Assessment of Student Academic Performance

School of Social Work faculty members are assigned official responsibility for unbiased assessment of the academic progress of students enrolled in the B.S.W., M.S.W., PhD, and Certificate programs. Individual instructors are responsible for student assessment in their respective courses. Guidelines for student assessment are required to be published in course syllabi for each assigned course.

Student academic assessment includes instructional oversight for the School of Social Work and Wayne State University's academic educational standards. The central function of Social Work student assessment is the evaluation of student progress with course assignments and related course grading, both substantive measures of overall student mastery of course content leading to learning outcomes that demonstrate student competency. Instructional faculty members have the responsibility to request and/or require student withdrawal from courses at any time prior to degree completion when the student's academic progress is assessed as unsatisfactory.

Decisions of unsatisfactory progress may be based on inadequacy in performance in class, in field internships and/or by the overall assessment of an unsatisfactory match (See http://advising.wayne.edu/excl.php) between Wayne State University and/or the Social Work profession. Wayne State University and the School of Social Work are committed to fairness of assessment based on academic policies and procedures that respect and support student-centeredness and due process approaches in the learning environment. To support this philosophy, the School of Social Work specifies policies and related procedures for the following evaluation processes: (1) Grade Appeals Policy, (2) Academic Termination and (3) Reinstatement Policy. All are intentionally designed to ensure fair, reasonable and educationally sound options for students to address problematic academic situations sustaining program quality and best practices outcomes.

The School of Social Work Student Academic Review Committee reviews all Grade Appeal Requests that result in student termination and Grade Appeal processes at the request of the Dean of the School of Social Work, and Termination and Reinstatement petitions. Committee meetings are strategically scheduled during the academic year with published document submission dates to provide students the opportunity for timely petition reviews for the avoidance of unintentional course drop/withdrawal and adversely assessed financial penalties.

If an unresolved disputed grade, based on student extenuating circumstances, results in termination of the student from his/her degree and/or certificate program, the student may request the University Provost to review the school's decision of record. The student must make
a written Request for a Provost Review with a copy to the Dean of the School of Social Work within 7 days from the notification of termination from the SW program. The student may also file with the Provost a Request for a Postponement of the effect of the School's final decision. Request for a Provost Review should outline any additional arguments the student wishes to be taken into consideration by the Provost's review. Procedures for requesting a Provost review are published in the University Bulletin at http://bulletins.wayne.edu/gbk-output/

If granted, a postponement permits the student to actively continue in his/her degree program until the grade dispute has been resolved through the University's Grade Appeal process. It is strongly recommended that the student remain in active contact with the assigned Academic degree Program Advisor for guidance and advisement during this process.

Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the academic policies that guide program enrollment. Program Academic Advisors are available to assist students with clarification of policies.

Grade Appeal Policy and Procedures

Grade Review Policy:

It is the instructor's responsibility to evaluate student work using his/her professional academic judgment based on the course grading criteria and procedures published in the course syllabus located in the section for Grading and Assignments.

*Grounds for appeal of course grades are:

1. Application of non-academic criteria in the grading process, as listed in the university’s non-discrimination/affirmative action statute: race, color, sex (including gender identity), national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, height, weight, disability, or veteran status;
2. Sexual harassment or discrimination;
3. Evaluation of student work by criteria not directly reflective of performance related to course requirements.

Grade Appeal Request Procedures

Informal Review
Prior to petitioning for a formal Grade Appeal, the student shall discuss the disputed course grade with the course instructor and provide a substantive rationale to the instructor for consideration of a grade change. Instructors are expected to respond to the student's request for a review of the disputed grade within 10 business days. If there is no informal resolution, the student may then elect to initiate a formal Grade Appeal Request. Once a student determines that initiating a grade appeal is in his/her best interest, it is strongly recommended that the student contact the assigned academic advisor for guidance/adviseement to begin the formal Grade Appeal process.

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In instances where the university schedule or other circumstances occur so that faculty members may be unavailable to participate in an Informal Grade Review discussion, the student may proceed straight to the formal Grade Appeal Process.

**Formal Appeal Procedures:**
Within thirty (30) days following official notification of grades through the university Academica system for the term in which the disputed grade was awarded, and when the informal review process is unavailable to the student (based on faculty availability) or fails to resolve the dispute, the student is to complete, sign, date and submit the *Request for Grade Appeal Form* to Marilynn Knall, Associate Director/Academic Support at ac0435@wayne.edu. Submission of this form serves as the official request to the WSU School of Social Work for the appeal of a course grade.

The student is to next submit a letter petitioning the instructor for reconsideration of a change in grade, along with any documentation that supports the student's request. The letter to the instructor should include:

A. A statement identifying the grade the student believes he/she has earned in the course,
B. A precise statement of the details that constitute the objections to the course grade awarded, along with any supporting documentation for the appeal. (*The student’s objections to the course grade must be consistent with the grounds for appeal of grades as outlined in the *Grade Review Policy*).

The course instructor shall provide a written and dated response to the student's petition for the grade change within 10 business days. The instructor's response to the student should address each of the student's objections to the course grade.

If the dispute remains unresolved, the student shall submit a letter of petition for a grade change to the Dean of the SSW within 10 business days of receiving the instructor's response. The letter of petition should include:

A. The grade the student believes he/she earned in the course,
B. The details of the student's objections to the grade awarded,
C. Any supporting documentation, which must include the letter from the course instructor denying reconsideration of the student's petition for a grade change.

The final decision for granting the appeal of the grade rests with the Dean of the SSW. When deemed appropriate, the Dean may refer the appeal to the Student Academic Review Committee for resolution. Students and the course instructor will be notified of the decision within 30 business days after the Dean receives the request. The Dean's decision shall be the final decision of record at the college level.

**University Level Academic Appeals Procedure**
When the appeal procedures within the School have been exhausted, the student may request the WSU Vice-President for Academic Affairs to review the decision of record. Procedures for requesting a review by the Vice President for Academic Affairs are published in the *University Bulletin*.

*Students are to be advised of their access to the university ombudsperson at any point in the evaluation process.*