



Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance Policy

Program Standards

The Texas State School of Social Work prepares students for ethical professional social work practice. Students must meet both academic and professional standards to advance successfully through the social work program. Academic standards include maintaining a minimum 3.0 GPA and successful completion of all required degree coursework. Professional standards are demonstrated through the student's professional development and ethical behavior.

Students sign a contract before admission to the program: 1) agreeing to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and applicable state laws, and 2) acknowledging their understanding that a student can be terminated from the social work program based on failing to satisfactorily achieve academic and professional standards. Faculty evaluate students' academic achievement and professional development based on the Council of Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the University Honor Code, the Texas State School of Social Work Student Handbooks, and the Field Handbook in order to identify actions that can be taken to facilitate students' successful advancement or to terminate enrollment in the program if remediation is not possible.

The Program Standards Committee is a standing committee comprised of seven faculty members appointed by the School Director. Committee members will serve for the academic year and rotate off the committee on a staggered basis to ensure consistency and continuity of policies and procedures.

Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance

The Texas State School of Social Work will comply with University program standards and policies related to student fitness and performance. If there are changes in the student's academic and behavioral standing:

- The University Registrar, Graduate College, and BSW or MSW Academic Adviser will inform the student and the BSW or MSW Program Director in writing of any changes in the student's academic standing;
- The student is responsible for contacting the BSW or MSW Program Director to submit a corrective action plan indicating how the student will resolve the academic standing issue by the end of the semester in which the problem is identified and
- Students who fail to comply with this process may not be allowed to continue in the program.
- Students will adhere to the program policies (BSW, MSW, and Field contracts) regarding academic and field placement performance.

Faculty Concern of Student Process

If a faculty member has a concern about a BSW or MSW student's academic or professional behavior and/or development, the faculty member will:

Assess the concern to determine the appropriate level of intervention (level 1, level 2, or level 3)

Level 1: Addressing Student Concerns

1. The faculty member will meet with the student in person or over Zoom when they observe a concern in the course (academic, ethics, and professionalism). Take notes of the conversation for accuracy of facts. Refer to any policies that are implicated in the observations. If this is a field student, a conversation with the BSW or MSW Field Coordinator may help to talk over the concerns. The faculty may consult with a Program Director to determine if there are any other faculty concerns about this student. A Program Director will provide guidance for the faculty member if multiple concerns require a Faculty Concern of Student form in conjunction with another faculty member. One faculty member will act as the principal contact and

the other faculty member(s) can add their documentation to the form.

2. Follow up student meeting with an email overview of the discussion; be certain to reference course policies, School policies, NASW code of ethics, and University conduct where appropriate based on the concern of academics, ethics, and professionalism.
3. Set an expectation of what changes should occur and by when they should be observed; a plan of action may be appropriate to support the student's work on specific professional and academic growth areas. For field students, this may include a Professional Growth Plan (PGP) and assignment to a field faculty mentor.
4. Include in the final sentence to student emails with "*Please let me know if this overview matches your understanding of our discussion.*"
5. Use the faculty assessment of a student concern documentation tool to support faculty in capturing the elements of a student concerns, observations, conversations, and expectations.

Level 2: Elevated Intervention

6. If the behavior does not change or the behavior observed is significantly detrimental to learning outcomes, prepare a formal **Faculty Concern of Student form**. The concern should include facts, dates, and transparency, should other levels of the University community review it. Avoid using emotional words and opinions in the write up.
7. The Faculty Concern of Student form should be reviewed by the appropriate Program Directors, BSW, MSW, or Field to determine recommended next steps.
8. Field ONLY - In some instances, an ELP evaluation may be needed to support or corroborate concerns or violations.

9. Once the Faculty Concern of Student form has been prepared, a copy is sent to the student and Program Director requesting a meeting to discuss the seriousness of the student concern. In some instances, the severity of the concern may elevate to a Level 3
10. After meeting with the student, the BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director will consult with faculty to determine if the concern should be forwarded for a program standard review. If the concern moves to the Program Standards Committee, the faculty will be asked to provide documentation and meet with the School Program Standards Committee.

Level 3: Program Standards Committee Referral

1. The faculty member and the appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director will discuss the concern within five (5) working days to determine if a corrective action plan is needed or a referral to the Program Standards Committee is warranted;
2. If it is determined that a corrective action plan is needed, the faculty member and appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director will meet with the student to discuss the concern and develop the corrective action plan together. If requested, this meeting can be held in a university designated safe zone;
3. If the student is unable or unwilling to participate in the development of a corrective action plan, the faculty member will develop the corrective action plan and document the student's lack of involvement on the plan;
4. A copy of the corrective action plan will be sent electronically to the student, and the appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director within five (5) working days of meeting with the student.
5. If the student's behavior improves or the concern is resolved, the faculty member will document this change of behavior or concern, inform the appropriate BSW, MSW or Field Program Director, and no further action will be pursued.

The Program Standards Committee Review Process

If the documented unprofessional behavior or developmental concern persists, the faculty member(s) will initiate involvement of the Program Standards Committee based on the following:

- The faculty member who had the initial concern will consult with the student's appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director, who will then refer the continued concern to the Program Standards Committee for action and/or recommendations.
- The Program Director will submit the Faculty Concern of Student Form, corrective action plan, if there is one, and any other supporting documentation to the Chair of the Program Standards Committee within five (5) working days of determining the need to involve the Program Standards Committee.
- A copy of all documentation will also be provided to the student within five (5) working days of determining the need to involve the Program Standards Committee.
- The Program Standards Committee (PSC) will convene a hearing within ten (10) working days of receiving the documentation to make recommendations.
 - The meeting may be held in a university-designated safe zone if requested by anyone attending this meeting;
 - Attending this meeting will be the faculty member who voiced the concern, the student, and a quorum (two-thirds PSC membership) of the Program Standards Committee. The Program Standards Committee may also invite other individuals who are deemed relevant to the process;
 - The student may also bring a support person to provide support or advisement to the student. However, the support person is not allowed to address the Program Standards Committee on behalf of the student;
 - The Program Standards Committee members will individually hear concerns from the faculty members, students, and any other relevant parties in an attempt to resolve the concern;

- At the conclusion of the hearing, all non-committee member participants will be excused from the room. The Program Standards Committee members will remain to deliberate.
- The Program Standards Committee is an independent review body that will make final recommendations based on documentation and interviews with the parties involved.
- The Program Standards Committee will report their recommendation(s) in writing within five (5) working days to the appropriate Program Director, who will then notify the student and the faculty member who submitted the Faculty Concern of Student form of the Program Standard Committees recommendation(s) in writing within five (5) working days.
- The student has ten (10) working days to accept/reject the Program Standards Committee's recommendation(s) in writing. If a student fails to respond in writing to the appropriate BSW, MSW or Field Program Director within ten (10) working days, this will be an indication of acceptance of the decision.
- If the student rejects the Program Standards Committee's recommendations, the student may appeal the Committee's recommendation in writing to the School Director within ten (10) working days of the notification of the Committee's recommendation. In the event the faculty reporting the Faculty Concern of Student form is the School Director, one of the other Program Directors (BSW, MSW, or Field) will assume the role of Administrator, and the student may appeal to the individual named in this position. The Administrator will be chosen based on avoiding dual roles (i.e., the MSW Program Director will not be chosen as the Administrator for an MSW Student Concern, the BSW Program Director will not be chosen as the Administrator for a BSW Student Concern, and the Field Program Director will not be chosen as the Administrator for a Field Student Concern).
- The student may appeal the School Director's (or Administrator's) decision in writing to the College Dean within ten (10) working days of the notification of the School Director's decision.
- The College of Applied Arts Dean's decision is final.

If a faculty member is concerned that a student's professional development and/or behavior is so serious that it requires a prompt or immediate resolution

and no corrective action plan is feasible, the faculty member will follow these procedures:

- The faculty member will notify the appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director, as well as the appropriate BSW or MSW Field Coordinator if the student will be entering an internship, about the concern and the need for prompt resolution.
- The Program Standards Committee will be notified and convene with at least a 2/3 quorum of eligible committee members within three (3) working days. All procedures outlined above will be followed within an expedited timeframe of three (3) working days instead of ten (10).

Documentation and Record-Keeping

The School must complete all Student Fitness and Performance Evaluation procedures by the last day of the semester (including exam week), unless the faculty member delivers the concern to the appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director within one week of the end of the semester. Should this occur, the Program Standards Committee must complete its deliberations within one week of the next semester's first class day.

The Program Standards Committee report will remain in the School Director's office, and the School Director will notify any appropriate University officials of the Program Standard Committee's decision if needed. Throughout the process, the confidentiality of the student will be maintained by all parties involved.

The appropriate BSW or MSW Degree Director will advise any student who has one or more unresolved student concerns on file with the School Director at the end of a semester that they are advanced to the next semester only on a probationary basis until a final recommendation is delivered by the Program Standards Committee and due process is completed. Students will not graduate if they have an unresolved level 3 student concern on file.