

**OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES, STANDARDS, AND EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES
FOR STUDENTS IN THE DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK**

The seven items listed below act as philosophical guideposts designed to inform the Division of key elements of performance expectations that we hold important as a program.

1. Behave in an Ethical Manner

A student who behaves in an ethical manner undertakes to thoroughly understand and adhere to professional and personal codes of conduct that reflect an unyielding respect for self and others. This student acts in an ethical and principled manner not because it is expedient or self-serving but rather because to do so engenders, uplifts, and strengthens the inherent value and dignity of all peoples and because it is right in outcome and means.

2. Take Responsibility for Learning

A student who takes responsibility for learning demonstrates intellectual curiosity and initiative. This student understands the importance of regular, punctual attendance, is prepared to learn, sets learning goals, actively engages in learning tasks, uses available resources, evaluates own actions and works, and meets deadlines and due dates.

3. Think Critically

A student who thinks critically demonstrates willingness to question, patience to doubt, and readiness to reconsider. This student reflects on and evaluates information, details, evidence, and/or his or her own ideas and work in order to draw conclusions, solve problems, and/or conduct investigations.

4. Communicate Skillfully

A student who communicates skillfully writes and speaks in a clear, organized, and interesting manner. This student does so in both formal and informal situations and for a variety of audiences and purposes.

5. Collaborate Effectively

A student who collaborates effectively works with peers and/or mentors to produce something greater than he/she could accomplish individually. This student initiates their own involvement, helps lead groups to set and achieve goals, is an active learner, acknowledges contributions, and works towards solutions.

6. Produce Quality Work

A student who produces quality work exceeds the minimum requirements of tasks to create products or performances that reflect skill, creativity, sophistication, and scholarly achievement. This student gives attention to detail and, uses technology effectively to complete tasks, products and/or presentations.

7. Assumes Responsibility for Obstacles to Learning

A student, who assumes responsibility for obstacles to learning prioritizes the need to act on impediments and obstacles, seeks assistance early, as needed, and from appropriate sources, and strives to increase self-awareness about learning style and resources to maximize benefits from all learning experience.

**DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
STUDENT PERFORMANCE REVIEW STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

The expectations and standards students of professional versus non-professional degree programs are, at their core, similar yet different from each other. In professional programs the student is often thrust into course work concurrent with hands-on practice situations that have real impact on the lives of real people with real problems and needs. The expectations and standards of professional programs must therefore interweave scholarship with codes of ethical conduct and scientific rigor with professional competency. The Division of Social Work establishes chief among its goals in delivering a program of graduate and undergraduate education, the preparation of individuals committed to the knowledge, values, and skills of professional social work practice.

The establishment of and adherence to a clearly articulated set of programmatic goals and performance standards for the Division's students begins with a recognition that becoming a competent and well trained professional in social work is a gradual process. Functional standards of performance capitalize on strategies that uplift and do not focus on diminishing people. The Division believes that its program expectations and requirements promote redemptive not punitive interventions when success or progress toward success is not easily forthcoming.

This means that not all criteria are expected to be met at all times. Persons who teach and supervise students, along with program administrators, will assess student academic performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if standards are being met during a student's educational career. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the social work profession, combined with a professional's own experience and practice wisdom.

Framework for the Evaluation of Student Performance in the Social Work Program

The Division of Social Work employs the following evaluative framework to guide program faculty and administrators in their responsibility for carefully assessing and regularly monitoring students in the Division's programs regarding the student's ability to function effectively across a variety of professional situations including but not limited to the classroom, field placement, and other settings where the individual is operating as a social work student. There are currently four areas of student capacity, performance, and functioning, which are viewed as inexorably linked in determining if program standards are being achieved. *As an example scholastic ability is not sufficient onto itself as a determining criteria justifying continued enrollment in the program.* That is, all four areas, taken together and/or separately are subject to assessment at regular intervals to determine the appropriateness of a student's continued enrollment in the program. These four areas are:

- I. ABILITY TO ACQUIRE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**
- II. EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL ABILITIES**
- III. PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE SKILLS**
- IV. SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE**

I. ABILITY TO ACQUIRE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

A. Communication Skills

Demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.

Written Communication: Writes clearly, uses correct grammar and spelling, and applies appropriate writing style, including American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation. Demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and complete adequately all written assignments as specified by faculty. Written work must be mechanically and stylistically acceptable. Serious deficiencies in areas such as spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and coherent organization will result in lower grades. Students are encouraged to seek Division (tutoring) and University level (writing lab and course work) resources to improve academic skills such as writing and study. Plagiarism (claiming the work of someone else as your own) will result in a grade of FAIL.

1. Effective use of knowledge: the integration of concepts, theories, and information from readings, lectures, and seminar discussions.
2. The inclusion of personal points of view along with rationale, logic, and examples.
3. Organization: thesis as part of the introduction, smooth relationship between ideas and between paragraphs, and overall structure, integrative concluding section.
4. Clarity: understandability, good style and form.
5. Syntax, grammar, and spelling.
6. Timely completion and submission of all written assignments.

Oral Communication: Communicates effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals. Expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others. Demonstrates sufficient skills in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to complete adequately all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty and field placement agency.

B. Interpersonal Skills

Demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to meet or exceed the ethical obligations of the profession. These skills include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others. The student takes appropriate responsibility for own actions and considers the impact of their actions on others.

Effective learning demands active participation. Take risks even if the environment does not feel completely "safe." One will not meaningfully act in any environment if one does not take risks. In order to enhance feelings of safety, and to create a positive learning environment, the following must apply:

1. Attends the classes and is prompt.
2. Reads assigned course material.
3. Get their needs met by interacting with others and by raising their concerns and criticisms with the instructor. Completes all of one's work.

4. Takes personal ownership of expressions of bigotry. In other words, rather than attribute a negative characteristic to a social group or to a member of that group, one begins with, "this is how I have been taught to believe," or "I don't like to admit it but I do have the belief that..."
5. Commits to personal/professional growth and self-exploration and behaves in a non-violent manner.

C. Cognitive Skills

Exhibit sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and applies it to appropriate situations in classroom and field placement settings. Demonstrate a clear *grounded-ness* in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research - including knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice and self as practitioner. Exhibits ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and apply that knowledge across various settings the student must function in including but not limited to settings and transactions in the classroom, field placement, with faculty and other classmates.

D. Physical Skills

Exhibits sufficient motor and sensory abilities to regularly attend and actively participate in class and field placement with or without accommodations. (See section on Accommodations for Disabilities for clarification.)

II. EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL ABILITIES NECESSARY FOR PERFORMANCE IN THE PROGRAM AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

A. Stress Management

Demonstrates ability to recognize and deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. Handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive (appropriate) relationships with colleagues, peers, and others. Students are encouraged to seek Division (academic advisor) and University level (counseling center) resources to assess the best approach to better coping and adaptation.

B. Emotional and Mental Capacities

Uses sound judgment. Seeks and effectively uses help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. Students are encouraged to seek Division (academic advisor) and University level (counseling center) resources to assess the best approach to better coping and adaptation. Engages in counseling resources for self or seeks out support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties do any of the following:

- Compromise scholastic and other performance,
- Interfere with professional judgment and behavior, or
- Jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics which can be viewed online at <http://www.naswdc.org/>).

III. PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR WORK WITH CLIENTS AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

A. Professional Commitment

Exhibits a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics. Demonstrates commitment to the core principles and essential values of social work that includes the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her rights to a just share of society's resources (social justice).

B. Professional Behavior

Students are to exhibit behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, university policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in the classroom, university community, field and community at large. Appearance, dress, and general demeanor reflect a professional manner. Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.

Students are to work effectively with others, regardless of level of authority. Advocates for him/her self in an appropriate and responsible manner and uses proper channels for conflict resolution. Shows a willingness to receive and accept feedback and supervision in a positive manner, as well as use such feedback to enhance personal and professional development.

C. Self Awareness

Students are to exhibit knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs; emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others. Reflect on one's own limitations as they relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.

D. Ethical Obligations

Current behavior and classroom performance demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice, noted in the NASW Code of Ethics. Ethical behaviors include:

- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics.
- No history of convictions which are contrary to professional practice.
- Systematic evaluation of clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way. Suspension of personal biases during interactions with others.
- Comprehension of another individual's way of life and values. Empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.

- Appreciation of the value of diversity. Effective and nonjudgmental relation to and work with others who are different from oneself. Appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system. No imposition of personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on clients.
- Demonstration of respect for the rights of others. Commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination.
- Maintenance of confidentiality as it relates to human service, classroom activities, and field placement.
- Demonstration of honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences and qualifications; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.
- Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.

IV. SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE

By conferring at least once each semester (after, for example, the Registrar releases the semester Grade Report) with students to review and update the Educational Contract, the Faculty Advisor/Undergraduate or Graduate Program Director assures compliance with the academic regulations of the University.

A. Academic Standards (This is a brief summary of the policies as stated on pages 107-8 of the University Catalog)

While a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 is sufficient for admissions consideration, graduate students must earn and maintain at least a 3.0 GPA. Undergraduate students must maintain at least a 2.0 GPA.

- **Academic Probation** when cumulative GPA overall or at CSUS falls below 3.0 for graduate students and 2.0 for undergraduate students.
- **Continued Probation** when already on Academic Probation and the semester GPA continues to be less than 3.0 or 2.0 for undergraduate students.
- **Academic Disqualification** when already on Academic Probation and/or Continued Probation and the earned GPA falls nine or more grade points below 3.0 for graduate students, 8.9 points below 2.0 for juniors and 5.9 points below 2.0 for seniors.
- **Academic Disqualification** also occurs if a graduate student receives 3 or more "C" grades during the course of their graduate studies.
- **Academic Dismissal** occurs when an undergraduate student has been reinstated after disqualification but earns a semester GPA below 2.0 or fails to meet the requirements specified in the reinstatement contract. Academically dismissed undergraduate students are not eligible for readmission without at least one semester of absence from CSUS
- **Special Contract** is required for students reinstated immediately after academic disqualification or readmitted after a break in enrollment after having been disqualified at

the end of the previous enrollment. A student on this status is allowed to continue on a semester-by-semester basis with achievement reviewed at the end of each semester to determine if continued enrollment is appropriate.

B. Administrative-Academic Probation and Disqualification when students have:

1. Withdrawn (or fails to enroll) from all or a substantial portion of their courses in two successive semesters or in any three terms;
2. Repeatedly failed to progress toward a degree under circumstances within control of the student;
3. Failed to comply, after due notice, with an academic requirement(s) or regulation(s).

A student's academic status is determined by grade point average. Grade Point Average (GPA) is computed by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the number of units attempted, except that neither CR nor NC grades are included in the calculation. A GPA of 2.0 indicates a C average; a 3.0 indicates a B average; a 4.0 indicates an A average.

Students must report errors shown on the grade report form to the Office of Admissions and Records within three months after the semester ends if they wish to request corrections.

C. Indicators of Academic Performance

Indicators of academic performance in the Division of Social Work may include but are not limited to the following:

- Feedback or reference letters from faculty, work supervisors, or supervisors of volunteer human service activity or other field experiences.
- Feedback from agency-based or faculty field instructors.
- Observation of classroom, volunteer, or field behaviors.
- Performance in oral and written assignments, examinations, social work skills labs, or other appropriate coursework.
- Student personal statements or self-assessments.
- Interviews with faculty or other professionals.
- Taped interview situations (audio or video).
- Feedback from students, staff, university, helping professionals, or community.
- Feedback from faculty in other social work programs that students may have attended.
- Signed confidentiality statements, scholastic honesty statements, contract to adhere to NASW Code of Ethics, other contracts (performance and nonperformance-based contracts) between the Division and the student.

D. Accommodations for Disabilities

No student, otherwise qualified, shall, on the basis of disability, be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in the Division of Social Work. A student with a disability may be protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be eligible for a reasonable accommodation to provide equal opportunity to meet academic criteria for professional behavior and scholastic performance. It is the responsibility of any qualified student with a protected disability (NOT the Division or any of its faculty), requesting a reasonable accommodation, to notify the Services to Students with Disabilities office (online at <http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>) and provide documentation to all parties as needed. The Services to Students with Disabilities office makes recommendations for accommodations. The Division of Social Work will review

academic performance criteria in light of individual student circumstances to explore issues of appropriateness and reasonable accommodation. An initial assessment, subsequent plan, use of outside experts (including the Services to Students with Disabilities office), and periodic checks between the Division of Social Work and the student are appropriate courses of action in making reasonable accommodations.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCEDURES

It should be noted that student performance review procedures discussed here are subject to university rules, regulations, and procedures, therefore, circumstances and situations that warrant immediate suspension or dismissal of a student according to university policies or regulations will be followed.

Information disclosed during student meetings with program, agency or community based personnel if and when the information raises concerns about professional performance. Faculty and program administrators will share pertinent information with each other for the purpose of identifying student issues and in order to further enhance planning, interventive efforts and problem solving relative to potential performance concerns. Faculty and program administrators are obligated to follow university procedures related to responding to real or potential issues of student performance.

A. Performance Issues That May Result in a Student Review or Staffing

Student reviews can occur under any of the following circumstances:

- Failure to meet or maintain academic requirements as stated under Scholastic Performance
- Scholastic dishonesty, including cheating, lying, plagiarism, falsifying academic records, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student. (Faculty must adhere to university guidelines. For complete University policy and procedures, see California State University, Sacramento (See University Policy Manual or online at <http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/>) Academic Regulations, Plagiarism and Cheating.)
- Behavior judged to be in violation of the current NASW Code of Ethics
- Behavior judged to be in violation of the Student Discipline Code (See University Policy Manual or online at <http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/>)
- Any threat or attempt to harm oneself or someone else
- Commission of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice.
- Consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior
- Failure to meet any of the performance expectations and standards seen as applicable under these, the Division of Social Work at California, Sacramento Student Performance Review Standards and Procedures

B. The Two Levels of Review

Two levels of review can occur in the Division of Social Work when assessing student performance. The level of review depends upon the potential seriousness of the concern(s). For purposes of distinguishing between the two levels of performance evaluation: Level I Review is the less formal but still potentially serious of the two levels while a Level II Review or Student Staffing is the more formal and therefore more complex of the two. What follows next is a

discussion of the trigger mechanism(s) to be considered when attempting to make a decision on the appropriate level or review, if any, to implement.

Level I Review

Whenever a faculty member, adjunct faculty or field instructor has concern(s) regarding a student's performance he/she shall meet with the student to resolve the concern(s).

It is strongly recommend that the faculty member, adjunct faculty or field instructor raising a performance concern(s) with a student be prepared to communicate that concern(s) in a clear, concise, and factual (when possible) documented manner.

If the issue(s) are not resolved, the student's Academic Advisor should be contacted. The student's Academic Advisor is engaged to help address the concern(s) and, if necessary, conduct additional fact finding activity such as reviewing the student's academic record (paper & electronic) and or informally consult with other personnel having current contact with student (written notes summarizing the sequence, process and outcomes of these meetings and activities should be made on the contact sheet found at the front of the student's Division file thus creating a retrievable record of fact gathering and interventive efforts). It should be noted that a Level I Review may originate with a student's Academic Advisor.

While it is not possible to establish an absolute and precise timetable for a Level I Review to be initiated, conducted and completed, every effort should be made to be as expedient as possible. Acting in an expeditious but nonetheless thorough manner is assumed to minimize the impact on the time and resources of all involved parties. In any event, not more than five business days should elapse from the time that an Academic Advisor is contacted regarding a Level I Review and when he or she directly responds to the request for their involvement. This timeline shall be appropriately amended if such contact is made too close to the end of a semester or the academic year.

If after these efforts, the concern(s) remains unresolved; the Academic Advisor must contact the Graduate/Undergraduate Program Director, for further assistance and or to determine if a Level II Review (Student Staffing) should be convened. Here too, not more than five business days should elapse from the time that an Academic Advisor contacts the Graduate/Undergraduate Program Director and the time he or she directly responds to the request for their involvement. This timeline shall be appropriately amended if such contact is made too close to the end of a semester or the academic year.

Level II Review (Student Staffing)

If an issue is not resolved at the first level of review, the Graduate/Undergraduate Program Director will decide if an AR&PSC meeting will be convened with the student and involved faculty/program members.

A Level II Review involves convening the Academic Review and Professional Standards Committee (AR&PSC) which shall be composed of the Graduate/Undergraduate Program Director (AR&PSC, Chair), the faculty member, adjunct faculty or field instructor where concern(s) originated, the student's Academic Advisor (may be the individual with an expressed concern), and anyone else deemed as appropriate in the judgment of the student's Academic Advisor or that of the AR&PSC Chair.

If an AR&PSC meeting occurs, it will be the Graduate/Undergraduate Program Director's responsibility to inform the student (and all parties concerned) in writing of the AR&PSC's decision(s) which may include one or more of the following actions:

1. Continue the student in the program with no conditions. In these situations, the concern has been addressed and no further action by the student or program is required.
2. Establish formal conditions for the student's continued enrollment in the program. An interventive or remediation plan will be developed by the student's Academic Advisor in consultation with the student, and the concerned faculty member as needed. This plan shall:
 - a) specify the concern(s) of the faculty member in as much detail as possible
 - b) indicate the actions to be undertaken by the student
 - c) indicate the date by which the student must demonstrate the required level of knowledge, skill, behavior, or ethical conduct
 - d) be signed by the advisor, and faculty member who initiated the concern
 - e) be reported on regularly by the student's Academic Advisor

The student will be given a copy of the plan and asked to sign it indicating that he or she received a copy of the document. The student will also be informed, in writing, of the right to rebut the Plan or grieve the decision. Interventive plans, all Level II (Student Staffing) reports (should include student's written rebuttal if one is written) will be filed in the student's Division file.

The AR&PSC shall, on or before the date specified in the plan for completion of the intervention or remediation, meet with the advisor and the faculty who had the concern(s), for a report on the student progress. Ultimately, one of two outcomes must be attained to finally resolve the concern(s):

- a) The plan is met and the concern is alleviated. This is communicated in writing to all those in the above paragraph, AR&PSC and the Director of the Division. All documentation pertaining to the student review is held confidential by the division.
- b) The plan is not met and concern is not alleviated. The AR&PSC shall recommend that the student be dismissed from the program through declassification.

In situations where the AR&PSC recommends that the student not be allowed to continue as a student in the graduate or undergraduate program of the Division of Social Work, this decision will be forwarded to a meeting of the Graduate or Undergraduate Committee for a vote of confirmation or no confirmation (requires a simple majority) and the decision will be final at the Division level. That decision will be communicated to the student in writing.

Role of the Academic Advisor in a Level II Review

The mentoring process is critical to helping both students who enter on academic probation as well as those who develop academic or professional difficulties. The Academic Advisor will set up monthly meetings (more often if necessary) with the student to discuss his or her situation, progress, and development.

Reapplication after Dismissal through Declassification (Applies to Graduate Program Only)

Any student, who is dismissed from the program through declassification as a graduate student from Division of Social Work, may, if interested in returning at some later point, reapply to the Division of Social Work (but cannot reapply under any circumstances prior to the passage of one full academic year after being dismissed through declassification). Reapplication requires completing the entire application process again and must be done during the regular application cycle and procedures. The reapplication materials must include written notification from the applicant that they were dismissed through declassification from the Division at some earlier time. Failure to provide such notification in writing to the Division of Social Work will automatically disqualify the student and be cause for immediate denial of readmission.

All reapplication and subsequent readmission consideration to the Master in Social Work graduate program will be considered on case-by-case basis by the Admissions Committee during the regular admissions process and timelines used by the Division of Social Work. In cases of reapplication, the Chair (or their designate) or faculty representatives of the Admissions Committee will always interview the student.

It should be noted that individuals applying as transfer students to the graduate program in social work must arrange for a letter of support and good standing from the Dean, Director (or their designate) of the department, division or school they are interested in transferring from and the student must indicate, in writing, if they have been dismissed from that program and not simply transferring. Likewise, failure to provide such notification in writing to the Division of Social Work will **automatically disqualify** the student from acceptance as a transfer student to our graduate program in social work or will be cause for immediate dismissal through declassification if this information comes to light after acceptance and enrollment to the program.