



Student Support and Performance Process

The primary focus of the Department of Social Work at Metropolitan State University of Denver is the successful education and development of our students. As professional and accredited educational programs it is critical that we all adhere to the standards, ethics, and values of the Social Work profession. We also recognize that there are times in each person's life when meeting academic and professional standards may be difficult. The *Student Support and Performance Process* is designed to support students in being successful while maintaining programmatic and professional standards. For further description about our professional and academic standards please see our [Standards of Ethical and Professional Behavior](#) (See Appendix 1), [NASW Code of Ethics](#), [CSWE](#), [BSSW Student Handbook](#), [MSW Student Handbook](#), and the [Field Student Support Process](#) (see Appendix 2). Students who have applied to the MSW or BSSW Program have affirmed that they will adhere to the *Standards of Ethical and Professional Behavior* as part of the applications process, although we proactively engage in the *Student Support and Performance Process* with all potential and current social work students. Depending on the circumstances, a referral to higher or alternative processes of support is possible at any point in the process. Results of the *Student Performance Review* may include modifications to the student's plan of study and/or dismissal from the program. For concerns specifically related to performance in a field agency, students will follow the parallel *Field Student Support Process*, which can be found in the [Field Manual](#).

The Department of Social Work is committed to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice. The *Student Support and Performance Process* can be used to provide support for navigating issues related to diversity, equity, belonging, and/or inclusion, such as microaggressions or dynamics of structural oppression. An intersectional framework to understanding identity and power dynamics will be applied throughout this process, with special sensitivity if/when those involved identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) and/or other marginalized identities. Further detail is included subsequently in this document about *how* we seek to engage in anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice throughout this process.

This process is intended to proactively address issues that may create obstacles to student success during any part of their academic program. Students, faculty, and staff are always entitled to utilize University policy and procedure to address their concerns. However, this process is offered to allow for students and faculty to address concerns in a way that supports a quick resolution and options for a minimally invasive approach. As the process continues or involves additional people, it may require additional time for resolution. This process is designed to provide opportunities for early, timely, and direct resolution of conflicts, congruent with our department mission and professional standards. This policy does not prevent students or Department members from pursuing alternative University supports or processes as needed; at times University policies may supersede the processes detailed here. This process is intended to work collaboratively with other University support systems and processes, not to replace existing other University policies and practices. (More information about these alternative processes are included following the discussion of the support process.)

Glossary

The following glossary provides definitions for key terms and processes utilized in the Student Support and Performance Process.

Academic Alerts: This support is provided to students by the OSWSS professional advisors when advisors identify a potential area of concern in the student's academic progression as noted through final grades and/or course registration and completion.

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.

Academic Progression: This an assessment of your academic performance at the end of each semester and is assessed by the OSWSS professional advisors.

Additional Attendees: Depending on the situation, it may be helpful to invite additional attendees to any level of the Student Support and Performance Process. Any member (e.g., student, faculty or staff) may request to have persons with specific knowledge about their situation included in the meeting. Meeting attendees should be established prior to the meeting and all involved parties will be notified. (Level 4 meeting attendees must be approved by the Performance Review Committee Chair.) For instance, if the student is receiving services from the ACCESS Center, the student's ACCESS 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. Additional attendees may also be helpful to support students in navigating issues related to diversity, equity, belonging, and/or inclusion, such as microaggressions or dynamics of structural oppression. In these circumstances the following additional steps may be taken:

- Faculty/staff will consult with the Social Work Department's Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This consultation may occur at any/all of the four levels.
- The Social Work Department's Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion may reach out to offer optional additional support to the student; it is the student's choice whether or not to accept the additional support.
- The student may wish to invite an additional support person throughout the process (e.g., a BIPOC or LGBTQ+ identified faculty member).

Appeal Process: Should the student disagree with the results of the Student Performance Review, they may follow the [University Appeal Process](#). The first step in this process is to appeal to the Chair of the Department. If the student disagrees with the outcome determined by the Chair of the Department, they may appeal to the Dean of the College of Health and Applied Sciences. Students may also follow this process if they have concerns about lower levels of intervention (Levels one, two, or three), or preferably (before engaging in this higher-level intervention), they could first meet with their respective Program Director (MSW or BSSW) to discuss their concerns.

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. 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.

Faculty Advisor: Every student in the BSSW and MSW Program is assigned a faculty advisor. Your faculty advisor can provide a range of professional mentorship and support and is ideally situated to provide support to students in developing a professional identity and navigating their academic program.

Field Student Support Process: This process is intended to support students navigating challenges in their field placement and primarily involves members of the Office of Field Education to support students in resolving these issues.

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 Plan, 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.

Performance Plan: This plan is created in collaboration with students to proactively address issues that may be emerging for students. The Performance Plan will be shared with the student via University email, and may include, but is 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 Performance Plan includes a specific timeline associated with these activities, and the completion of the Performance Plan will be monitored by the faculty advisor or designee, the appropriate Program Director and the OSWSS.

Professional Advisor: In the Department of Social Work, we have our own advising team that is housed in our Office of Social Work Student Services (OSWSS). Your professional advisor will be assigned to you based on the program you are enrolled in (BSSW or MSW) and are ideally situated to help you navigate your academic and course planning process, as well as overall navigation of MSU Denver (e.g., financial aid or other student support services).

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>)
- Metropolitan State University-Denver Policies as outlined in the student catalog (<http://www.msudenver.edu/academics/catalog/>)
- Metropolitan State University of Denver BSSW or MSW Program policies as outlined in the BSSW 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/>)
- 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.

SSC Navigate Alerts: This tool is available to faculty to share information about a student's status or progress in class. This tool is helpful to simply let someone know that a student is struggling academically in class and/or not attending. It is helpful for us to know this information so that we can proactively support student success, so faculty are encouraged to utilize this tool without hesitation. To initiate an alert, please use the tool within Navigate. Alternatively, faculty may email bssw@msudenver.edu for BSSW students and maw@msudenver.edu to alert advisors. When Office of Social Work Student Services (OSWSS) professional advisors receive these alerts, they are able to quickly put the concern in context and determine the appropriate next steps.

Student Support and Performance Process: This process is intended to support students navigating challenges in their academic coursework (and if additional support is needed, field experiences) and primarily involves members of the faculty, staff, and Program Directors in resolving these issues.

Student Support Review (SSR): Faculty or staff can initiate this process to support students who may be struggling in more than one course. When faced with these situations we utilize the Student Support Review (SSR). The SSR is a collaboration between the student's faculty advisor and the student's professional advisor to collect more information about the student's progress overall. To request an SSR, please email bssw@msudenver.edu for BSSW students and maw@msudenver.edu for MSW students. The student's faculty and professional advisors will work as a team to collect information and follow up to support student success.

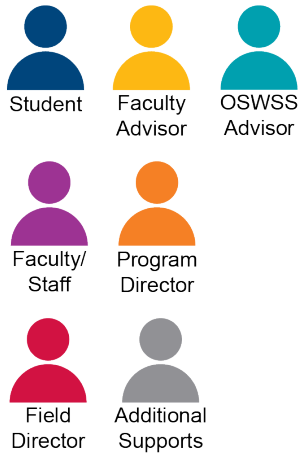
Student Support and Performance Process Overview



The Student Support and Performance Process is designed to utilize your support team to provide guidance, problem solving, and assistance during your time in the Department of Social Work.

Possible Outcomes

Key:



Level Four: Reassess
Academic Performance Review from the Office of Social Work Student Services *or* Departmental Student Performance Review

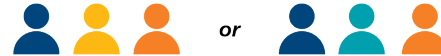


Revised Academic Plan
If the plan is followed, move back to Good Standing

Written Performance Plan
If the plan is followed, move back to Good Standing

Program Dismissal
Our goal is always to provide support, however in certain situations circumstances do lead to programmatic dismissal

Level Three: Taking a New Approach
Meeting between student, advisor, and BSSW/MSW Program Director

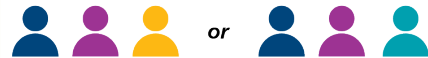


Resolution of Issue *or* Written Performance Plan
If the issue is resolved or the plan is followed, move back to Good Standing

Move Back to Level One or Two for further discussion

Escalation to Level Four

Level Two: Mediation with a New Perspective
Meeting between student, instructor/staff member, and advisor



Resolution of Issue
Move back to Good Standing

Move Back to Level One for further discussion

Escalation to Level Three or Four

Level One: Talk it Out
Meeting between student and instructor/staff member



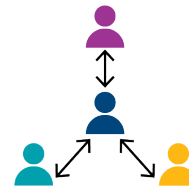
Resolution of Issue
Move back to Good Standing

Escalation to Level Two, Three, or Four

Good Standing

Students who are in good standing should utilize their support team to remain on track.

Students who are in good standing may escalate through the Student Support and Performance Process when issues arise, either step-by-step or jumping up to a higher level of support if needed.



Graduation

Our commitment to students is to help them navigate their degree so they can graduate and enter the profession as social work colleagues.

First Level of Student Support—Meeting between student and instructor/staff member

The first level of student support offered to all students is direct communication with an instructor/staff member. Through discussion and interaction that are a normal and typical part of the class, field, and advising process, instructors/staff members 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 struggling to meet the course expectations and/or program, departmental or university standards, such as those expressed in the *Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior* and the *MSW/BSSW Student or Field Handbooks*. Early use of instructor/staff support helps to ensure that students will receive the support needed to 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. Faculty supporting students with this level of intervention may also benefit from utilizing a SSC Navigate alert or Student Support Review (SSR), as described in the glossary, to provide additional support for students. Faculty may also wish to engage in other supportive University processes (e.g., CARE referral) which are described at the conclusion of this document.

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

If a student is not receiving enough support through the first level of support, or an instructor, or other staff/faculty member believes that the support provided at the first level is not sufficient, a request for the second level of support can be utilized. The second level of support involves the student, instructor and faculty or professional advisor in a discussion and problem-solving process to explore additional support and steps that might be required. (The determination about which type of advisor may be involved will be made based on factors such as the relationship between the student and the advisor and the type of issues being discussed. Advisors and students can consult with one another to help make this decision.) If the instructor bringing the concern is also the faculty advisor, an alternative faculty member will be identified by the Program Director to fulfill the role of advisor. The role of the advisor is to help facilitate clear communication between the instructor and the student and to brainstorm solutions for success. The advisor may also 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. This may include the development of a written Performance Plan for the student. Faculty supporting students with this level of intervention may also benefit from utilizing a SSC Navigate Alert or Student Support Review (SSR), as described in the glossary, to provide additional support for students. Faculty may also wish to engage in other supportive University processes (e.g., CARE referral) which are described at the conclusion of this document.

The outcomes of this support process should be documented by the instructor/staff member within one week of the meeting, who will send an email to the student's university email address and to the faculty advisor, the OSWSS Director, and the appropriate Program Director (MSW or BSSW). The faculty advisor (or designee) will monitor the Performance Plan and consult with the appropriate Program Director (MSW or BSSW), Director of Field Education, and Director of OSWSS to resolve the Performance Plan.

Unsuccessful completion of the Performance Plan may elevate the concern to a Level 3 or 4 Student Support and/or Performance Review.

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

If a student is not finding enough support through the first and second levels of support or an instructor or other faculty/staff members believe that the support provided at the first or second level does not resolve the concerns, any 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/staff member may also be included. As in Level 2, if the instructor 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 advisor. (The determination about which type of advisor may be involved will be made based on factors such as the relationship between the student and the advisor and the type of issues being discussed. Advisors and students can consult with one another to help make this decision.) The goal of the meeting is to discuss and seek solutions regarding 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 referral to the University discipline procedures. This will likely involve the development of a written Performance Plan for the student. Faculty supporting students with this level of intervention may also benefit from utilizing a SSC Navigate Alert or Student Support Review (SSR), as described in the glossary, to provide additional support for students. Faculty may also wish to engage in other supportive University processes (e.g., CARE referral) which are described at the conclusion of this document.

In a Level 3 meeting, the advisor consults with the referring party (e.g., instructor, student) gathering necessary information about the situation(s). The Level 3 meeting addresses: 1) the factors that may have contributed to the current situation, 2) the changes or adjustments that are needed, 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, advisor and student will determine changes that are needed as well as support plans to ensure success (if necessary). If a Performance Plan is deemed appropriate, the terms of this notice will 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 outcomes of this support process should be documented by the advisor within one week of the meeting, who will send an email to the student's university email address and to the faculty advisor, the OSWSS Director, and the appropriate Program Director (MSW or BSSW). The faculty advisor (or designee) will monitor the Performance Plan and consult with the appropriate Program Director (MSW or BSSW), Director of Field Education, and Director of OSWSS to resolve the Performance Plan.

Unsuccessful completion of the Performance Plan may elevate the concern to a Level 4 Student Performance Review.

Fourth Level—Student Performance Review

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

1. *Automatic Academic Performance Reviews* are initiated when a student's grade(s) or academic performance/progression are of concern and/or are out of compliance with academic policy.
 - [BSSW Student Policies](#)
 - [MSW Student Policies](#)

Automatic Academic Performance Reviews have varying outcomes depending on the situation. These include a notice of academic alert, academic probation, or dismissal from the Program. Whenever possible, a resolution/support plan is put in place that outlines a required plan of action for the student to complete to regain good academic standing. When a resolution/support plan is not possible, the student may be dismissed from the BSSW/MSW Program or required to engage in the Student Performance Review process.

[The Office of Social Work Student Services \(OSWSS\)](#) team facilitates the Automatic Academic Performance Review process. Reviews and subsequent communication typically occur between semesters. The student's faculty advisor, respective Program Director, and OSWSS Director are copied on notices of academic probation. Dismissal notices will be sent by the Chair of the Department of Social Work and the OSWSS Director, respective Program Director, and faculty advisor will be copied. Students are assigned an OSWSS advisor and may direct any questions or concerns to their advisor, the Associate Director of Student Services, or the Director of the Office of Social Work Student Services, Operations, and Finance.

2. *Student Performance Reviews* are used to evaluate a student's standing in the program. Student Performance Reviews may result when issues are unresolved at lower levels of support. These reviews are usually the result of a recommendation of the Advisor or Program Director. Issues that can result in a Student Performance Review include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Behaviors are not matched to those of the social work profession and social work practice.
 - The student is not demonstrating the ability to provide quality services to clients, accept supervision, or develop a professional demeanor.
 - 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 their field experience practicum or course (e.g., a violation of professional practice or other expressly articulated violation of agency or University policy).

In certain cases, the gravity of a concern may elevate an issue to a Student Performance Review without having gone through previous levels of review. Examples of the types of behavior that may escalate to a Student Performance Review include the following:

- The student's behavior or interactions raise concerns about their 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, their 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).
- For MSW students, allegations of Academic Dishonesty.

Student Performance Review Process:

If the situation requires a 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 determination as to a plan of action. Results of the Student Performance Review may include modifications to the student's plan of study, requirement to meet with a faculty advisor on a regular basis, requirement to develop a learning plan around issues presented, and/or dismissal from the program.

The Student Performance Review Committee will consist of three voting members- a committee chair and two additional members. 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 by the Committee Chair to serve in their place.) The Program 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 may secure additional information from any and all instructors regarding the student's performance in their courses, in their field placement, and evaluations from the Office of Social Work Student Services about the overall academic status of the student.

As with other levels of review, additional attendees may be invited to attend to share additional information about the situation. 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. 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. For the meeting, the Student Performance Review Committee chair may also request the presence of the Dean from the College of Health and Applied Sciences, or their designee, or other faculty or staff from the university as deemed necessary.

The Student Performance Review meeting agenda will involve:

1. Information Sharing and Discussion
 - Review of facts which led to Student Performance Review – Chair of Performance Review Committee or designee (e.g., Director of Field Education).

- Presentation of additional background information about situation by additional attendees, as needed.
- Presentation of information and reflection from student.
- Discussion of the situation, including possibilities for resolution, strategies for support, discussion of accountability, and opportunities for professional development. Discussion will also involve reflective questions such as,
 - What are lessons learned and/or key takeaways for your growth?
 - What skills and strengths did you demonstrate?
 - What might you (or others) have done differently?
 - In considering your part in what happened, what are you able to take accountability for?
 - What would you do differently if this happened again in the future?
 - What supports might be helpful to ensure your success moving forward?
 - What does repair and resolution mean in this situation?
 - What thoughts and hopes do you have for the next chapter of your educational journey?

2. Deliberation and Action

- For this part of the meeting, the student will be released from the meeting and members of the Student Performance Review Committee will deliberate about next steps. Additional attendees may be included in the deliberations, but only the members of the Student Performance Review Committee will vote. Deliberations may include the factors and information regarding the student's present and past performance, the options to address the performance problem(s), consideration of the student's level of responsibility and accountability for the issue(s), and feasibility of a Performance Plan, including resource capacity and the student's potential to meet the terms. A majority vote from the Performance Review Committee will determine the outcome.

By way of follow up from the Student Performance Review, the Performance Review Committee Chair will produce a decision letter that describes the nature of the performance problem and the committee's decision about next steps. This decision letter may also include a Performance Plan, that documents the requirements that the committee has delineated to support the student in moving forward with their educational pursuits. Within one week after the Student Performance Review meeting, the committee Chair will forward the decision letter, using the student's official MSU Denver email to notify the student, the student's faculty advisor or designee, all committee members, the Chair of the Social Work Department, and the Office of Social Work Student Services. The Performance Plan will dictate a plan of action for the student as well as timeline for these activities. If a Performance Plan has been offered to the student, it will also delineate who the student will be working with as a primary source of support as they work to resolve the Performance Plan (e.g., faculty advisor, BSSW/MSW Program Director). The faculty advisor (or designee) will monitor the Performance Plan and consult with the appropriate Program Director (MSW or BSSW), Director of Field Education, and Director of OSWSS to resolve the Performance Plan.

Unsuccessful completion of the Performance Plan may require additional intervention as recommended by the Performance Review Committee. Specific expectations and timelines for completion are described in the Performance Plans.

Additional Support Tools and Resources: Within and External to the Department of Social Work

The Student Support and Performance process exists to support students resolving barriers to success quickly and within the Department of Social Work whenever possible. However, there are many other supports also available. This is not an exhaustive list, but some of the supports that MSU Denver also offers that may be especially helpful for the types of barriers often encountered within the Department of Social Work. In general, the student support process involves fewer people, is contained within the Department of Social Work, and is designed to address issues that are academic or professional in nature, whereas services stemming from other University offices may or may not be academic or professional in nature and are resolved with additional MSU Denver personnel, and not solely within the Department of Social Work. It is our intention to communicate early and often and to resolve issues quickly at the lowest level of support as they arise.

Ways faculty/staff can support students:

SSC Navigate Alerting/Reporting

SSC Navigate: faculty can use this system to flag many types of concerns. The OSWSS advisor is alerted to all SSC Navigate flags as an open case. This helps alert the university of academic struggle and could also trigger additional support for academic success.

- SSC Campus Early Alerts
- SSC Campus Attendance Alerts
- SSC Campus Progress Reports
- Contacting OSWSS Advisor

Investigating/Researching/Collaborating

- Student Support Review (SSR)/Progress Reports

Dean of Student's Office-

- Students at MSU Denver are expected to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct. If a reporting party believes that a student is in violation of this code, that individual may file an [incident report](#). If this occurs, the concern would be handled by the Dean of Student's Office as the lead organizing entity, in partnership with the Department of Social Work whereas the Student Support Process is a Department of Social Work-led process.
- In the case of academic misconduct, the reporting party has the option of filing an academic misconduct report. If this occurs, the concern would be handled by the Dean of Student's Office as the lead organizing entity, in partnership with the Department of Social Work.
- If the reporting party is concerned about the well-being of a student, then a [CARE report](#) may also be filed. The CARE team responds within one business day and can address academic and non-academic issues that affect student performance. If this occurs, the concern would be handled by the Dean of Student's Office as the lead organizing entity, in partnership with the Department of Social Work.

Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver, the University) is committed to maintaining environments that are welcoming, safe, and accessible, where all students, staff, faculty, visitors, guests, vendors, contractors, and others can study, work, and/or recreate free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, consistent with University policies, and relevant State and Federal Law. Allegations of discrimination should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 303-615-0036, Student Services Building, 306. Complaints about student conduct and concerns about student

welfare also may be submitted to the Dean of Students. Allegations of sexual or interpersonal violence shall not be subject to informal resolution. Alternatively, you may also call the Dean of Students Office at office at 303-615-0220 or file a report online by visiting <https://www.msudenver.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/>

Resources students can access without faculty/staff intervention:

- Center for Multicultural Excellence and Inclusion cmei@msudenver.edu
- MSU Denver students also have access to the [Counseling Center](#), which offers free and confidential mental health assistance. Call 303-615-9988 or visit the Counseling Center [website](#) to arrange a remote appointment.
- [Center for Equity and Student Achievement](#) (CESA)

For a more comprehensive list of additional resources that may be helpful to students, please also refer to the Student Handbook.

Department of Social Work Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior

The Department of Social Work at the Metropolitan State University of Denver is mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSW E) to foster and evaluate professional behavioral development for all students in the social work program. The Department of Social Work also bears a responsibility to the community at large to produce fully trained professional social workers who consciously exhibit the competences, values, and skills of the profession of social work. The values of the profession are codified in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and the Council on Social Work Education has nine core educational competencies that social workers must master (NASW, 2017). Given this context, the Social Work Department has identified behaviors for the social work student to exhibit in the classroom, the online classroom, the field placement, in the Social Work office, through email/phone conversations, and any other interaction in a professional/academic setting. This document does not include the complete NASW Code of Ethics or the CSWE Educational Policies, however it highlights particular ethics and competencies to serve as a framework of professional and ethical behaviors to abide by while a social work student at MSU Denver. Other aspects of the NASW Code of Ethics or the CSW E Educational Policies are evaluated academically throughout the program's curriculum.

Social Work Values

Diversity

Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power (CSWE, EPAS 2, 2015).

Social Work students:

- Demonstrate sensitivity to and respect for human diversity, with ability to relate to people who are different from oneself and a basic capacity for nonjudgmental behavior toward individuals whose values, beliefs, life experiences, and culture may be different from the student's own.
- Strive to become more open to people, ideas, and creeds that you are not familiar with and embrace diversity.
- Maintain speech free of racism, sexism, heterosexism, or stereotyping.
- Are aware of and open to understanding one's own potential for microaggressions and implicit bias.
- Exhibit a willingness to serve diverse groups of persons. Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Student Code of Conduct.

- Develop self-awareness of their own salient identities and how these identities influence their own experiences of power, privilege, and oppression.

Social Justice

Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected (CSWE, EPAS 3, 2015).

Social Work students:

- Strive to deepen commitment to social justice for all marginalized and vulnerable populations.
- Strive to deepen understanding of how institutional and personal oppression impede the experience of social justice for individuals and groups.
- Strive to learn about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Student Code of Conduct.

Respect

Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession (NASW, Ethical Principles, 2017).

Social Work students:

- Treat all student peers, instructors, field agency professionals, clients, and staff with dignity and respect at all times.
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to others.
- Give feedback to student peers in a constructive and non-judgmental manner.
- Approach conflict with student peers, your instructors and professionals in academia and in the field in a cooperative and solution-seeking manner.
- Use positive and nonjudgmental language with student peers, instructors, field agency professionals, clients, staff and otherwise.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Student Code of Conduct.

Integrity

Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated (NASW, Ethical Principles, 2017).

Social Work students:

- Comport themselves in a professional and respectful manner while in class, online, field placement, workshops or other learning environments by exhibiting behaviors such as: being respectful, mature and attentive. Avoid sleeping in class, using cell phones, passing notes, and the non-academic use of computers.
- Avoid academic dishonesty.
Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Plagiarism: the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without fully and properly crediting the author with footnotes, citations or bibliographical reference; unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials; or unacknowledged use of original work/material that has been produced through collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.
- Use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations;
- Dependence upon the aid of unauthorized sources in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
- Acquisition or possession without permission of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff;
- In any way giving assistance to others who are participating in any of the preceding types of behavior; or
- Falsifying attendance records or other official documents.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Denver Student Code of Conduct

Professional Competencies

In addition to the academic competencies outlined in each course syllabi, the social work student is expected to be thoughtful and professional when interacting and communicating in a professional or academic setting including face-to-face and online communications. This expectation extends to other members of the community whenever the student's behavior may influence the perception of others about the profession of social work or MSU Denver.

Professionalism

Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal

experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. (CSWE, EPAS 1, 2015).

Social Work students:

- Respond to constructive feedback through acknowledgment and by appropriate modification of behavior.
- Apply themselves in all academic and field-related pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, meeting all deadlines as given by instructors, field supervisors and administration.
- Come to class and/or online discussion prepared and ready to participate and engage. (Examples include: coming to class or participating in discussion online having completed all required readings and assignments.)
- Seek out appropriate support when having difficulties to ensure success in completing Social Work Program requirements.
- Take responsibility for one's own education by utilizing tools such as advisors, faculty, and administration after having read the catalog, website, course materials and other program materials to educate oneself on minimum requirements, policies and procedures. Utilize systems of support as implemented by the university and department in the correct order (i.e., students with an issue in the classroom should first talk with their instructor, then assigned advisor, then program director, and escalate only when needed).
- Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal issues that may impede your effectiveness with clients.
- Have ability sufficient to perform essential classroom and field-related activities. Provide documentation of reasonable requested accommodations from the MSU ACCESS Center.
- Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed. Accept and benefit from constructive feedback.
- Display a significant measure of self-awareness such that others' problems are not viewed through the prism of one's own experience.
- Understand how their online activity and presence impacts their professional reputation, the reputation of MSU Denver, and the organizations with whom they are associated.
- Properly represent oneself as a student intern in field settings and engage in ongoing supervision to ensure development and maintenance of professional behaviors. Follow all field agency policies/protocols.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Student Code of Conduct.

Professional Skill: Accountability

Social Work students:

- Attend class and field placement (face-to-face and online), arrive on time, and return from break in a timely manner (punctuality).
- Participate in group activities and assignments at a comparable level to student peers. Complete work in a timely fashion and according to directions provided.

- Come to class prepared, with readings and other homework completed.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Student Code of Conduct.
- Adhere to the Social Work Department Attendance Policy.

Professional Skill: Communication

Social Work students:

- Strive to practice most effective verbal and written communication skills both face-to-face, through the use of technology, and/or online as these skills are used heavily in interactions with clients and peers and also with creating client records.
- Demonstrates interpersonal skills including the ability to establish rapport and work well with others (fellow students, faculty, staff, supervisors, etc.) These include compassion, altruism, integrity and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others.
- Practice positive, constructive, respectful and professional communications skills with student peers, clients, supervisors and instructors (i.e., body language, empathy, and listening).
- Have sufficient skills in spoken and written English to understand the content presented in the program.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Student Code of Conduct.

Professional Skill: Confidentiality

Social Work students:

- Guard any personal information that you gain about a peer or an instructor in face-to-face, online, or other environments, as strictly confidential. Maintain confidentiality on any information shared in face-to-face or online class, dyads or smaller groups within that except for instances where others report intent to harm self and/or others; abuse and/or neglect; or other mandated reporting circumstances.
- Know Colorado Mandated Reporting Laws and follow appropriate protocols. Seek supervision or support from an appropriate supervisor, advisor or instructor if you are unclear of proper protocol.
- Use judgment in self-disclosing information of a very personal nature in face-to-face and/or online classroom environments or student groups. (Class time should not be used as therapy or treatment. If students feel the need to talk about issues they are struggling with on a non-professional level, they may consult with their instructor to receive a referral for counseling.)
- Never use names of clients or disclose other identifying information in or outside the classroom, online, or in student groups.
- Understand the benefits and risks of technology use in protecting clients and/or confidential information.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Student Code of Conduct.

Professional Ethics

Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context; use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations; demonstrate professional demeanor in

behavior, appearance, oral, written, and electronic communication; use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior. (CSW E, EPAS 1, 2015).

Social Work students:

- Will not use alcohol or drugs in ways that impair his/her/their ability to perform the work of the profession, or that results in compromised client care. It is the responsibility of every social work student to strive to protect the public from an impaired colleague and to assist that colleague whose capability is impaired because of alcohol or drug use.
- Shall seek consultation and supervision whenever their ability to care for the client or provide adequate services to the field placement agency is inadequate because of lack of knowledge, experience, or ability.
- Shall understand how his/her/their values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect his/her/their thinking, behavior and relationships. The student must be willing to examine and change his/her/their behavior when it interferes with his/her/their working with clients and other professionals and must be able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as those in authority.
- Avoid violation of the MSU Student Code of Conduct.

Actions contrary to the Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior will result in corrective action in a variety of ways. Examples may include: through classroom assignment feedback, advising sessions, written documentation of the event and/or engaging in the student problem resolution process.

The Department of Social Work reserves the right to terminate a student's participation in the program on the basis of professional non-suitability if the Department determines that a student's behavior has constituted a significant violation or pattern of violations of any of the Department of Social Work Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior listed in this document. In such cases, a Performance Review will be initiated. See the department's website at www.msudenver.edu/socialwork for Performance Review procedures.

All students enrolled in social work courses are automatically held to the standards outlined in this document.

Field Student Support Process

The Office of Field Education is committed to ensuring that students are placed in quality learning environments in order to complete their field experience. However, there may be times in which unexpected challenges arise. It is best that these issues are addressed openly and immediately. Issues may be brought forth by the Student, Agency Field Instructor/Task Supervisor (Agency Supervisors), Faculty Field Liaison, or Office of Field Education. In any circumstance, the following steps should be taken. It should 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 concern warrant.

The Office of Field Education is committed to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice (see full statement in the official Field Manual). This Field Support Process is used to provide support for navigating field placement issues related to diversity, equity, belonging, and/or inclusion, such as microaggressions or dynamics of structural oppression. An intersectional framework to understanding identity and power dynamics will be applied throughout this process, with special sensitivity if/when those involved identify as BIPOC and/or other marginalized identities. In these circumstances the following additional steps may be taken:

- The Office of Field Education will consult with the Social Work Department's Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This consultation may occur at any/all of the four levels.
- The Social Work Department's Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion may reach out to offer optional additional support to the student; it is the student's choice whether or not to accept the additional support.
- The student may be encouraged to invite an advocate (such as a BIPOC or LGBTQ faculty member or an ACCESS Center representative) as an additional support person throughout the process.

Metropolitan State University of Denver is committed to maintaining environments that are welcoming, safe, and accessible, where all students, staff, faculty, visitors, guests, vendors, contractors, and others can study, work, and/or recreate free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, consistent with University policies, and relevant State and Federal Law. Allegations of discrimination should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 303-615-0036, Student Services Building, 306. Complaints about student conduct and concerns about student welfare also may be submitted to the Dean of Students. Allegations of sexual or interpersonal violence shall not be subject to informal resolution. Alternatively, you may call the Dean of Students Office at office at 303-615-0220 or file a report online by visiting <https://www.msudenver.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/>.

PLEASE NOTE: The following four levels of the Field Support Process are intended to address issues that may present challenges to student success during an internship. Separately, the Social Work Department has a parallel process for all other issues not related to internship, such as classroom or academic issues. The departmental Student Support and Performance Review Process may be found online at <https://www.msudenver.edu/social-work/master-social-work/policies-and-procedures/>.

In both the Field Support Processes and Social Work Department Student Support and Performance Review Process, students are expected to demonstrate the [Social Work Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior](#).

First Level of Support: Supervision meeting between student and agency (Field Instructor/Task Supervisor)

In this conversation, usually but not always held during a regularly scheduled supervision meeting, any issue(s) will be clarified. The student and agency field supervisors will identify strategies (specific activities and/or steps) for improvement and expectations for change. The faculty field liaison may be contacted by either or both of the parties involved to discuss the best way to proceed prior to this meeting. The faculty field liaison must be notified by both the student and the agency field supervisors of the situation immediately after this meeting takes place so they can monitor the developments as appropriate.

In most cases, the issues can be resolved, and placement can continue. If the concern persists, then the following additional step must be taken.

Second Level of Support: Meeting between student, agency (Field Instructor/Task Supervisor), and Faculty Field Liaison (FFL)

At this step, the FFL is brought in for additional support. All parties will meet to discuss the specific issues at hand and explore additional support and steps that might be required. The FFL will consult individually with both the agency field supervisor(s) and the student prior to the meeting.

The goal of the meeting is to develop a plan for success in the field. It may outline modifications or additional tasks that need to be accomplished, and also may include a written contract.

The FFL will inform the Field Office of the conference and provide a copy of the written summary to the student, agency field instructor, and field office. This summary will be documented in the student file.

If the concerns continue to persist, then the issue may be elevated to the third level of support.

Third Level of Support: Field Placement Re-evaluation Conference

The third level of support involves a conference that includes:

- the student,
- the Faculty Field Liaison,
- a representative from the Office of Field Education (Assistant Director)

Additional individuals, including but not limited to the agency supervisor(s) and/or the student's faculty advisor, may be invited to attend as needed.

This conference will be coordinated and facilitated by the Assistant Director of Field Education. The goal of this meeting is to identify solutions to the challenges preventing success in the field placement. Prior to the meeting, the Assistant Director will conference individually with all parties and will gather information from relevant faculty and staff concerning the student's performance academically and professionally in all areas of the program.

At the level three meeting, the group will examine:

- The factors that may have contributed to the current situation
- The conduct or behavior that requires change or adjustment

- The available supports to address any noted issues
- The student's and agency's willingness to utilize supports and make necessary changes for improvement

These discussions will determine whether the student is able to continue in the current field placement. One of the following decisions may be made:

A. INTERNSHIP CONTINUES

The student and agency will work together to make the placement successful. A specific Performance Plan will be developed including specific goals to be met, dates for goals to be met, and dates for progress meetings. A timetable for successful completion and indicators of success will be outlined.

OR

B. INTERNSHIP ENDS

It is not suitable for the student to continue the current field placement. The student will work in collaboration with the Office of Field Education to determine next steps for completing the Field Experience course, including identifying an alternate field placement, if possible, and under what parameters this may occur (this can include the assignment of additional hours of field experience required). A specific Performance Plan may be created which would be a part of the new field placement.

OR

C. REFERRED TO LEVEL FOUR

The student must be terminated from the field placement and the Field Experience course. They will be referred for a Full Student Performance Review through the Social Work Department.

Fourth Level of Support: Full Student Performance Review

If the Performance Plan is not completed successfully, the student will be referred for a Full Student Performance Review. The procedures outlined in the [Social Work Department's Student Performance Process](#) will be followed.

Documentation

The outcomes of the Field Support Process, including any Performance Plan if necessary, shall be documented by sending an email to the student's university email address and to a representative from the Field Office (Faculty Field Liaison, Assistant Director and/or, Director) and any other relevant individuals who need to be informed. All written documentation will be saved in the student file.

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. Information related to the Field Support Process is to remain confidential and should be shared only with those persons involved with the student in an educational capacity.