

300 ACADEMIC AND FIELDWORK PERFORMANCE STANDING COMMITTEE

300.1 Role and Function

(updated 2019)

The function of the Academic and Clinical Internship Performance Standing Committee for the PhD Program is to serve as the body before which all issues pertaining to the academic and clinical internship performance, and personal and professional conduct of PhD students shall come for hearing and disposition. Class attendance, honoring deadlines for written work, meeting curriculum criteria to receive a passing grade, and meeting the academic and field requirements of the clinical internship are central to the learning process. It is the student's responsibility to inform an instructor, FFA or clinical supervisor if a problem is anticipated, and to develop with the instructor, FFA or clinical supervisor a plan acceptable to the instructor, FFA or clinical supervisor for meeting the student's academic responsibility.

300.2 Committee Composition

(updated 2019)

The Committee shall be composed of the following voting membership:

- The member of the full-time faculty who holds the position of Director of the Ph.D. program;
- One resident faculty member appointed by the Dean for a two-year period (optional);
- One part-time faculty member appointed by the Dean for a period of 3 years initially and 3 years thereafter; and
- The Faculty Field Adviser (FFA);
- One student, elected by the PhD Student Body for a term of one year. (One PhD student each from the first year, second year and third year cohorts – will be identified to serve in this role. It is necessary to identify several student options for this role as someone from the same cohort as the student under review may not be able to provide an unbiased hearing or may be placed in a challenging position. Only one of these three students will sit on the committee for the review process).

The position of Chair of all Review processes shall be appointed by the Associate Dean and shall be a voting member only in the case of a tie vote.

In the event of a vacancy, conflict of interest, or the unavailability of a member, the Associate Dean may appoint a substitute member.

A quorum of the Committee shall be four (4) voting members, including the student member. If a quorum of the Committee is present, the vote of a majority of the members present shall be the vote of the Committee.

The Chair may invite other persons involved in the student's learning (for example, a supervisor or course instructor) to attend the Review as non-voting participants.

The student may request to have one Ph.D. student or faculty advocate of their choice, who is a member of the School community in good standing to participate as a non-voting observer. If a student does not wish to have an advocate, they will sign a release waiving that right.

The Committee shall meet on an ad hoc basis in response to issues raised about the standing of any Ph.D. student.

300.3 Review of a Student's Clinical Internship Performance

A student's clinical internship performance is subject to ongoing and shared assessment by the student's supervisor and Faculty Field Adviser (FFA) as outlined in this Program Handbook, and, if it is felt by the supervisor, the Program Director. If it is decided that a Review is not needed, the director will inform the requesting person, the Associate Dean, and other appropriate parties of alternative actions.

If it is decided that a Review is appropriate, the director will notify the Associate Dean (Chair of the Committee). The Associate Dean may proceed on the basis of such notice, or, alternatively, may designate a faculty member to investigate the concerns identified, and to report back to them. After reviewing the report, the Associate Dean will decide whether to proceed to a Review.

When a Review is called, the Chair will notify the Committee and the student of the date and location of the review. The Chair shall stipulate in writing to the student whether the Review is for personal, academic, professional, or a combination of performance reasons. They shall also send written notification to the student outlining the areas of concern. Because of the nature of the Review and its importance to the student and agency, the Review will be scheduled as soon as possible. The student will be requested to submit a written statement, including representative case material, in response to the notification by the Chair, or a written waiver of the right to submit such a response. The written statement or signed waiver must be received by the Chair at least one week in advance of the Review. If the situation demands, the Chair may allow a shorter time.

At the time the student submits the written statement or signed waiver, the student may request that an advocate of their choice, who shall be a member of the School community in good standing, be present at the Review as a non-voting observer.

The role of the student's advocate is to observe whether procedures are followed, and whether they feel that all relevant materials and points of view have been heard. If they feel that either of these requirements has not been met, they should inform the Chair. The advocate may also make a statement on behalf of the student and may stay for the Committee's discussion. While the advocate may not reveal any of the content of the Committee's discussion, they may report to the student or, with permission of the student, to any part of the School community, their assessment regarding whether the discussion was fair and open and whether appropriate guidelines were followed.

1. Student's Clinical Internship Performance

If a student chooses to withdraw rather than participate in a Review, the transcript will read "Withdrawn." The student may request permission from the Associate Dean to Withdraw or to take a Leave of Absence (LOA). The Associate Dean will consider the request in conjunction with the director and one other full-time faculty member on the Committee. If a LOA is granted, conditions may be specified in writing that must be fulfilled in order for the student to return to the

Program. The Associate Dean, in conjunction with the director and a full-time member of the Committee, will determine whether conditions have been successfully met when the student petitions to return to the Program.

2. Review Procedures

- a. Before the commencement of the Review, the voting members of the committee shall meet to define the function and focus of the Review.
- b. The Review will then proceed, and will include the student, supervisor, FFA, student's advocate, and other participants invited by the Chair. The Review will start with a field overview presented by the director, or a faculty member designated by the Dean in the summer.
- c. The order of presentation will be determined by the Chair and include adequate time for the student to speak on their own behalf. Members of the Committee, the student, and the student advocate shall have reasonable opportunities to direct questions to each presenter.
- d. After the issues have been discussed to the satisfaction of the Committee and all participants, the supervisor will be asked to leave that portion of the Review. Whoever presents the material and concerns prompting the Review will then give an overview of the student's performance in the Program at large. The student will have a chance to respond. Ordinarily, this should be a brief part of the Review. The student and FFA will then be asked to leave.
- e. The proceedings of the Review up to point (D) above, shall be tape recorded. Subsequent Committee discussion shall not be tape-recorded. The tape, or copy thereof, shall be available to the Committee and, on request, to the student and the student's advocate. The part of the Committee proceedings that include the student shall be audio taped and available to any member of the Committee, the student, and the advocate. The discussion that follows, which does not include the student or those persons bringing the concerns, shall be confidential and shall not be tape-recorded. Notes, however, may be kept by the Dean's office.
- f. The Committee will review the student's performance based upon the statements and written materials presented during the tape-recorded portion of the Review. The Committee will review the student's performance based on the statements of the director, the supervisor, the FFA, the student, and the representative case material submitted by the supervisor and student (if applicable).
- g. The School will make a good faith effort to identify for the student in writing, in advance, all areas of concern to be considered by the Committee. However, the Committee may act on the basis of material presented at the time of the Review, which may raise other concerns.
- h. On the basis of the Review, the committee will take one of the following courses of action:
 - i. The Committee may determine that the student's performance is satisfactory and does not warrant action on the part of the Committee.
 - ii. The Committee may mandate a Leave of Absence, including a medical Leave of Absence, and outline the goals to be achieved during the Leave.
 - iii. The Committee may send a written statement to the student outlining the deficiencies in performance and the requirements necessary to remedy these deficits. The statement will advise the student that their performance will

be reviewed again at a follow-up Review. The student will also be advised of the month in which the follow-up Review will occur.

- iv. The Committee may dismiss the student or institute a probationary period.
- v. The Committee may determine that a student has failed to complete the learning objectives for clinical internship and, in assigning a grade of "incomplete," may mandate a defined period of additional field experience.
- i. The Chair of the Committee shall meet with the student and, if the student wishes, with the student's advocate to discuss the Committee's findings and decisions. The Chair may ask another Committee member to participate in this meeting. The Chair shall advise the student in writing of the decision of the Committee, and the student's right to appeal to the Dean. The presenter of the material and the concerns prompting the Review shall advise the supervisor and FFA of the Committee's findings. The decision of the Committee will be retained in the student's permanent record.

3. Appeal

The student, any member of the Committee, and any other participant in the Review who believes the decision of the Committee lacks due process may petition the Dean to appeal within seven (7) days after the written notice to the student is issued by the Associate Dean.

4. Students on Probation

If a student's work is to be re-reviewed, or if the student has been placed on probation:

- a. The supervisor and the FFA will be responsible for submitting a written progress report and current assessment of the student's performance to the director, and to the student, at least one week in advance of the second meeting of the Committee; and
- b. The student will be responsible for submitting a written assessment of their performance, or a signed waiver of that right, to the director, at least one week in advance of the meeting.

At the same time, the student may ask to have an advocate of their choice, who is a member of the School community in good standing, present at the second meeting as a non-voting observer.

At the second meeting, the Committee will review the statement of the director, supervisor, FFA, and student (if applicable), and make one of the following decisions:

- Determine that the deficiencies have been remedied.
- Determine that the deficiencies have not been remedied and institute a probationary period, or extend the previous probationary period, until the next scheduled meeting of the Committee. If the student is placed on probation, his or her performance will again be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.
- Determine to dismiss the student.
- At the next scheduled (third) meeting of the committee, the committee will make one of two decisions. The same procedures will apply as listed for the second meeting, or
- Determine that the deficiencies have been remedied and remove the student from probation, or,
- Determine that the deficiencies have not been remedied and dismiss the student from the School.

300.4 Consultation on a Student's Clinical Internship Performance

1. Purpose

The purpose of a consultation is to develop a plan that will assist in the resolution of learning issues that have been identified by the student, supervisor, or FFA. Before a consultation is called, reasonable efforts will be made to resolve concerns in conversations between supervisor and student, FFA and student, and supervisor and FFA. Consultations will occur when such conversations have been insufficient to problem solve the issues at hand. Additional efforts at problem solving may include but are not limited to multiple party conference calls or face-to-face meetings. The director can initiate a consultation.

In most situations, the Consultation process will be sufficient to resolve the difficulties. No disciplinary action may result from a Consultation. If the performance problems are serious enough and there is still doubt about their future resolution, the Review process or a second Consultation may be recommended.

2. Composition of Consultation Committee

The Consultation Committee for Clinical internship Performance shall be composed of the following members drawn from the Committee:

- The Ph.D. program director and one Ph.D. Program Faculty member
- A member appointed by the Associate Dean
- The student's advocate, if the student chooses

3. Consultation Process

The Consultation process can be initiated by a student, supervisor, faculty member, or FFA. The requesting individual should submit to the Consultation Committee Chair, with a copy to the student, a written statement of the problem, including representative materials detailing the student's difficulties, or if called by the student, materials representing the student's concerns. The FFA and supervisor will be notified should a student request a Consultation regarding concerns or issues pertaining to their work at the agency. If the director chooses to initiate the consultation process, the Consultation Committee will meet with the individual requesting the Consultation and other appropriate parties (e.g., student, supervisor, or FFA), as may be indicated.

At the conclusion of the Consultation, the student will be verbally informed of the outcome. A written statement of the recommendations of the Consultation will be sent to the student. No information obtained during a Consultation will be placed in the student's permanent record. If a Consultation leads to a Review, a written statement will be provided to the Associate Dean by the Chair of the Consultation Committee. The student may add an addendum to the Chair's written statement prepared for the Review.

300.5 Review and Consultation of Academic Performance

Issues pertaining to academic matters will be referred to the Associate Dean, who will refer them to the Chair of the Ph.D. Program Academic and Clinical Internship Performance Standing Committee during summer academic sessions. During the summer session, the Consultation Committee for Academic Performance shall be composed of:

- The Ph.D. program director and one Ph.D. program faculty member
- A member appointed by the Associate Dean
- The student's advocate, if the student chooses

1. Role of Consultation Committee

A student's academic performance is governed by the grading system guidelines (see Academic Standards section of this Handbook). The role of the Consultation Committee is to provide consultation and recommendations to the parties who have convened the Consultation Committee. Any instructor who has serious concerns about a student's academic performance should discuss such concerns with the Ph.D. program director to determine whether or not a Consultation is indicated. If a Consultation is indicated, the instructor should submit to the Committee a written statement, including written work representative of the student's performance. Any student who received a first final grade of Marginal Pass in a required course or a second final grade of Marginal Pass overall shall come before the Consultation Committee for a Consultation regarding their academic work. The purpose of this meeting is not to grieve a grade, but to assist the student with learning issues to which the grade has called attention.

Normally, this Consultation will take place during the summer session. The instructor for the given course will attend the meeting. The Consultation Committee will decide who, in addition to the student and the Associate Dean, should be informed of its recommendations. The Consultation Committee meeting may provide sufficient Consultation around the learning issues identified and require no follow-up. The Consultation Committee may also recommend to the student additional supports outside of the classroom to assist them to master particularly problematic content areas.

The Consultation Committee may suggest that the student make active use of the Center for Academic Development. The Consultation Committee may also decide to refer a student to the Academic and Clinical Internship Performance Standing Committee for a Review. The director collects all materials necessary for such a Review.

300.6 Personal or Professional Conduct: Academic and Field

A Review or Consultation may be called for personal or professional conduct at any time based on concerns in the classroom, the field, or with the community at Smith. Any member of the community can inform the Associate Dean of concerns about personal or professional conduct. Except as provided below, the processes for determining whether a Review will be held and how a Review will be conducted are the same as those that govern Reviews for clinical internship or academic performance.

1. Review of a Student's Personal & Professional Conduct

Personal and professional conduct that call for a Review process and that are subject to dismissal include, but are not limited to, such matters as the following:

- a. All forms of dishonesty, including cheating, knowingly furnishing false information to the School or placement agency, any alteration or misuse of School or placement agency documents, records, finances, or instruments of identification.
- b. Theft of, or intentional damage to, property of the School, College, placement agency, or members and visitors of the above.
- c. Physical abuse of, or threat of physical abuse to, any person on College or placement agency premises, or at School-sponsored or supervised functions.
- d. Conduct involving serious or substantial plagiarism shall automatically necessitate the calling of a Review. The role of the Committee is to determine whether or not serious or substantial plagiarism occurred. If a determination of serious or substantial plagiarism is made, dismissal is automatic. A student charged with serious or substantial plagiarism cannot withdraw from the Program in good standing. A Review must take place, and in its absence, a student's record shall read "Withdrawn."
- e. Other conduct that renders a student an undesirable member of the School community.

Professional conduct resulting in dismissal is defined in terms of the Code of Professional Ethics adopted by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

If the Committee determines that the student's personal or professional conduct is such as to render them an undesirable member of the School community, the Committee may dismiss the student from the School. The decision to dismiss may be appealed to the Dean only on the grounds of gross error in procedure, material violation of the student's rights, new evidence unavailable at the time of the Review, or extreme bias on the part of the Committee. Appeals may not be filed based on disagreement with the Committee's decision.

If circumstances were ambiguous regarding due process, the Dean may then convene the Committee, which will Review the case and make a determination of the due process issue, including recommendations to the Dean as to outcome. Other faculty involved, for example, the instructor or the program director, may be invited to attend as non-voting participants. In addition, the student may request to have present as a non-voting observer an advocate of their choice, who is a member in good standing of the School community.