

## **ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE (APPRC)**

*Revised September 18, 2023*

Social work education assures that competent persons enter the social work profession, and UT's Social Work Programs are committed to ensuring that students from our program are well-suited for the professional demands, roles, and responsibilities of social workers. Our programs seek to enhance students' probability of succeeding educationally and professionally. As such, our programs utilize a committee of the faculty called the Academic Professional Performance Review Committee (APPRC) for this purpose. This committee functions through a strengths-perspective, with the purpose of helping students succeed.

At times, social work faculty, academic advisors, staff, or students may have concerns about a particular student's performance in the BSW or MSW program – concerns that raise questions about the student's ability to succeed academically or their suitability for a career in social work. The University of Toledo BSW and MSW Social Work Programs have jointly established the Academic Professional Performance Review Committee (APPRC) to address these concerns. The policies and procedures delineated below govern the functioning of the APPRC.

### **Definition of Academic & Professional Performance**

Like other professional education programs, our social work programs define academic and professional performance as more than just the attainment of an adequate grade. We agree with Cole & Lewis (2000) and the U.S. Supreme Court that "... *professional behavior, especially in clinical and practice settings, is an academic requirement and therefore an educational component of professional preparation*" (p.214). Therefore, student performance and suitability concerns may include behavior problems in the classroom and field settings and elsewhere. Grade-related and behavioral difficulties may signify that students need support or academic disciplinary action is needed.

### **Referral to the Academic Professional Performance Review Committee**

#### When a referral to the APPRC should be made

When issues occur in the field, the field instructor and/or Field Director and/or Field Committee should first follow established procedures to resolve the issue. When issues occur in the classroom, an attempt to resolve the issue should first take place between the instructor and the student. For MSW students, if the issue cannot be resolved, then the student should be referred to their MSW advisor for consultation and support. (This step does not apply to BSW students.) If the field or classroom issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, field personnel, instructor, (and/or advisor if student is an MSW student), the matter should be referred to the appropriate Program Director for consultation. If the issue cannot be resolved to either party's satisfaction, the Program Director may elect to call a meeting of the APPRC to assist the student in an attempt to provide additional support for all parties. This process should take place as quickly as possible. Early intervention may improve the likelihood of student success.

*Student behavior that may necessitate a referral to the APPRC may include, but is not limited to:*

- Failure to meet or maintain Social Work Program requirements.
- Failure to meet or maintain the current National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
- Failure to meet or maintain the laws and rules specified by State of Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 4757 *Counselors, Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists* <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/qov/faba2418-aa3e-4af2-99be-358454da55a5/CSWMFT+Board+Laws+and+Rules+4757+4-19-2021.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=nBxPivP> , and/or equivalent state laws and rules pertaining to social work practice if the student internship is in a different state such as Michigan Public Health Code Part 185 Social Work: [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(11cqjnm0ydr533irharfw2m\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-368-1978-15-185](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(11cqjnm0ydr533irharfw2m))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-368-1978-15-185).

NOTE: Behavior or conduct judged to be in violation of the University of Toledo Student Code of Conduct should be reported to the Office of Student Conduct using their procedures. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, lying, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, or any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student. Faculty are required to adhere to UToledo guidelines regarding reporting academic dishonesty. Issues related to academic dishonesty should also be reported to the Office of Student Conduct using their procedures and should not be referred to APPRC.

[https://www.utoledo.edu/policies/main\\_campus/student\\_life/pdfs/3364\\_30\\_04\\_student\\_code\\_of\\_conduct.pdf](https://www.utoledo.edu/policies/main_campus/student_life/pdfs/3364_30_04_student_code_of_conduct.pdf)

### **APPRC Composition & Referral Procedure**

Once a case has been identified by the corresponding Program Director that additional supportive measures are needed, the Program Director shall notify the Social Work Faculty and Staff members that an APPRC Committee meeting is warranted. A chairperson shall be designated at the time the case is assigned (“Designee”), who will coordinate the meeting and records related to the case. A committee shall be assigned (a minimum of a Designee and one other member), which may include Adjunct Faculty. Note: Students are excluded from membership in the APPRC to ensure the privacy of referred students. The Program Director shall forward the APPRC referral form to the Designee outlining the student concerns, measures taken, and reasons why the APPRC meeting is needed.

## **Student Rights & Responsibilities**

### Student Responsibilities

Student participation in the APPRC review process - via timely responses to communication and attendance of scheduled meetings - is a professional behavior expectation and requirement in the Social Work Program. Failure to participate in the APPRC process may result in course registration holds, or removal from the Social Work Program.

Once a student receives an emailed request to appear before the APPRC, the student must respond within 3 days by accepting one of the two dates provided by the APPRC Designee or notifying that they need an alternative date. If the student cannot attend one of the two dates, the APPRC Designee will provide a third date and time. Appearing before the APPRC is mandatory. A meeting must be set within two weeks of the student receiving the notice from the APPRC. Whether the student appears or not, the APPRC will meet and will make decisions and recommendations. Students who do not appear before the committee will be subject to abide by the committee's recommendations /or decisions.

### Student Rights

Before the APPRC meeting, students will be provided with the same documentation the APPRC receives related to the issues at hand.

Students may bring any documentation with them to the APPRC meeting that they deem relevant to the issues to be discussed.

Students have the right to bring someone to support them to the APPRC meeting. The support person may remain silent and offer emotional support or may be used to help shed light on the situation. If they would like, they can have someone from the Office of Student Advocacy: <https://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/student-advocacy/>

### Student Privacy and Confidentiality

All procedures relating to the performance review shall be carried out to protect the student's right to privacy consistent with federal and state privacy laws. Members of the committee and all other persons who appear at the review meeting are expected to observe the confidential nature of the information made available to them and any discussion held during the meeting. Actions and recommendations of the committee are to be confidential and shared only with the student, University personnel, and those persons involved with the student in an educational capacity.

The faculty operates under the professional concept of a "circle of confidentiality," which means that departmental personnel and field instructors have a right and an obligation to exchange information about students. Such an exchange is necessary because student performance may impact the operation of the program, the integrity of the program in meeting its goals and objectives, the student's potential for success, and the safety and well-being of UToledo, and field agency personnel, other students, and agency clients.

## Procedures and Process

### Before the Meeting

When a student is referred to the APPRC, within 7 business days of receiving the referral, the committee Designee will: 1) review and prioritize the referral based on urgency of the identified issues and time sensitivity; 2) inform the student's advisor of the referral via email; 3) schedule the student's review for the soonest available committee meeting, based on referral priority/time sensitivity and current meeting capacity; and 4) notify the student in writing via email - including a copy of the referral form and the APPRC policy - that a referral has been made and communicate with the student to confirm the date and time of the student's review.

The student must respond to the notification email within 3 business days of the email date to either confirm attendance or request an alternate date due to a schedule conflict. If the student does not respond within 3 business days of the notification email and/or refuses to attend, the review may be conducted in their absence. If the student's availability requires that the committee meet at a time other than their regularly scheduled meeting times, the Designee is responsible for initiating the process of finding a time agreeable to both the student and committee members. Support from the school secretary will be used as needed to assist the Designee with scheduling logistics.

Prior to each committee meeting, the Designee shall notify committee members via email of the meeting's agenda, e.g., which student(s) will be reviewed, and forward a copy of the student's APPRC Referral Form and any other relevant materials to all committee members and to the student.

### The Meeting Itself

The student whose performance will be reviewed is required to attend the performance review meeting. If the student has been contacted about the meeting and does not respond or refuses to attend, the review may be conducted in their absence.

The student may invite one or more people to attend the committee meeting in a supportive capacity. The student is responsible for informing the committee Designee ahead of time who they are inviting to attend. The student may invite their attorney. However, in academic disciplinary situations, students do not have constitutional rights to legal counsel. If a student wishes to have an attorney present, the committee may permit such requests, but the professional capacity of the student's attorney is strictly advisory. They may not participate unless the committee gives permission (Cobb, Ramsdell, & Hunter, 2000, p. 240).

The student's BSW advisor or MSW advisor may be invited to attend the meeting. Other persons who have significant knowledge of the problem or of the student's academic performance, such as the person who made the referral, also may be invited by the committee Designee. The Designee may invite additional administrative resources from within the institution, as appropriate.

The Designee has the authority to limit the number of people who will be attending the review.

### During the Meeting

APPRC meetings are comprised of five parts: *committee preparation, introduction, discussion, deliberations, and recommendations.*

- 1) *Committee Preparation.* Prior to the meeting, committee members are expected to review any materials they have received about the student. Before the student and their guests enter the meeting, committee members will meet to orient themselves as a group to the student's situation. During this time, the committee Designee will designate a recorder from among the committee members. The recorder is responsible for completing the APPRC Decision Page and reviewing it with committee members before the meeting is adjourned. After committee orientation and appointment of the recorder, the student and their guests will be invited to the meeting.
- 2) *Introduction.* The committee Designee will facilitate the introduction of everyone present at the meeting. They will describe to the student and any non-committee members who may be present the purpose of the meeting, the committee's strengths-based philosophy, and committee procedures, including confidentiality expectations.
- 3) *Discussion.* The Designee will facilitate the presentation of issues raised by the person who made the referral (if present), the student, and any other individuals who possess relevant information. The Designee also will moderate the discussion of these facts.
- 4) *Deliberation.* The committee will deliberate on the issues involved. In many cases, all deliberations will take place with the student present. In some cases, the committee may ask the student and their guests to step out of the room momentarily if deemed necessary. Instances in which the student might be asked to momentarily step out of the meeting may include situations that necessitate committee discussion with the student not present. It is intended that the student will be present for as much of the committee deliberations as possible. If asked to leave the meeting momentarily, when appropriate, the student will be asked to return for the remainder of the deliberations. When possible, the student will be present for the entire deliberation process. Only committee members, students, and/or additional administrative resources from within the institution shall be present for this part of the meeting. Committee members analyze the facts that were presented and identify potential responses to the student's situation.
- 5) *Recommendations.* The committee will reach a consensus regarding recommendations for a plan of action and deliver those recommendations to the student. These recommendations will be recorded and will be forwarded in writing to the student within one week.

### After the Meeting

The Designee will designate a recorder who will complete the Follow up Form summarizing what took place in the meeting along with the recommendations and actions of the committee.

Within a one-week period, the committee Designee will email a letter to the student, the program director, and the student's academic advisor that will include:

- A brief description of the issues discussed.
- The recommendations and/or actions taken by the committee.
- Any relevant instructions for the student including time periods for completing tasks, reporting mechanisms and to whom to report, instructions for making successful progress in the program, or instructions for re-entrance into the program.
- If appropriate, a suggested date that the APPRC Designee will follow up with the student and other appropriate parties regarding the issues discussed and the status of the student's progress.

After following up with the student as described above, the Designee will notify all appropriate parties regarding the findings of the follow-up effort. The committee Designee will turn the materials into the corresponding Program Director who will store the materials in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

### **Possible Outcomes of Performance Review**

The APPRC may make recommendations and requirements ranging from self-awareness exercises to expulsion from the social work major. Examples of these recommendations and requirements include but are not limited to:

- Specific self-awareness exercises
- Using the UT Writing Center
- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Referral to other resources
- Additional assessment, e.g., psychological, neurological, physiological
- Field placement reassignment or discontinuation
- Extended field placement hours
- Retaking one or more courses
- Completing an ethics course
- Mutually agreed upon counseling
- Mutually agreed upon alcohol and drug rehabilitation treatment
- Delaying continuation in the social work program for a set period of time. If this action is required, after the set period of time, the student must appear before the committee to request readmission. At this time, the student must demonstrate that they have addressed the concerns that led to delayed continuation. Student registration for additional social

work courses may be blocked until APPRC issues are satisfactorily resolved.

- Referral to the UToledo Student Conduct and Community Standards Office
- Permanent removal/termination from UToledo's BSW or MSW Program

The committee will establish a time frame for implementation, completion, and review of the plan. The student will be made aware of the committee's recommendation prior to adjournment.

### **Termination from Social Work Program**

As noted in previous sections, termination from the social work program may be an outcome in several instances:

- Upon receipt and review of the APPRC referral form: In extreme cases – such as an egregious deliberate violation of the Code of Ethics or where someone is put in danger – the APPRC Designee and committee members upon receipt/review of the APPRC referral may require the student to immediately withdraw from the Social Work Program. Again, a copy of the written notice of this decision will be distributed to the student, the student's file, the Program Director, the Department Chair, and the Dean (or their designee).
- Failure to satisfactorily complete a designated remediation plan: If a student does not complete the required remediation plan in the time frame established by the APPRC Committee, the student may be required to withdraw from the Social Work Program.
- Failure to participate in the APPRC process: Participation in the APPRC process is part of any APPRC remediation plan. If a student fails to respond to communications from the APPRC and/or attends scheduled meetings, this is grounds for termination from the social work program.

Student conduct that may result in termination from the Social Work Program includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to meet or maintain Social Work Program requirements.
- Behavior or conduct judged to be in violation of:
  - The current National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
  - The laws and rules specified by State of Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 4757 *Counselors, Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists* <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/qov/faba2418-aa3e-4af2-99be-358454da55a5/CSWMFT+Board+Laws+and+Rules+4757+4-19-2021.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=nBxPivP> , and/or equivalent state laws and rules pertaining to social work practice if the student internship is in a different state such as Michigan Public Health Code Part 185 Social Work:

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(11cqjnm0ydr533irharfw2m\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-368-1978-15-185](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(11cqjnm0ydr533irharfw2m))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-368-1978-15-185).

- The University of Toledo (UT) Student Code of Conduct  
[https://www.utoledo.edu/policies/main\\_campus/student\\_life/pdfs/3364\\_30\\_04\\_student\\_code\\_of\\_conduct.pdf](https://www.utoledo.edu/policies/main_campus/student_life/pdfs/3364_30_04_student_code_of_conduct.pdf)

Upon APPRC determination of termination from the Social Work Program, a copy of the written notice of this decision will be distributed within 3 business days to the student, the student's file, the Department Chair, and the Dean (or their designee).

### **Readmission to Social Work Program**

All APPRC issues must be satisfactorily resolved prior to a student being readmitted to the Social Work Program.

### **Appeal Process**

Any student who has been referred to the APPRC may appeal the APPRC committee's decision pertaining to their referral. The first level of appeal is to the Chair of the Department of Human Services. The student must submit their appeal in writing within six (6) weeks of the APPRC meeting. The Department Chair will review the appeal and respond in writing to the student within one month of receiving the student's appeal request. If the student wishes to appeal the Department Chair's decision, the second level of appeal is to the Dean (or their designee) of the College of Health and Human Services. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Dean of College of Health and Human Services (or their designee) within 30 days.

### **Bibliography**

Cole, B. S., & Lewis, R. G. (2000). Court cases and judicial opinions related to gatekeeping in colleges, universities, and professional schools. In P. Gibbs & E. H. Blakely (Eds.), *Gatekeeping in BSW programs* (pp. 212-235). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.