

# Student Success Review (SSR)

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## What is the Student Success Review (SSR)?

Student Success Review (SSR) is a structured, supportive, and transparent process designed to help School of Social Work (SSW) students succeed and ensure readiness for professional practice, leadership, or scholarly roles. Faculty, staff, and community members identify concerns early; when necessary, students are referred to the Student Success Review process in which the SSW provides support to students so they can grow in ethical and competent social work practice. The SSR process is designed to ensure consistency, transparency, and student-centered support while maintaining professional standards.

This procedure ensures that students receive Student Success–focused consultations across three levels, determined by the severity of identified concerns. SSRs specifically address issues related to Practice Competencies and Ethical Standards, particularly when student behaviors do not align with the values and ethics of the social work profession.

Concerns related to academic performance and student well-being are addressed through separate processes identified in Figure 1. In general, Early Alerts, BRIDGE Alerts, Academic Integrity concerns, Title IX concerns, and SSRs operate as distinct and mutually exclusive processes. However, in cases where overlap occurs, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, in collaboration with the appropriate academic program director (i.e., BSW, MSW, Practicum, PhD, or DSW), will assess the situation, triage the concerns, and determine the prioritization of next steps.

## What kinds of concerns may lead to SSR?

Concerns may include issues related to professional behavior such as communication, confidentiality, integrity, respect for others, ethical decision-making, accountability, emotional regulation, or professional judgment. These concerns are always based on observable behavior, not personal characteristics.

## Program-Specific Expectations

All students are expected to adhere to [University requirements and policies](#); additionally, there are program specific expectations provided in the respective student manual and summarized as follows:

### **BSW Students (Professional Practice Readiness)**

BSW Students are expected to follow the NASW Code of Ethics and strive for the 9 Council on Social Work Education Generalist Competencies.

### **MSW Students (Specialized Practice Readiness)**

MSW Students are expected to follow the NASW Code of Ethics and strive for both the 9 Council on Social Work Education Generalist Competencies and the SSW's relevant specialized competencies depending on the student's chosen specialization (i.e., Direct Practice or Community and Administrative Practice).

### **DSW Students (Advanced Practice & Leadership)**

DSW Students are expected to follow the NASW Code of Ethics and strive for the Council on Social Work Education Core Expertise and Skills.

### **PhD Students (Scholarship & Academic Readiness)**

PhD Students are expected to follow the NASW Code of Ethics and strive for the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work's Quality Guidelines.

## **What is Evaluated**

SSR evaluates professional behavior and competency development, including:

- Ethical behavior and professionalism
- Communication and accountability
- Performance in academic, practicum, leadership, or research contexts (as applicable)
- Ability to engage respectfully across difference<sup>1</sup>; SSR does NOT evaluate personal beliefs, values, or viewpoints.

## **Levels of SSR**

There are 3 levels to SSRs; the person referring the student to the SSR process may recommend a level but the Office of Student and Academic Affairs makes the final determination. A single serious concern (e.g., ethical violation, harm risk, or research misconduct) may result in a higher-level SSR regardless of there being a lack of previous referrals. At any of these levels, because ethical integrity is an academic issue in a professional school, as in any academic matter, the student appearing before the Referrer, Directors, or Committee will not be represented by an attorney.

Level 1 – Early Support: Informal conversation to clarify expectations and support improvement. Outcome of a Level 1 is that concerns are documented through the SSR

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of competencies related to diversity and justice is based on observable professional behavior and effectiveness, not personal beliefs or ideological positions.

Referral Form and student has received early support and mentoring. Although most concerns are resolved at this level, in rare cases, a Level 2 or 3 referral may result following the Level 1 conversation.

**Level 2 – Structured Support Plan:** Formal process with a written plan, expectations, and timelines. Outcome of a Level 2 is that concerns are documented through the SSR Referral Form and student has received a structured support plan that includes specific goals, actions, timelines, and supports to help you succeed. A Level 3 referral may result following the Level 2 conversation depending on the severity of the situation.

**Level 3 – Committee Review:** This is a formal faculty review to determine readiness to continue. A Level 3 review occurs when concerns are serious or unresolved. A committee will review the situation, including documentation and your perspective, and determine next steps. Possible outcomes of a Level 3 SSR include:

A. **Concerns Unfounded:** Concerns are not substantiated based on available information. No action is required, and the student continues in the program without restriction.

B. **Concerns Corroborated – Action Plan:** Concerns are substantiated and indicate areas for development. A Student Success Plan will be developed outlining specific expectations, actions, and timelines. The student continues in the program with conditions and monitored progress.

C. **Concerns Corroborated – Not Ready for Continuation:** Concerns are substantiated and reflect significant or persistent issues. The committee is not confident that the concerns can be sufficiently remediated to meet program expectations. Program leadership may recommend dismissal to the Associate Dean for Student and Academic Affairs, who makes the final decision in accordance with university policy.

## **How Decisions Are Made**

SSR decisions are based on a holistic review of performance, documented evidence, and professional judgment. No single score, incident, or factor determines the outcome in isolation.

The School of Social Work is committed to supporting student success whenever possible. When concerns are identified, the goal of SSR is to provide clear expectations, appropriate support, and opportunities for growth. At the same time, SSR ensures that all students who progress in their program are prepared to meet the ethical and professional standards of the social work profession.

Students who disagree with the SSR committee decision, may submit an appeal to the SSW Student & Academic Affairs Associate Dean.

Students' rights and applicable grievance, appeal, and academic due process procedures are outlined in the relevant University and School of Social Work student handbooks. Students are encouraged to review those handbooks for additional information about their rights and available processes.

### **What are your rights?**

In addition to the rights delineated in your respective program manual, you have the right to be informed of concerns, to review the referral, to provide a response, and to participate in meetings related to your review. You are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification throughout the process.

### **How can you succeed in SSR?**

Students who are successful in the SSR process typically engage openly with feedback, take responsibility for their actions, reflect on their behavior, and demonstrate meaningful effort toward growth and change.

### **Support and Resources**

If you are involved in SSR, you are encouraged to use available supports such as counseling services, tutoring, mentoring, and faculty guidance. Seeking support is a sign of professionalism and commitment to your development.

### **Final Note**

**SSR is not intended to be punitive.** Rather, it is a part of your professional education and is designed to support your development as a competent, ethical, and effective social worker. Referrals to the Student Success Review process and any resulting outcomes are maintained only in the student's file within the School of Social Work. They are not shared with the larger university or transfer institutions, nor future employers; these do not appear on the student's transcript. At times, it may be necessary for the Department of Field Education to share information about a student's previous placement and performance problems in order for a student to be placed; if this is the case, permission will be sought from the student (FERPA) to disclose this information.

# Referral Pathways for Identified Concerns

