculty, field instructors, professional staff, or administrators of the School.~~ The Committee members shall choose a Chair from among themselves. Three (3) members of the Committee, ~~shall~~ constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting the Committee’s business. Members of the Committee shall serve two (2) year terms, except for the initial members of the Committee who shall be appointed to staggered terms with the terms staggered so that at least two (2) new members join the Committee each year.

Any individual affiliated with the School of Social Welfare in an instructional role (*i.e.*, full-time or part-time faculty, field instructors, professional staff, administrators) may file a charge with the Committee on Standards for Social Work Education alleging a violation or failure to meet the Standards. All charges must be submitted to the Committee in writing and must contain, where possible, the following:

1. the name, local and permanent address(es), and telephone number(s) of the individual filing the charge (the “Complainant”);
2. a statement of facts explaining what happened and the acts which the Complainant believes constituted a violation or failure to meet the Standards in sufficient detail to give the subject of the charge (the “Respondent”) reasonable notice of the charges. The statement should include the date, approximate time and place where the alleged violations occurred. If the acts occurred on more than one date, the statement should also include the last date on which the acts occurred as well as detailed information about the prior acts;
3. the names of any potential witnesses to the alleged violation or violations;
4. the name(s), address(es) and telephone number(s) of the Respondent(s); and
5. such other or supplemental information as may be requested.

If the Complainant is a member of the Committee, the Complainant must recuse her/himself from any participation in the review of the charge. In this instant, the Dean will appoint a replacement for deliberations concerning that complaint.

As soon as reasonably possible after the date of filing the charge, the Chair of the Committee will mail a copy of the charge to the Respondent, and, within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the charge, the Chair of the Committee shall send notification to the Complainant and the Respondent that a review of the matter shall take place.

The Committee shall review all relevant information, interview pertinent witnesses and, at its discretion, hear testimony from the Complainant and the Respondent. Both the Complainant and the Respondent shall be permitted to submit written statements or other relevant and material evidence. At any hearing convened by the Committee to take oral testimony, the Respondent may be assisted by an advisor of his or her choosing. However, advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any hearing before the Committee. At any hearing convened by the Committee to take oral testimony, the Complainant and the Respondent may be permitted, at the discretion of the Committee Chair, to present witnesses, subject to the right of cross examination by the Committee only. Hearings normally shall be conducted in private. Admission of any person to the hearing, except for the Respondent's advisor, shall be at the discretion of the Committee Chair. All procedural questions regarding the conduct of a Committee investigation shall be determined by the Chair of the Committee, and the Chair's decision on any such matters shall be final.

Within sixty (60) calendar days from the filing of the charge the Committee shall prepare a summary of its findings as to whether the Respondent violated the Standards and its recommendation for sanctions, if any, to the Dean, or designee, for final resolution. The Committee's findings and recommendation shall be determined by a majority vote of those members participating in the investigation and shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the Respondent violated the Standards. The summary shall identify the facts upon which the findings and recommendation were based, including a summary of all oral testimony presented to the Committee, and shall include copies of all documents accepted as evidence by the Committee. Upon transmission of the findings and recommendation to the Dean, or designee, the Committee Chair shall transmit, concurrently, copies to the Complainant and Respondent.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the written findings and recommendation, the Dean, or designee, shall issue a written statement to the Complainant and Respondent, indicating what action the Dean, or designee, proposes to take. The action proposed by the Dean, or designee, may consist of:

- (a) A determination that the charge was not substantiated; or
- (b) A determination that the charge was substantiated and the imposition of an appropriate sanction.

Sanctions that may be imposed upon a student found to have violated the Standards include:

- (a) Warning – A notice in writing to the student that the student has been found to have violated institutional standards ;
- (b) Probation – A written reprimand for violation of institutional standards. Probation shall be for a specified period of time, may include conditions for continued attendance and shall include the admonition that subsequent violations within the probationary period shall result in more severe sanctions, up to and including immediate dismissal;

- (c) Dismissal –Recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies for immediate dismissal from the Program (if an MSW student) or recommendation to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for immediate removal from the major (if an undergraduate student); or
- (d) Such other sanction as the Dean determines to be appropriate.

The decision of the Dean shall be final, and may be appealed only to the Undergraduate (if an undergraduate student) or Graduate Academic Council (if an MSW student) as may be appropriate. Appeals to the UAC ~~or GAC~~ shall be limited to questions of compliance with the due process provisions as contained in these procedures. The time limitations set forth herein may be extended by the Chair or the Dean, as the case may be, for good cause shown. Such extension shall be confirmed in writing.