



Student Performance Process

The Department of Social Work at Metropolitan State University of Denver has as their primary mission the successful professional education and development of our students for the field and profession of social work. Student success is our highest priority. Our primary concern is to ensure students' successful progression through either the BSSW or MSW program and readiness for the field. However, as professional and accredited educational programs, each program in the department is required to make sure that students adhere to the standards, ethics, and values of the profession. Therefore, students are continually assessed in terms of academic and professional performance.

We recognize that there are times in each person's life when meeting academic and professional standards may be difficult. The *Student Performance Process* is designed to support our students in being successful while maintaining programmatic standards. The process outlined here further builds upon the Department's *Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior*. Students, faculty and staff are always entitled to utilize University policy and procedure to address their concerns. However, the following outlined process is the preferred process of the Department of Social Work. It should also be noted that, depending on the nature of the concern, a referral to higher levels of support is possible at any point in the process should the concern warrant (see serious vs. non-serious concerns). If, at any stage, the student refuses to engage in the process, the student may be referred to a Full Student Performance Review. For concerns specifically related to performance in a field agency, students will follow the parallel Field Student Performance Support and Problem Solving Process. Issues in field seminar will follow the policy noted below, as they would in any academic course.

This process is intended to address issues that may create obstacles to student success during any part of their academic program. It is important to note that the University prohibits discrimination and/or harassment against any employee or student based on the individual's race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability, age, veteran or marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or based on those aspects in an individual's relatives, friends or associates. Allegations of discrimination should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity at (303) 556-4746, SSB 440. Allegations of sexual misconduct can be submitted to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Services at (303) 556-3559, Tivoli 311, or an individual can file a report online by visiting: <http://www.msudenver.edu/studentengagementandwellness/studentconductandconflictreresolutionservices/reportanincident/>

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First Level of Student Support—Meeting between student and instructor

The first level of student support offered to all students is the direct communication with a faculty member (this includes course faculty, faculty field liaison, field instructor or advisor). Through discussion and interaction that are a normal and typical part of the class, field, and advising process, faculty may offer support to students experiencing challenges in meeting expectations of the program and University. For most students this level of support is sufficient to navigate the difficult challenges that often get in the way of student success. Students are encouraged to use this level of student support early in any area they notice themselves failing to meet the standards expressed in the *Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior* or in course expectations or *Student or Field Handbooks*. Your early use of faculty support helps to ensure that you will receive the support you need and be successful. The results of this level of support may include, but are not limited to, recommendations to the student regarding changing performance or behavior, accommodations or modifications to assignments, and/or provision of additional support services.

Second Level of Student Support—Meeting between student, instructor, and advisor

If a student is not receiving enough support through the first level of support, or a faculty member believes that the support provided at the first level is not helpful enough, either party can ask for the second level of support. The second level of support involves the student, faculty member and advisor in a three-way discussion and problem solving process to explore additional support and steps that might be required. If the faculty member bringing the concern is also the advisor, an alternative faculty member may be identified to fulfill the role of advisor. The role of the advisor is to help facilitate clear communication between the faculty member and the student and to brainstorm solutions for success. The advisor may be a useful resource in assisting the student to prepare for this discussion. The results of this level of support may include, but are not limited to, asking a student to complete specific tasks associated with the performance or behavior, making suggestions about modification to a student's course or plan of study, and/or asking for or requesting additional support services. The outcomes of this support process should be documented by sending an email to the respective program email address with the subject line "Level II outcome". This **may** include the development of a written plan or contract.

Third Level of Student Support—Meeting between student, advisor, and BSSW or MSW Program Director

If a student is not finding enough support through the first and second level of support or a faculty member believes that the support provided at the first or second level does not resolve the concerns, either party can ask for the third level of support. The third level of support involves a meeting with the student, the BSSW or MSW program Director, and the student's advisor; the concerned faculty member bringing the concern may be included. As in Level 2, if the faculty member bringing the concern is also the advisor, an alternative faculty member may be identified to fulfill the role of advisor. The meeting will be coordinated by the student's faculty advisor. The goal of the meeting is to discuss and problem solve solutions to the challenges preventing student success. The results of this level of support may include, but are not limited to, recommendations regarding specific tasks to be undertaken by the student, modifications or alterations to the student's plan or course of study, and/or recommendations to University discipline procedures. At this level, the student may be placed on a Performance Notice to ensure that extra attention and support is given to the situation in hopes of preventing escalation of the concern. Because the program has the right and responsibility to request reevaluation of a student's suitability for the social work program, it is at this level of the support process that this would be considered. The outcomes of this support process shall be documented by sending an email to the respective program email address with the subject line "Level III outcome". and forwarded to the Department Chair.

In a Level 3 meeting, the advisor consults with the referring instructor or supervisor, gathering necessary information about the concern(s). The Level 3 meeting addresses: 1) the factors that may have contributed to the current situation, 2) the conduct or behavior that requires change or adjustment, 3) the available supports within the University to address any noted issues, and 4) the student's willingness to utilize supports and make necessary changes for improvement. The Program Director and Advisor will determine terms for remediation (if necessary) and if a Performance Notice is deemed appropriate, the terms of this notice (i.e., restrictions placed on the student which may range from disallowing coursework for a term, limiting the number of course hours, the placement of the student in certain courses, etc.). If a student is placed on a Performance Notice, a Performance Plan will be created to include specific goals to be met, dates for goals to be met, plan for progress meetings with the advisor, and a timetable for goal completion.

The final Performance Plan will be signed by the advisor, the student, and the program director. At this time, the student is placed on the Performance Plan and receives a copy of the signed form. The original Social Work Performance Plan is sent via email to the respective program email address with the subject line "Level III PP".

The successful completion of the Performance Plan will result in the removal of the Performance Notice. Unsuccessful completion of the Performance Plan may elevate the concern to a Full Student Performance Review.

Fourth Level of Student Support—Student Performance Review

There are two types of student performance reviews. Automatic Administrative Performance Reviews and Full Student Performance Reviews.

Automatic Administrative Performance Reviews are triggered by a violation of departmental academic policy and are conducted by the Office of Social Work Student Services. These policy violations can include, but are not limited to:

- The student who falls below the required minimum GPA.
- The student who receives a grade below that required in the program (academic or field).
- The student falls out of the required sequence of coursework or fails to adhere to the advising snapshot provided at time of acceptance.
- The student has an outstanding Incomplete from one semester when the subsequent semester begins, and does not have an approved plan for completion.
- The student does not fulfill the obligations mandated by special, probationary and/or conditional status.

For a full list of academic policies, visit <http://www.msudenver.edu/socialwork/>

Automatic Administrative Performance Reviews will generate a comprehensive email sent to the student's MSU Denver email address and will outline the policy violation and the steps necessary to regain good academic standing (if applicable). In situations where the student cannot regain good academic standing, the result may be termination from the BSSW or MSW Program. In some cases, a Full Performance Review may be recommended. The student's faculty advisor will be included on this email.

Full Student Performance Reviews are used to evaluate a student's standing in the program.

In certain cases the gravity of a concern may elevate an issue to a Full Student Performance Review. Examples of the types of behavior that may trigger a Full Student Performance Review include:

- The student's behavior or interactions raise concerns about his/her ability to function in the Social Work Department or as a professional social worker (including, but not limited to, acts or threats of physical and/or verbal violence), and such concerns are not resolved among the student, his/her advisor, and any other concerned parties.
- Documented evidence of serious criminal activity (e.g., felony) occurring during the course of study.
- A major violation of the Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior or MSU Denver Student Handbook (including, but not limited to: violations of confidentiality, impairment as a professional, or major acts of academic dishonesty).

Full Student Performance Reviews may also result when issues are unresolved at lower levels of support. These reviews are usually the result of a recommendation of the advisor and program director. Issues that can result in a Full Student Performance Review include, but are not limited to:

- Physical illness or emotional problems that exceed the availability of reasonable accommodations and, in the professional judgment of one or more of the social work faculty, could impair effective

quality provision of services to future clients, acceptance of supervision, appearance and general demeanor.

- Professional goals are not matched to those of the social work profession and generalist social work practice.
- The student displays behavior that interferes with their professional judgment and performance or jeopardizes the best interests of people for whom they have professional accountability in the classroom or responsibility in the field placement.
- The student displays behavior that is a significant violation or a pattern of violations of the Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior or the MSU Denver Student Handbook (including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism and/or fraud).
- The student is dismissed from his/her field experience course for cause (e.g., a violation of professional practice or other expressly articulated violation of agency or University policy).

Confidentiality:

All procedures related to the performance review must be carried out in a manner which assures protection of the student's rights in line with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The student has the right to review all written information which is presented at the hearing, preferably the hearing and may address any of this information in the hearing. Members of the committee and other persons who appear at the review hearing are expected to maintain confidentiality with regard to all aspects of the hearing. Actions of the committee are to remain confidential and are to be shared only with those persons involved with the student in an educational capacity.

Full Student Performance Review:

If the situation requires a Full Student Performance Review, a committee will be formed as outlined below to conduct a formal review of the student's performance and to make formal recommendations as to a plan of action. Results of the Full Student Performance Review can result in modifications to the student's plan of study and/or dismissal from the program.

Full Student Performance Review Procedure

All committee members must be present at the meeting.

Members of the Full Student Performance Review Committee

The Performance Review Committee will consist of three voting members- a committee chair and two additional faculty.

The committee will be comprised of the following: the BSSW Program Director, the MSW Program Director, and the Director of Field Education. (If any one of these directors cannot attend, a full-time faculty member will be designated to serve in their place.) The director of the student's program (e.g., BSSW or MSW) shall serve as the chair of the Performance Review Committee. The chair will organize and facilitate the meeting and ensure that the process outlined in this policy is adhered to. The chair will

also secure evaluations from instructors of the previous semester(s) regarding the student's performance in his/her courses and field and will secure evaluations from the Office of Social Work Student Services about the overall academic status of the student. The chair will publish the results of the meeting to the student, the committee, and to the student's file.

Role of the Faculty Advisor (or Designee)

The student's faculty advisor may attend the review hearing at the invitation of the student, and present brief background information about the student.

Additional Attendees

The student whose performance is to be reviewed may attend during the fact-finding part of the meeting. The student must leave prior to the committee's deliberation. The student may also present information to the review committee. Prior to the meeting, the student must inform the committee chair of his/her intent to attend the meeting and/or speak to the committee.

The student may ask persons who have specific knowledgeable about his/her performance in this specific situation to present information to the committee. Such persons must make brief statements and are permitted to be present in the committee meeting only to make their presentation to the committee. The committee chair must be informed in advance about those persons who will appear on behalf of the student, as well as the general nature of the information each will present.

If the student is receiving services from the ACCESS Center – the student's Disability Coordinator or another representative may be invited to attend to ensure that the student's rights and University's obligations are attended to with regard to ADA requirements.

If the review was requested by a faculty/administrator/staff member, that person shall present his/her information to the committee and respond to questions from committee members.

Other faculty/administrator/staff members or Field Experience supervisors may contribute information regarding the student's performance. These members are to be identified by the student's faculty advisor or the committee chair.

The presence of a Dean from the College of Professional Studies may be requested by the Performance Review Committee chair.

Meeting Agenda

1. Fact Finding
 - a. Review of facts which led to performance review – Chair of Performance Review Committee.

- b. Presentation of background information about student – Faculty advisor or designee. When a hearing resulted from a faculty request, presentation by that person.
 - c. Presentation of information by student.
 - d. Presentation of information by student designated persons with information relevant to the performance of the student, if any are present.
 - e. Presentation of information by other faculty members
 - f. Summary of main points and facts -- Chair of Performance Review Committee.
2. Deliberation and Action
- For this part of the meeting, voting committee members, the student's advisor or designee, a Dean (if present), and other social work faculty or field faculty will be included in the deliberations, but only the chair of the committee and the voting committee members will vote. Deliberations may include the following:
- a. Consideration of all factors of the student's present and past performance.
 - b. Discussion of the options to address the performance problem(s).
 - c. Formation of a remediation plan to be completed by the student to resolve the performance problem, or decision to dismiss the student from the Program.

While it is desirable for a unanimous opinion, a majority vote will decide the plan (only the chair of the committee and the voting faculty members will vote). It is the responsibility of the Performance Review Committee chair to write a statement which describes the nature of the performance problem, a summary of the facts which were presented to the committee, and the committee's action. This information will be kept in the student's file. Within one week after the review hearing, this written summary statement reflecting the committee's decision will be sent in writing to:

- The student,
- The student's faculty advisor or designee,
- The Director of Field Education,
- The Chair of the Social Work Department, and
- The Office of Social Work Student Services by sending an email to the respective program email address with the subject line "Level IV Full Performance Review".
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Appeal Process

Should the student disagree with the results of the Full Student Performance Review, he/she must follow the [University Appeal Process](#).

Academic Performance

Academic performance is evaluated in courses by instructors. Students must maintain the minimum GPA for their program as well as minimum grades in their coursework according to their program's guidelines. In addition, students must adhere to the course sequencing as designated in the program catalog and their plan of study.

Professional Performance

Professional performance is formally evaluated in the field courses by the faculty field liaison and the field instructor. Professional performance is also assessed in all social work courses and in interactions with staff, faculty, students, field supervisors, the field office, field colleagues and clients, and the community. Students are required to maintain professional conduct and demeanor in all of their interactions as guided by the Social Work Code of Ethics.

Expectations for professional conduct and demeanor further include adherence to the following:

- The Social Work Professional Code of Ethics (<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>)
 - For example: Students are expected to treat clients with dignity and respect.
- Metropolitan State University-Denver Policies as outlined in the student catalog (<http://www.msudenver.edu/academics/catalog/>)
 - For example: From the *Student Code of Conduct*, students are prohibited from engaging in hazing activities.
- Metropolitan State University Denver BSW or MSW Program policies as outlined in the BSW Program Student Handbook and the MSW Program Student Handbook. (<http://www.msudenver.edu/socialwork/about/policiesandprocedures/>) or (<http://www.msudenver.edu/socialwork/msw/about/policiesprocedures/>)
 - For example: Students are expected to attend class.
- Interacting with students, staff, faculty, advisors, field supervisors, and clients in a professional manner.
 - For example: Students are expected to address problems with others in a constructive manner and to consider, accept, and implement feedback from faculty and instructors that is intended to help with their professional development.

Serious vs. Non-serious Concerns

When an advisor, instructor, or supervisor notes a concern regarding a student's professional conduct or behavior, the course of action will generally be a consultation with the student. However, this will depend upon the seriousness of the issue. Serious issues, as determined by the advisor in consultation with the appropriate Program Director, may result in immediate suspension from the program and referred to the University's Conduct Officer (please see the University's Code of Conflict).

When a concern is raised regarding a student's professional conduct or behavior, the course of action is dependent upon the seriousness of the concern.

Serious concerns

Serious concerns are those that threaten, cause, or have the potential to cause physical, psychological or emotional harm to others. Many serious concerns violate University, program, or agency policy or violate

the Social Work Code of Ethics. Serious concerns include, but are not limited to: assault of a supervisor, faculty, client, or student; sexual contact with a client; and, intoxication at work. Serious concerns, as determined by a faculty member or advisor in consultation with the Program Director, may result in immediate suspension from the program and referral to the University's Conduct Officer.

Non-serious concerns

Concerns that are not deemed serious by the advisor and Program Director, (see above), will be handled so that the student has an opportunity to address and correct the noted concern. The term non-serious is used not to minimize the nature of the concern, but rather to differentiate it from those that result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Non-serious concerns are those that do not bring real or potential harm to self or others as stated above in the section on serious concerns. While non-serious concerns include acts that may be in violation of the Social Work Code of Ethics or written University, program, department, or agency policies, they are not necessarily proscribed by the aforementioned policies and standards. These concerns include, but are not limited to, difficulties in interacting with a peer, staff, faculty, or agency colleagues; repeated class tardiness or unexcused absences; behavior or conduct that disrupts interaction or learning in the classroom; and, acts of academic dishonesty. Again, the term non-serious applies only to distinguish such concerns from those that result in immediate dismissal from the program, not as an indication that such conduct is deemed acceptable.

Notification

If, at any stage of the process (Level One, Level Two, Level Three or Level Four), the advisor or other program representative is unable to arrange a meeting with a student, notice (e.g., note of concern; remediation plan; Performance Review letter, etc.) will be sent to the student in writing to the student's MSU-Denver email address and will serve as the official notice and status for the student.

Domains/Standards/Areas of Concern

The following are additional clarification and expansion of those areas in the **Department of Social Work Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior** that each student signs upon admission to the department. This is not meant as a full and exhaustive expansion, but is designed to provide the student and faculty member with greater guidance as to the standards of the department in the primary domains of professional practice.

Domain	Standard	Indicators of Concern
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and organizes work effectively Turns in assignments complete and on time Makes arrangements for his/her special needs Attends class regularly 	<p>Appears to demonstrate a <i>pattern</i> of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor organizational skills Requests for extensions on assignments and exams Turning in assignments late or incomplete Multiple absences from class per class syllabus Multiple absences from field placement

Domain	Standard	Indicators of Concern
Conduct/Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates ability to work cooperatively with others Actively participates in class discussion groups/role plays Shows respect for others' opinions Is open to feedback from peers/faculty Demonstrates a willingness to understand diversity in people regarding race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political orientation, sexual orientation, and populations at risk Conducts him/herself according to the values and ethics of the profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears to create conflict in class, which impedes learning and/or building effective relationships Uncooperative/unwilling to participate in class activities Consistently late for class, or leaves class early Consistently late for field placement Sleeps during class periods Disrupts class process by talking to others Uses derogatory language or demeaning remarks Appears unwilling/unable to accept feedback Monopolizes class discussions Consistently complains about class workload to the point of impeding class process Unwilling/unable to develop an understand of people different from oneself

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminatory behavior or harassment towards others on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, etc. • Unethical professional behavior • Academic misconduct • Illegal behavior that impedes performance in field or class • Unattended to personal issues that impede performance in class or field • Acts or threats of violence to self or others
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Domain	Standard	Indicators of Concern
<i>Emotional Self-Awareness (Self-Understanding)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses self-disclosure appropriately • Appears to be able to handle discussion of uncomfortable topics • Deals appropriately in class with issues which arouse emotions • Demonstrates an awareness of one's personal limits • Understands the effect of one's behavior on others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When engaged in self-disclosure, the student appears to be working through unresolved issues. The student appears to overreact to, or resent feedback (e.g., takes it personally) • Appears unable/unwilling to control emotional reactions • Verbal threats directed at clients, faculty, staff, or students • Demonstrates poor judgement, decision-making, or problem solving skills • Consistent failure to demonstrate ability to form effective client/social worker relationship (e.g., shows judgmental attitude)

Domain	Standard	Indicators of Concern
<i>Communication Skills (Written)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows consistency in written communication • Written assignments demonstrate: good spelling, appropriate use of punctuation, clear structure and paragraphing, good organization, follows logical sequence. • Demonstrates ability to use citations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written works are frequently vague, shows difficulty in expressing ideas clearly and concisely and lacks critical analysis • Written work does not follow the assignment as designated by the instructor • Student's written work has errors in the areas of spelling, punctuation,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates ability to write effectively in records • Shows command of the English language • Abides by University standards • Demonstrates use of critical thinking skills 	structure, etc., and does not seek supports to improve
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Domain	Standard	Indicators of Concern
<i>Communication Skills (Verbal)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to clearly articulate ideas, thoughts, concepts, etc. • Has the ability to communicate clearly • Has working proficiency of the English language even when English is not the student's primary language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears to have difficulty expressing him/herself when speaking • Difficulty communicating so that others can hear or understand • Lacks a working proficiency of the English language when communicating