

School of Social Work, Placement Failure Policy

Acronyms and Meanings

FEM = Field Education Manager

FA = Faculty Advisor (School Representative attached to the placement)

FI = Field Instructor (at the placement site/agency)

UPD= Undergraduate Program Director

GPD= Graduate Program Director

A placement failure is based on the student's performance in the practice setting and is determined by the Faculty Advisor and/or the Field Education Manager. Reasons for failure include but are not limited to:

- Failure to meet the expectations for BSW or MSW level of practice
- Student engages in actions, including the use of social media, which jeopardize the well-being and/or reputation of the agency, the School, the Field Instructor or a client
- Student fails to adhere to the Social Work Code of Ethics as espoused by the Canadian Association of Social Workers
- Student fails to act in accordance with the Practicum Centre's regulations and policies and procedures, including appropriate Provincial Acts as they apply to the Practicum Centre including, but not limited to, confidentiality and privacy
- Behaviour or actions exhibiting racism, homophobia, sexism or any other form of discriminatory behaviour
- Student engages in unethical practices as described in the Student Professional Behaviour Policy (Appendix A for BSW Professional Behaviour Review Policy and Appendix B for MSW Professional Behaviour Review Policy).

In cases of a **professional breach of conduct**, the only option may be for the student to be withdrawn from the placement. The Field Instructor brings the area of concern to the immediate attention of the student and the Faculty Advisor. At that time, the Student Professional Behaviour Policy will be followed.

- A. A Student Professional Behaviour Review may result in withdrawal from the program.
- B. If following a Student Professional Behaviour Review, a student is granted permission to undertake a second placement, they will have to wait until the next regular placement period as set out in the BSW or MSW program.

In cases where the reason for contemplating a placement failure is the **result of the inability to begin to develop social work practice skills**, the following steps must be taken to attempt to develop these skills. The required skills for practice are identified by the School in the 5 development areas detailed in the learning contract, mid-point progress review and final evaluation forms.

1. The Field Instructor, student, Faculty Advisor and Field Education Manager meet to discuss the concern and determine if there are ways in which the issue may be resolved.

2. The Field Instructor, student, and Faculty Advisor will create a plan that would support the student in succeeding in developing the required skills. Follow up should take place no more than 12 placement days (approximately 1 month) after the initial meeting.
3. Once the plan is set, the student's progress should be carefully monitored by the Field Instructor and the Faculty Advisor. Regular on-going communication between the student, Field Instructor, and the Faculty Advisor should occur with regards to the student's progress. The Field Instructor should document regular supervision meetings with the student and any other meetings in which the student's performance is discussed.
4. If the Field Instructor has determined that the student still has not demonstrated readiness for practice within the timeframe stipulated above, then the Faculty Advisor has the right to fail the student. In such cases, the Field Instructor must ensure that:
 - i. Concerns about the student's readiness for practice were made explicit to the student and the School in a timely fashion
 - ii. The evaluation contains sufficient evidence as to why the student should fail
5. The Student Professional Behaviour Review Policy (MSW policy approved on January 27, 2017 and BSW Policy approved by Senate on June 26, 2008) states "where the matter concerns the possible outcome of denying the student an opportunity to complete the practicum requirement, the matter shall be referred for a Student Professional Behaviour Review".
 - a. A Student Professional Behaviour Review may result in withdrawal from the program.
 - b. If following a Student Professional Behaviour Review the student is granted permission to undertake a second placement, they will have to wait until the next regular placement period as set out in the BSW or MSW program.
6. In order to qualify for another placement, the student must write a reflective paper (1500-2000 words in length, APA format and submitted in hard copy) that clearly outlines their understanding of why they failed the placement, including examples of where they need to increase their learning, what they have learned from this experience, and how and why they feel completing another placement will benefit them in terms of their readiness for practice. The reflective paper will be reviewed by the Field Education Manager and the Faculty Advisor.
7. The Faculty Advisor and Field Education Manager may involve the GPD or UPD to talk about options or measures that can be put in place to help the student prepare for another placement (i.e. a directed reading course).

There is a two-placement limit for failed placements in this program, therefore, if a student fails a second time they will not be offered a third placement and will not graduate with a BSW or MSW.

[POLICY APPROVED BY YORK UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY ON MAY 10, 2016]

Summary of Placement Failure
(Refer to details in section above)

Scenario 2: Lack of Social Work Skills Development

Student is unable to develop social work practice skills.

FI informs FA about concerns. FA notifies FEM of the issues.

FI, student, FA and FEM meet to discuss issues and concerns.

FI, student, FA and FEM create a plan for student's development of skills.

Student progress is monitored by FI and FA.

If FI determines that student has not demonstrated readiness for practice within the timeframe, and has sufficient evidence on evaluation, FI will inform FA.

Scenario 1: Breach of Professional Conduct

Student engages in professional breach of conduct.

FI brings concerns to the immediate attention of FA.

FA and FEM can enter a FAIL grade. If FEM and FA are reluctant and concerned to have student complete another placement, the Student Professional Behaviour Review is initiated.

Outcome of Student Professional Behaviour Review is determined.

Student's FAILURE grade remains on the record and student is withdrawn from the program.

Student fails placement but is granted the opportunity to undertake a second placement.

Student submits reflective paper.

FA and FEM (may include UPD or GPD) discuss measures to help student prepare for second placement.

APPENDIX A

York University BSW Student Professional Behaviour Policy

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree is an important determinant of eligibility for registration with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. Given the professional trajectory of the BSW degree, a professional standard of behaviour is expected from social work students. At issue in this policy is the protection of the public and the University's role in graduating competent professionals.

Progression through the BSW program at the School of Social Work at York University is contingent on students' behaviour meeting the ethical and behavioural standards set forth in the *Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (CASW) 1*, the *Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Standards of Practice 2*; the *York University Student Code of Conduct*, and other relevant York University policies 3 including but not limited to the Sexual Harassment Policy and the Policy Concerning Racism.

This policy recognizes the general responsibility of the faculty members of the School of Social Work to foster acceptable standards of professional behaviour and of the student to be mindful of and abide by such standards.

A. Behaviour that may result in withdrawal from the BSW program

A student may be withdrawn from the BSW program if he or she:

1. commits any breach of the CASW Code of Ethics, the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Standards of Practice, and/or any York University Policy that relates to student behaviour, such as the York University Student Code of Conduct or the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty that would engage the behavioural and ethical standards of the profession;
2. engages in any proscribed behaviour in a practicum agency as detailed in the School of Social Work's Practicum Manual;
3. acquires a criminal conviction after being admitted to the program (or which was acquired prior to admission but became known only after having been admitted to the program) which jeopardizes the student's ability to gain registration as a social worker; or
4. engages in behaviour that impairs the performance of professional responsibilities.

B. Jurisdiction

Allegations of a breach of professional behavioural or ethical standards by a student enrolled in the BSW degree program offered by the School of Social Work, York University shall be dealt with by the School of Social Work, York University in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

¹ http://www.caswacts.ca/practice/code3_e.html

² http://206.221.245.198/sections/membership_info/current_members/ethicsandpractice.html

³ for a complete list see <http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/services/policies/index.htm>

C. Procedures for determination of whether a Student Professional Behaviour Review is Necessary

1. Any breach of professional behaviour that is deemed so serious that it may warrant requiring a student to withdraw from the program will initiate a Student Professional Behaviour Review.
2. NonPracticum Courses: In instances where a Course Director of a nonpracticum social work course has concerns about student behaviour that have not been resolved through discussion with the student, he or she will consult with the Undergraduate Program Director.

The Undergraduate Program Director, the Course Director and the student will normally meet to discuss the concerns in the hopes of determining a resolution. If no resolution is achieved or if conditions agreed to by the student as part of the resolution were not fulfilled the matter shall be referred for a Student Professional Behaviour Review.

3. Practicum Courses: In the event that a Faculty Advisor or the Field Coordinator has concerns about the behaviour of a student enrolled in SOWK 4000 6.0 or SOWK 4001 6.0 (Practicum in Social Work I and II), he/she will follow policies detailed in the School of Social Work's Practicum Manual. Where the matter concerns the possible outcome of denying the student an opportunity to complete the practicum requirement, the matter shall be referred for a Student Professional Behaviour Review.
4. When allegations of a breach of professional behaviour standards by a student enrolled in the BSW program are reported to have occurred in a venue other than a BSW course or practicum, the matter will be investigated by the Undergraduate Program Director or designate. Normally this investigation will include meeting with the student to discuss the allegation in the hopes of determining a resolution. If no resolution is achieved or if conditions agreed to by the student are not fulfilled the matter shall be referred for a Student Professional Behaviour Review.

D. Student Professional Behaviour Review

1. Once notified of a potential breach of professional behaviour standards by a student in the BSW Honours degree program, the designated Faculty office shall post a block on enrolment activity in the concerned course or courses. The student may not drop or be deregistered from the course for any reason, nor withdraw from the University, nor may transcripts be released to the student until a final decision is reached.
2. The Undergraduate Program Director of the School or his/her designate convenes a review committee consisting of three members. The review committee will consist of the Associate Dean of Students of the Faculty, or his/her designate; the Director of the School of Social Work; and one other member of the BSW Program who has not been privy to the allegations. The Undergraduate Program Director of the School or his/her designate, the Director of Field Education for the School or his/her designate, Course Directors of courses in which the student's behaviour has become an issue, Field Instructors where the behaviour occurred in a practicum setting and other representatives of the professional may be called to serve as witnesses. When the alleged breach of professional or ethical standards occurs in a noncourse or practicum setting, other persons may be called to appear as witnesses.
3. The student will be notified in writing by email and by priority commercial post of the intention to hold a Student Professional Behaviour Review and provided with suggested times and dates. It is the student's responsibility to provide the School with current email, postal and telephone contact information. Failure to do so may result in shorter or no notice being received. In such a case the Review may take place without the student. The letter notifying the student of the Review shall include a summary of the alleged breach of professional standards and an outline of the procedures to be followed at a Student Professional Behaviour Review. If the student wishes to file a written response to the allegation, it must be received within fourteen calendar days of the date on which the notification of the Review was sent to the student. All parties are required to inform the Review Committee of their intention to call witnesses and the names of these witnesses at least seven calendar days prior to the Review.
4. The student has seven days to respond so as to fix the time and date for the meeting. If the student does not respond in a timely way, the Review may take place without the student.

5. The student may be accompanied by a representative. In such a case, the representative's name and relationship to the student must be provided to the Director in advance of the Review.
6. The Director or designate chairs the Review and a School staff person take notes. The representatives of the School first present their concerns. If witnesses are present they are called to present their information concerning the alleged behaviour of the student. The student is then given an opportunity to ask questions about the concerns and evidence presented and to respond to them. Finally, the representatives of the School have an opportunity to comment on any issues or information that has been presented by the student. The Review Committee is not bound by formal rules of evidence applicable in courts of law.
7. When all available relevant evidence and witnesses have been heard and both the School and student have had opportunity to provide comment, the Review Committee shall then enter into a closed session to determine whether a breach of professional standards or ethics has occurred and, if so, what actions will be taken. The decision is made by a majority vote of the review committee.
8. A Student Professional Behaviour Review will result in one of four outcomes:
 - i) A finding that no breach of professional standards or ethics has occurred. No records will be retained.
 - ii) A finding that a breach of professional standards or ethics has occurred but it is determined that no action other than remedial educative measures will be taken;
 - iii) A finding that a breach of professional standards or ethics has occurred that warrants the imposition of conditions on the student as a requirement for continuation in the program.
 - iv) A finding that a breach of professional or ethical standards has occurred that warrants either or both assigning a grade of F in the course and withdrawal of the student from the BSW Honours degree program.
9. The decision of the committee shall be communicated to the student in writing, delivered by hand or by mail. A record of the decision will be retained in the Office of the Director of the School of Social Work, regardless of the severity of the penalty, and be held for a time consistent with the University's records retention guidelines. This record is for internal academic purposes only. A note shall be placed on the Student Information System to bar withdrawal from the course.

F. Appeals

1. Students may appeal to the Senate Appeals Committee a decision rendered from a Student Professional Behaviour Review on the grounds permitted by the procedures of that Committee. Information on the Senate Appeals Committee procedures can be found at http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/sac.htm

Approved by York University Senate, June 26, 2008

APPENDIX B

Student Professional Behaviour Policy (MSW)

York University Master of Social Work (MSW) Student Professional Behaviour Policy

PREAMBLE

The Master of Social Work (MSW) degree is an important determinant of eligibility for registration with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. Given the professional trajectory of the MSW degree, a professional standard of behaviour is expected from all Social Work students. At issue in this policy is the protection of the public in view of the University's role in graduating competent professionals.

Progression through the MSW program at the School of Social Work at York University is therefore contingent on compliance with the ethical and behavioural standards required of them. The MSW Student Professional Behaviour Policy recognizes the general responsibility of the faculty members of the School of Social Work to foster standards of behaviour that are acceptable in a professional context and the responsibility of the students to be mindful of and abide by such standards at all times both in the Program and outside of it.

POLICY

A. Behaviour that may result in failure or withdrawal from the MSW program

The standards required of Social Work students are those set forth in the *Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (CASW)*¹, the *Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Standards of Practice*² and the School of Social Work's "MSW Practicum Manual". Conduct that breaches the York University *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* or any other relevant York University policy³ including but not limited to the Policy Concerning Academic Honesty, the Sexual Harassment Policy and the Policy Concerning Racism, may also be found to constitute unprofessional behaviour and allegations of such behaviour may be dealt with concurrently under this Policy and under the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

A student who fails to abide by such standards may, depending on the gravity of the breach, face consequences ranging from failure in a specific course to being withdrawn from the Program with no possibility of return. Such consequences are independent of any proceedings or consequences that may be imposed by the professional governing body of a student who is already a registered Social Worker at the time of such breach.

¹ http://www.casw-acts.ca/sites/default/files/attachements/CASW_Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf

² <http://www.ocswssw.org/docs/codeofethicsstandardspractice.pdf>

³ For a complete list see <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/>

B. Jurisdiction

Allegations of a breach of professional behavioural or ethical standards by a student enrolled in the MSW degree program offered by the School of Social Work, York University, shall be dealt with by the School of Social Work, York University, in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

C. Circumstances leading to a Student Professional Behaviour Review

1. A Student Professional Behaviour Review is to be conducted when there is evidence indicating that a student may have engaged in any behaviour that is deemed unprofessional.
2. Non-Practicum Courses: in instances where a Course Director of a non-practicum social work course has concerns about student behaviour that have not been resolved through discussion with the student, they will consult with the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director, the Course Director and the student will normally meet to discuss the concerns in the hopes of determining a resolution. If no resolution is achieved or if conditions agreed to by the student as part of the resolution were not fulfilled the matter shall be referred for a Student Professional Behaviour Review.
3. Practicum Courses: in the event that a Faculty Advisor, Field Instructor, or the Field Coordinator has concerns about the behaviour of a student enrolled in SOWK 5350 6.0 or SOWK 5310 6.0 (Practicum and Advanced Practicum), they will follow policies detailed in the School of Social Work's Practicum Manual. Where the matter concerns the possible outcome of denying the student an opportunity to complete the practicum requirement, the matter shall be referred for a Student Professional Behaviour Review.
4. When allegations of a breach of professional behaviour standards by a student enrolled in the MSW program come from a venue other than a MSW course or practicum, the matter will be investigated by the Graduate Program Director or designate. Normally this investigation will include meeting with the student to discuss the allegation in the hopes of determining a resolution. If no resolution is achieved or if conditions agreed to by the student are not fulfilled, the matter shall be referred for a Student Professional Behaviour Review.

D. Student Professional Behaviour Review Procedure

1. Once informed of a potential breach of professional behaviour standards by a student in the MSW degree program, the designated Faculty causes the Office of the Registrar to post a block on the student's enrolment activity in the concerned course(s). The student may not drop or be deregistered from the course for any reason, nor withdraw from the University, nor may transcripts be released to the student, until the Professional Behaviour Review has been completed and a final decision is reached in any appeal from it.
2. The Graduate Program Director of the School or their designate asks the designated Faculty office to convene a review committee consisting of three persons: the Associate Dean of Students of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, or their designate; the Director of the School of Social Work; and one other full-time School of Social Work faculty member who is also appointed to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and who has not been privy to the alleged behaviour or discussions concerning it.
3. The Graduate Program Director of the School or their designate and the Manager of Field Education for the School or their designate are responsible for presenting the evidence and testimony concerning the alleged unprofessional behaviour. They may call testimony from the Course Directors if the behaviour was observed by them or occurred in a course or courses, and/or from Field Instructors including placement agency staff where the behaviour occurred in a practicum setting, as well as from any other person(s) with relevant knowledge. .
4. The student is notified in writing by email and by courier or priority commercial post of the intention to hold a Student Professional Behaviour Review. The notice contains proposed date(s) and time(s) that are a minimum of **twenty-one** calendar days following the date on which the

notification is sent out to the student. It is the student's responsibility to provide the School with their current email, postal and telephone contact information. If, by reason of having failed to update their contact information with the University, the student either fails to receive the notice or receives it late, the Review hearing may be conducted without the student's participation.

5. The notification to the student includes a summary description of the alleged behaviour, an indication of the standard it breached, and an outline of the procedures to be followed.
6. The student's first obligation is to respond, within **seven** days of delivery of the above-described notification, to the proposed time and date for the hearing. If this is not done the Review hearing may take place without further consultation of the student as to time or date.
7. If the student wishes to file a written substantive response to the allegation, it must be delivered and confirmed as received within **fourteen** calendar days following delivery of the notification of the Review.
8. No less than seven calendar days prior to the Review hearing, all parties are required to inform the Review Committee of their intention to call witnesses and the names of these witnesses.
9. The student may bring a representative to the Review hearing to call evidence, question witnesses and make closing submissions. If the student chooses to do this, the representative's name and relationship to the student must be provided to the Director in advance of the Review.
10. The Director or designate chairs the Review hearing. A School staff person may be designated to take notes of the timing and order of witnesses and any rulings made by the Review Committee during the proceeding.
11. The representatives of the School first present their concerns. If witnesses are present they are called to present their information concerning the alleged behaviour of the student. The student or the student's representative is then given an opportunity to put questions to the witnesses about the evidence presented and to present evidence in response. Finally, the representatives of the School have an opportunity to comment on any issues or information that has been presented by the student. The Review Committee is not bound by formal rules of evidence applicable in courts of law.
12. When all available relevant evidence and witnesses have been heard and both the faculty representatives and the student have had opportunity to sum up about the case, the Review Committee then enters into a closed session to determine whether a breach of professional standards or ethics occurred and, if so, what actions will be taken. The decision is made by a majority vote of the review committee.
13. A Student Professional Behaviour Review results in one of four possible outcomes:
 - i) A finding that no breach of professional standards or ethics has occurred. No records will be retained.
 - ii) A finding that a breach of professional standards or ethics has occurred but it is determined that no action other than remedial educative measures will be taken;
 - iii) A finding that a breach of professional standards or ethics has occurred that warrants the imposition of conditions on the student as a requirement for continuation in the program.
 - iv) A finding that a breach of professional or ethical standards has occurred that warrants either or both assigning a grade of F in the course and withdrawal of the student from the MSW degree program.
14. The decision of the Review Committee is communicated to the student in writing and is delivered by hand, by email or by mail, at the discretion of the Committee. The decision incorporates a summary of the timing and of the evidence presented and testimony heard before expressing the Review Committee's findings and conclusions. No minority or dissenting opinion is expressed.

Except where the outcome is (i) above (no breach), a record of the decision is retained in the Office of the Director of the School of Social Work, regardless of the severity of the outcome, for a time consistent with the University's records retention guidelines. This record is for internal academic purposes only. A note shall be placed on the Student Information System to bar retroactive withdrawal from the course.

E. Appeals

Students may appeal a decision of a Student Professional Behaviour Review Committee to the FGS Appeals Committee on grounds permitted by FGS. Information on the FGS Appeals Committee procedures can be found at: <http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/regulations/petitions-appeals/>