

## **SIUE Department of Social Work Behavior Policy (Academic and Ethical Standards of Performance Policy)**

### **Policy Rationale**

As the primary role of the SIUE Department of Social Work is to prepare students to engage in ethical social work practice, a major element of this training involves ensuring that students understand the values that undergird the profession and display behaviors that are consistent with these values. The National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics serves as the cornerstone of both our profession and this departmental behavior and performance policy. This policy supports and is in addendum to the SIUE's Student Rights and Conduct Policy, which students are also bound to. That policy can be found at: <https://www.siu.edu/policies/3c1.shtml>

All students are expected to uphold and adhere to the Academic and Ethical Standards of the Performance Policy in and outside of class, including but not limited to activities they are involved in on SIUE property, in the wider community, at practicum placements, volunteer sites, and online. With respect to social media postings and other online communications in particular, students should adhere to the *Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice* published by NASW, which states that "social workers should apply principles of honesty, respect, and social justice, whether their electronic communications are for personal or work-related purposes" (p. 25).

In order to support students through the process of acclimating to the profession as well as our department's ethical responsibility to safeguard the communities in which social workers engage, we have laid out this policy. The intent of the policy is to provide students with feedback and coaching on those aspects of our profession that are not easily captured in standard university course participation assessment and grading metrics. The terms of this policy may take the form of either commendation or remediation depending on the circumstance and review of the faculty. Learning about historical and contemporary structural influences on marginalized and oppressed populations may challenge previously held attitudes and require significant personal change. This process may be anxiety producing, thus the department strongly encourages students to develop a support system in which all attitudes may be examined and challenged toward the goal of greater empathy and social action.

In instances of this policy initiating remediation the results will include a plan for ameliorative action up to dismissal from the program. In particular, the Department has zero tolerance for the denigration of any person based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, or any other dimension of human identity. Any violation of this fundamental value of the social work profession and the SIUE Department of Social Work that comes to our attention is addressed with all due seriousness and swiftness, in accordance with the Policy Guidelines delineated below.

## **Policy Dissemination**

### ***Students***

Students receive information regarding the Academic and Ethical Performance Standards Policy prior to entering the program. Information dissemination occurs through:

1. The policy is placed on the SIUE Department of Social Work website so that prospective students have the opportunity to review the policy early in their process of considering our programs of study.
2. This policy is reviewed during program orientation sessions that prospective students attend prior to applying to the BSW program as well as at MSW program orientation.
3. Students must address their commitment to the Policy Guidelines (delineated below) in their personal statements submitted with their applications.
4. Both the BSW and MSW application forms require that students sign off that they have read and understand the policy.
5. For undergraduate students, the SOCW 202 course reviews and reinforces the Academic and Ethical Standards of Performance Policy set forth by the Department of Social Work. It is strongly recommended that students take this course prior to being declared a social work major. For graduate students, this information is covered very early in their course of study.

It is the goal for students to know and understand the Academic and Ethical Standards of Performance Policy for the SIUE Department of Social Work as early as possible in their process of considering and applying for the BSW or MSW program. If students do not feel as though they can uphold these standards, it is recommended that they consider pursuing other majors that may be a better fit.

### ***Faculty and Staff***

Faculty receive information regarding the Academic and Ethical Standards of Performance Policy through the following:

1. The policy is placed on the SIUE Department of Social Work website and within the department's SharePoint to ensure ease of access to all faculty.
2. Faculty are briefed on the contents and trained on the purpose of the policy during onboarding by The Department Chair.
3. The full contents of the policy, its use, and statistics on policy application from the previous year are reviewed at one of the first faculty meetings of each academic year.
4. If faculty complete a disposition, they are to complete the Qualtrics survey on review of the disposition process to facilitate future updates.

## **Policy Guidelines**

The table below outlines the major values and ethical principles of the social work profession as found in the NASW Code of Ethics. In addition, it outlines some of the behavioral expectations of students that demonstrate a sound understanding of and adherence to these values and ethical principles. Please note that the behavioral expectations identified below are not exhaustive, but

should be interpreted as a foundation for broader considerations of how behaviors may or may not align with the values and ethical principles identified in the left-hand column.

<b>Social Work Values and Ethical Principles</b>	<b>Academic and Professional Expectations</b>
<i>Service</i> Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems	Social workers should:  Familiarize and commit themselves to the NASW Code of Ethics and this policy, both in and outside of educational and practice settings (i.e., in their personal lives)
<i>Social Justice</i> Social workers challenge social injustice	Social workers should:  Not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability (Code of Ethics, Section 4.02)  Commit to learning about issues of oppression and social justice, particularly from the perspectives of those most impacted  Show a willingness to examine, question, and/or change attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors in light of new information  Commit to addressing issues of oppression and social justice as a future social work practitioner
<i>Dignity and Worth of the Person</i> Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person	Social workers should:  Show respect for the self-determination of clients, regardless of personal feelings and/or values, within practicum and/or agency settings  Demonstrate a sound understanding of the above values and ethical principles in all course and program assignments and/or requirements  Recognize and accept that the human story is varied and broad and the unique ways that clients may present does not dismiss the inherent dignity and worth of that person

<p><i>Importance of Human Relationships</i> Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships</p>	<p>Social workers should:</p> <p>Demonstrate respectful communication with fellow students, faculty, practicum sites, employers, clients, and others</p> <p>Communicate effectively in a variety of settings with people from a wide variety of backgrounds</p>
<p><i>Integrity</i> Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner</p>	<p>Social workers should:</p> <p>Show honesty in communication with fellow students, faculty, practicum sites, employers, clients, and others</p> <p>Understand and practice academic honesty and the proper standards of academic citation</p> <p>Understand and practice professional honesty and give credit to others' work whenever appropriate</p> <p>Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with fellow students, faculty, and others</p>
<p><i>Competence</i> Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional experience</p>	<p>Social workers should:</p> <p>Not allow their own personal problems, psychological distress, legal problems, substance abuse, physical or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility (Code of Ethics, Section 4.05)</p> <p>Demonstrate responsibility and dependability by fully adhering to the academic and professional standards articulated through course syllabi and departmental policy and standards, by meeting deadlines on assignments and projects, keeping appointments, and being responsive in communications.</p> <p>Maintain confidentiality of clients in all manners in accordance with practicum site or agency policy</p> <p>Properly use practicum and/or agency resources</p>

	<p>Be open and responsive to academic and professional evaluation, feedback, and constructive criticism</p> <p>Demonstrate a commitment to self-care and self-evaluation of academic and practice performance</p> <p>Follow all policies and protocols of the practicum site or agencies to which you are assigned or visit</p>
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## Policy Implementation

There are several opportunities for evaluation of students using the Policy Guidelines. At the end of each academic year all students will complete a self-assessment of their progress through the program using the Commendation/Disposition Form to be submitted to the program director and reviewed by the appropriate program committee. At any time, students may initiate formal feedback through the policy process by contacting their faculty mentor or appropriate program director; feedback may be provided by faculty who have worked with the student in an educational or mentor capacity during the current academic year. Additionally, Faculty and Directors will fill out disposition forms when a violation of ethical standards occurs requiring remediation.

As the point of this policy is to provide coaching and feedback outside of traditional university course participation assessment and grading metrics, students should not receive a disposition for those instances in which they are already receiving a grading sanction.

All commendation or disposition forms are placed inside the internal departmental file of the students. However, students who receive a “some concerns” and “does not meet” designation on one of the Policy Guidelines criteria receive a written remediation and follow-up discussion outlined more fully below.

If the person filling out the Disposition Form deems the violation of the Policy Guideline to be egregious they write a detailed description and bring the matter before the full faculty to vote on recommendation of student termination. If the majority of faculty vote in favor of student termination, the Chair meets with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences to facilitate student removal from the program. Otherwise, remediation proceeds as follows.

### Remediation Steps:

Step 1: Filling Out Disposition Forms

Before any student receives a disposition, the Faculty or Director wishing to initiate the disposition process will bring the matter before the appropriate program committee (either BSW or MSW) for review. If the committee determines that the concern brought by the Faculty or Director warrants a disposition then the petitioning Faculty or Director will complete the disposition form.

#### Step 2: Remediation

When a student receives a “some concerns” and/or “does not meet” for any category on the disposition form, the student meets with the person who filled out the remediation form, the student’s mentor, and the student; the student may also choose to invite an advocate to the meeting. Together, the attendees develop a plan of action to consider the behavior and how best the student can proceed in the future to work with the feedback. The plan will then be put in writing, signed by the student, and placed in the student’s file. All goals listed in the plan of action should be measurable and include a concrete plan for follow-up with the student on goal progress. Copies of the plan of action will be emailed to the student and their mentor, placed in the student’s file and kept in the department SharePoint folder.

#### Step 3: Filling out Second Disposition Form

Before a second disposition is filled out the Faculty or Director should follow the petitioning steps outlined in Step One. If a second disposition is granted and the student receives a “some concern” and/or “does not meet” for any category (including one different than the first), the Program Director solicits feedback from departmental faculty to receive a more comprehensive view of the student. After soliciting feedback, the Director sets up a meeting with the student, the Program Director, Chair of the department and possibly the Associate Dean for Student Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences to discuss remediation. A remediation plan, including concrete measurable action steps with clearly delineated deadlines and follow-up is created and shared with the student and placed in the student’s file.

#### Step 4: Termination

If following the steps of this process the student receives a third disposition form for any reason they are terminated from the program.

#### **Commendation:**

Faculty or Directors may at times wish to formally highlight certain behaviors or accomplishments of students that exemplify ethical social work practice. They can use the Commendation Form to highlight which area(s) of practice the student is currently excelling at to be placed in the student’s file. These commendations may serve as the basis for recommendation letters, departmental awards, or other recognition. However, receipt of a commendation does not oblige the department to any of these actions.

**SIUE Department of Social Work Academic and Ethical Standards of Performance Policy**

**Student Contract**

By initialing and signing below, I acknowledge the following:

1. I have read and understand the standards as outlined in the Academic and Ethical Standards of Performance policy. \_\_\_\_ (Student initials)
2. I understand that I am accountable for demonstrating these standards in and outside of class, including but not limited to on SIUE property, in the wider community, at practicum placements, volunteer sites, and online. \_\_\_\_ (Student initials)
3. I understand that failure to properly adhere to these standards results in ameliorative actions as outlined in the policy, including possible dismissal from the social work program. \_\_\_\_ (Student initials)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

## Commendation/Disposition Form

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Work Values and Ethical Principles	Academic and Ethical Expectations	Exceeds	Meets	Some concerns	Does Not Meet	NA
<p><i>Service</i> Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems</p>	<p>Is familiarized and committed to the NASW Code of Ethics and this policy, both in and outside of educational and practice settings (i.e., in their personal lives)</p>					
<p><i>Social Justice</i> Social workers challenge social injustice</p>	<p>Does not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability (Code of Ethics, Section 4.02)</p> <p>Is committed to learning about issues of oppression and social justice, particularly from the perspectives of those most impacted</p> <p>Shows a willingness to examine, question, and/or change attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors in light of new information</p> <p>Is committed to addressing issues of oppression and social justice as a future social work practitioner</p>					
<p><i>Dignity and Worth of the Person</i> Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person</p>	<p>Shows respect for the self-determination of clients, regardless of personal feelings and/or values, within practicum and/or agency settings</p> <p>Demonstrates a sound understanding of the above values and ethical principles in all course and program assignments and/or requirements</p>					



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<i>Importance of Human Relationships</i> Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships	<p>Demonstrates respectful communication with fellow students, faculty, practicum sites, employers, clients, and others</p> <p>Communicates effectively in a variety of settings with people from a wide variety of backgrounds</p>					
<i>Integrity</i> Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner	<p>Shows honesty in communication with fellow students, faculty, and others</p> <p>Understands and practices professional honesty and gives credit to others' work whenever appropriate</p> <p>Maintains appropriate professional boundaries with fellow students, faculty, and others</p>					
<i>Competence</i> Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional experience	<p>Does not allow their own personal problems, psychological distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or physical and mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility (Code of Ethics, Section 4.05)</p> <p>Demonstrates responsibility and dependability by fully adhering to the academic and professional standards articulated through course syllabi and departmental policy and standards, by meeting deadlines on assignments and projects, keeping appointments, and being responsive in communications.</p> <p>Maintains the cumulative GPA in accordance with department requirements</p> <p>Maintains confidentiality of clients in all manners in accordance with practicum site or agency policy</p> <p>Properly uses practicum and/or agency resources</p> <p>Is open and responsive to academic and professional evaluation, feedback, and constructive criticism</p> <p>Demonstrates a commitment to self-care and self-evaluation of academic and practice performance.</p> <p>Follows all policies and protocols of the practicum site and other agencies.</p>					

<i>Comments</i>	
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