

University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Social Work

Academic Retention and Dismissal Policy and Procedures –MSW Students

The University of Texas at El Paso Department of Social Work admits students to the graduate MSW Program to foster their development as successful, competent, and ethical social work practitioners. Because the program is academically challenging, some students may experience difficulties in coursework or fieldwork. The department is committed as a matter of its central mission to the success of students. Thus the faculty are involved in resolving concerns over academic performance in a timely, fair and ethical manner through due process in order to assure that students are afforded every opportunity to demonstrate success in coursework and the field.

The following procedures outline the process for the retention and dismissal of MSW students for academic reasons. These procedures do not govern alleged violations of the *UTEP Student Code of Conduct*, which is administered by the UTEP Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

- 1) If a faculty member has concerns about a student's academic performance on an assignment, learning endeavor, field education assignment, paper, performance or other academic activity, the instructor will raise the issue directly with the student to find solutions whereby the student can either complete the assigned work or activity or finalize the grade received.
- 2) If a faculty member has concerns about a pattern of academic performance that raises concerns about the potential for that student to complete the class or course, the faculty member will also inform the student's academic advisor. The advisor may meet with the student to provide assistance and support to the student. The advisor will complete an advising form and outline the plan to support the student to improve their academic performance, which will be filed in the student's departmental records.
- 3) If a student's *pattern of academic performance* is of concern to the advisor or instructor, the MSW Committee will meet to discuss and develop recommendations to resolve the pattern of academic performance. The student will be given the opportunity to present her/his case as part of the meeting with the student's advisor (or a social work faculty member of the student's choice) present as an advocate. If a student's major GPA falls below the minimum for two semesters, the student may be dismissed by the program and the Graduate School for academic reasons. To be reinstated, they will need to follow the guidelines established by the Graduate School (see 6b below).
- 4) The MSW Coordinator will submit the committee's recommended action to the Department Chair.
- 5) If the decision is to dismiss the student, the Chair will make a recommendation to the Dean of Health Sciences.
- 6) The following Graduate School Policy governs MSW student grade point average:
 - a. A student admitted into a graduate program and whose cumulative grade point average drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation (by the Graduate School). The student must return the cumulative grade point average to a 3.0 by the next nine (9) hours of study. Failure to meet the 3.0 grade point average

requirement during the probationary period will result in dismissal from the Graduate School (Source: UTEP Graduate Catalog, 2015).

- b. A dismissed student will remain on suspension for one full semester before appealing for reinstatement. Appeals for reinstatement are submitted by the respective Graduate Studies Program Committee to the Dean of the Graduate School. Only the Dean of the Graduate School can approve reinstatement of dismissed students (Source: UTEP Graduate Catalog, 2015).
- c. Appeals must include a plan of action describing intervention to ensure student success. If readmitted, the student must raise the cumulative grade point average to a 3.0 by the end of the first semester of reinstatement or face permanent dismissal from the Graduate School (Source: UTEP Graduate Catalog, 2015)

7) The following Graduate School Policy governs grade changes for the MSW Program:

Graduate students must submit to the faculty of record a written request for a grade change as soon as possible after the receipt of the grade but not later than one year after the semester in which the course in question was taken. A graduating student must request a grade change within three months after the last day of final examinations of the last semester enrolled. After this time, all grades become part of the student's official academic history and cannot be altered. A grade change must be approved by the faculty of record, the department chair, and the college dean. Additional approval is required from the Graduate School for thesis/dissertation and project courses (5396-5397, 5398-5399, 6320-6321, and 6398-6399). Students will receive notification of approved changes. Exceptions to the grade change policy will be at the discretion of the faculty member, department chair, and final approval from the academic dean.

Grades can be changed as a result of:

1. Grade changes initiated by the instructor and approved by the appropriate department chair and the college dean;,
2. Grade change initiated by the department chair for cases in which the instructor is no longer affiliated with the University and cannot be contacted and there exists clear and convincing evidence for a grade change;
3. Grade change because of disciplinary action imposed by the Office of Student Life or Hearing Officer for violation of University rules; or action taken by the Student Welfare and Grievance Committee in grade-appeal procedures.

Grades determined as a result of actions taken in items (3) or (4) above are final and not subject to change. No other grade change shall occur without the consent of the instructor. The Registrar will notify the student and the instructor of any change of grade.

Adopted May 4, 2015