



**Rhode Island College  
School of Social Work**

**POLICY ON PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

**I have read the Policy on Professional Behavior:**

✓

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**I agree to read the complete MSW Field Manual, available on-line at**  
<https://www.ric.edu/documents/msw-field-education-manual-20-21pdf> before I begin field placement:

✓

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Please print your name here:**

✓

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## **Policy on Professional Behavior**<sup>1</sup>

Any student whose performance in the field placement constitutes a breach of the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and/or the School of Social Work Professional Code of Conduct (see below) will be referred to the Academic Standing Committee by the director of Field Education.

The following framework guides the policy on professional conduct. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice, inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff (at school or field placement) will be the basis for nonacademic termination policies (Council on Social Work Education, Commission on Accreditation, Supplement to the Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures).

### **Ethical Obligations**

Students are ethically and professionally bound to:

- adhere to the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) *Code of Ethics*
- appreciate the value of diversity by demonstrating effective and nonjudgmental relationships and working with others who are different from oneself; and
- adhere to issues of confidentiality as they relate to human services, classroom activities, and field placement.

Students are required to meet all of the following requirements to maintain good standing:

### **Professional Commitment**

- A strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the *NASW Code of Ethics*. Behavior judged to be in violation of the current NASW Code of Ethics may result in a consultative review and/or administrative action by the Academic Standing Committee.
- A demonstrated commitment to the essential values of social work, which include respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).

### **Professional Behavior**

- Behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethics standards, and societal laws in classroom, field, and community.
- Appearance and personal demeanor that reflect a professional manner.
- Sound judgment in decision making.
- Potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and critique in a positive manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted with permission from Wood, Z.B. (2008). Field education manual: Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University.

- Work and communication with others that is intended to resolve issues in a manner that is direct, professional, and geared toward problem resolution while avoiding triangulation.
- Advocacy for oneself undertaken in an appropriate and responsible manner using proper channels for conflict resolution.
- Willingness to receive and accept classroom feedback and field supervision in a positive manner to enhance professional development.
- Professional and respectful interpersonal behavior with colleagues, faculty, and staff in class and field.

## **Personal Behavior**

### **Stress Management**

- Ability to deal with current life stress through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms when stress interferes with scholastic and professional performance.
- Use of appropriate self-care and supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others when stress affects scholastic and professional performance.

### **Emotional Problems**

- Use of help for problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance.
- Recognition of need to engage in counseling or seek support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties result in any of the following:
  - compromising scholastic and other performance;
  - interfering with professional judgment and behavior;
  - jeopardizing the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the *NASW Code of Ethics*)

## **Harassment**

The school has absolutely no tolerance for any form of harassment, which includes the following:

- Conduct that intimidates, threatens, or endangers the health or safety of any person.
- Behavior that intentionally or negligently causes physical, financial, or emotional harm to any person, or is abusive or harassing to others, through prank phone calls or use of electronic means.