

Responding to Serious Concerns Regarding Student Progress

When a serious concern is raised regarding a student's work in the field, the student, faculty field liaison, and field instructor will always attempt resolution of the concern together as a group. The field education coordinator must be contacted, however, if the concern is serious enough to include the perception that the student's behavior may be unprofessional, inappropriate, unlawful, or unethical and is, or could be, detrimental to clients, the agency, the University, or the student.

It is ultimately the decision of the field education coordinator to move the concern into a formal academic review process or to move toward resolution without the formality. A formal academic review process would include broadening the scope of the faculty members involved (Faculty Field Subcommittee), to interview the parties directly involved in the concern, and a final academically grounded resolution. In some instances it may make sense for the student to suspend their engagement within their field agency/organization until resolution is reached – the field education coordinator is responsible for making that decision.

In some instances, a field agency may determine that it is not possible for the student to return to their internship prior to the formal review process. It is within their right to do so. Please see the policy entitled, "Field Agency Decision to Terminate Student Placement Prior to Faculty Process"

Suspension - If a student is suspended from the field, the student is not permitted to continue in the field placement until the completion of a formal academic review process. Because all field situations of concern are unique to the student, the agency and the situation itself, the review process length and depth will fall within very broad parameters but not to exceed thirty (30) days. It is in the best interest of the student, the agency, the field program, and the Department of Social Work to move as quickly as possible on the matter while balancing the need to hear the complete experiences of everyone involved in the situation of concern. At minimum, the student's field liaison, academic advisor, corresponding practice/seminar course instructor and the appropriate faculty program committee will be made aware of the suspension. The field education coordinator and liaison will work with other selected members of the faculty (Faculty Field Subcommittee) to review the concerns and make a final determination about next steps.

Students are invited to attend any formal consultation regarding their status within the field program and will be included in attempts to set times conducive to the participants' schedules. Students may propose an alternative manner of participation, if they so choose.

The decision options regarding any serious concerns regarding student progress are as follows:

1. The student will continue in the same field placement with an action plan to address the serious concerns initially expressed. This plan will be in writing and signed by the field instructor, faculty field liaison, and student.
2. The student will be assigned to a different field placement with an agreement between the student, faculty field liaison, and field education coordinator about how the 'request for placement change' will be explained to the new placement field instructor.
3. The student will be permanently terminated from the current field placement with an end-of-semester grade of "Unsatisfactory" or "Failure." An action plan to address ethical or behavioral concerns will be agreed on and a method for evaluating this completion will be made in writing and signed by the student and field education coordinator. Future field placement matching will be contingent on a positive evaluation of the agreed upon action plan. This plan generally involves the delay of enrollment in field by at least one semester, if not two.
4. The student will be permanently terminated from the current field placement with an end-of-semester grade of "Unsatisfactory" or "Failure" **and without** the possibility of a field placement in the future.

During the formal review process, the following intersecting academic policies will be made explicit and will have significant bearing on the final decision and corresponding action plans:

1. Because the field practicum must be taken concurrently with practice courses, the student who is not registered for the field may not register for any of the designated practice courses (SWSS 168, 169, 212, 213, 314, 315). Undergraduate students may also not register for Field Experience Seminar (SWSS 171 or 172).
2. A student may be terminated from a field placement once and only once and still remain in the program. A subsequent termination from another field placement constitutes grounds for dismissal from either the B.S.W. or M.S.W. Program.

3. Likewise, the Faculty Field Subcommittee's decision to terminate the student permanently from the current field placement with an evaluation of "Unsatisfactory" or "Failure" and without the possibility of being placed again (option #4 above) also constitutes grounds for dismissal from the B.S.W. or the M.S.W. Program.
4. Any student dismissed from the M.S.W. Program may apply for readmission to the program after a minimum period of two years.