

# 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)*<sup>1</sup>, the *Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Standards of Practice*<sup>2</sup>; the *York University Student Code of Conduct*, and other relevant York University policies<sup>3</sup> 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A student may be withdrawn from the BSW program if he or she: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.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.casw-acts.ca/practice/code3\\_e.html](http://www.casw-acts.ca/practice/code3_e.html)

<sup>2</sup> [http://206.221.245.198/sections/membership\\_info/current\\_members/ethicsandpractice.html](http://206.221.245.198/sections/membership_info/current_members/ethicsandpractice.html)

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

**C. Procedures for determination of whether a Student Profession 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. 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, 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 non-course or practicum setting, other persons may be called to appear as witnesses.

3. The student will be notified in writing by e-mail 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 e-mail, 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 takes 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.

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](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/sac.htm)

Approved by York University Senate, June 26, 2008