

Student Retention Policy
Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs
Kansas State University

We, the Faculty of the Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs, support a regularized system for monitoring academic and professional (e.g., affective, ethical, social) aspects of individual student performance. Although professional aspects are not separate from such academic indicators as grade averages, the latter are monitored by a centralized system that is designed to ensure that exceptionally strong or weak performance will be noticed and will receive timely recognition and attention. We wish to be at least equally confident that professional aspects of student performance are receiving timely recognition and attention.

This document sets out policies and procedures for implementing a student retention process. The principles and aspirations that underlie that process are consistent with those expressed in the College of Education's undergraduate policy entitled "Qualitative Aspects of Student Performance," found in the College's Undergraduate Student Handbook. Specifically, we propose to implement a process that (a) is comprehensive as to the sources of input about each student's progress and in terms of establishing a cumulative record in cases of concern, (b) takes a case-by-case approach and allows for varieties of responses; and (c) involves collaboration in professional judgment.

When making collaborative decisions about the continuation of students in the program, faculty consider the following expectations they hold for students:

- *Demonstrated effectiveness in developing interpersonal relationships in individual and group contacts

- *Demonstrated aptitude for counseling, student personnel services, or related human development responsibilities

- *Demonstrated commitment to a career in counseling or college student personnel services

- *Demonstrated potential for establishing facilitative relationships with people at different levels of development and with various needs and problems

- *Demonstrated openness to self-examination and personal and professional self-development

- *Demonstrated commitment to and practice of ethical principles

Policies and Procedures

A. The Department Chair, and/or the Counselor Education Program Leader, will make every reasonable effort to inform all appropriate constituencies about the principles, aspirations, policies, and procedures outlined in this document and to solicit their cooperation in making this system effective. Students within the department will be informed about the retention policy early in the admissions process. The policy will appear on the Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs web site, and students will receive a paper copy upon admission to the program. For students with visual impairments, the retention policy will be presented either on audiotape or via Braille transcription as needed. It is understood that a regularized system of

monitoring our students' performance will require excellent liaison efforts between this Department and cooperating schools or agencies.

B. At a designated time each semester, the Program Leader will convene a meeting of the counselor education faculty to evaluate each student's progress on the basis of grade point average, faculty observations of academic performance, and progress in the didactic, lab, and field experiences. In addition, any faculty member may request such a meeting at any time to express concern about a student's deficiencies. Faculty members who have teaching or advising relationships with the student in question should identify or define that relationship at the beginning of the student review process.

C. When a concern about a student is reported, the Program Leader will make a judgment about what kind of response is appropriate, within the guidelines of this document. The most common response will be to contact other persons who have been associated with the student to ascertain whether or not other professionals have similar concerns about the student. As a result of these contacts and discussions, the Program Leader will, with the combined judgment of those acquainted with the student's performance, decide whether or not further action should be taken at this time, and if so, will establish what the appropriate steps are, given the conditions of concern.

In cases where student performance is deficient, the student should be informed (by the persons stipulated above) about the nature of the deficiency, should be encouraged to state his or her views of the situation, and, except in extreme or dangerous circumstances, given an opportunity to improve.

Formal Proceedings

To be Implemented when Denial of a Privilege is Contemplated

1. When a concern reaches a point at which the denial of a privilege is contemplated (for example, denying a practicum or internship placement), formal procedures must be initiated. At that point, the Program Leader will form a committee of three faculty members--one member being outside the Department--to discuss the perceived problems. Ordinarily this committee will include those persons most directly involved with the student as well as one or more persons who will, by virtue of their previous experience in these kinds of proceedings, be able to provide continuity. If necessary, the Program Leader will be designated to act to ensure that the student understands the process. This committee will meet with the student to receive his/her views concerning the problem. This committee will then meet in closed session to determine what, if any, action should be taken. The plan of action may range from stipulating a plan for improvement of the student's performance to recommending dismissal in rare and extreme cases. The criteria for such sanctions must be consistent with the Graduate School Handbook.

2. Monitoring of Student Progress. If the committee identifies weaknesses or deficiencies which the student is required to remediate, a retention committee member will monitor the student's progress and report back to the committee about that progress. The committee will then determine what further action, if

any, should be taken, after meeting with the student and discussing alternatives. Before taking any actions, the committee will consider the student's own plan for improvement.

3. In the event that a student is removed from practicum/internship, or produces an unsatisfactory performance, and wishes to have another opportunity, the student must make a formal request for such an opportunity. Upon receiving such a request, the Program Leader will establish a review committee to consider the advisability of that student being allowed to have another practicum/internship experience. When a student is involuntarily withdrawn from a practicum/internship experience, he or she will be informed in writing that if another opportunity is to be granted, it may be only after certain conditions are met, conditions that are judged appropriate to his or her particular situation. Commonly, such conditions may include the requirement that a prescribed time period has elapsed before a student request is considered. As part of such a request, the student must provide convincing evidence for his or her readiness to undertake, and be successful in, another attempt. That evidence will be judged by the professionals on the review committee.

4. A student may at any time appeal a decision of the committee to the Chair of the Department. In the case of such an appeal, the Chair will appoint a committee to hear the appeal, being careful to ensure that the committee has the greatest probability of being fair and impartial in its hearing of the case. The committee will review the case and its file material, hear the student's presentation on her/his behalf, and may call others connected with the case to discuss the case. The committee will make its recommendation to the Chair. If satisfaction is not achieved at this level, additional steps of appeal may be taken as described in the Graduate Catalog.

Dismissal

In the unusual case where progress is not satisfactory after remediation, the faculty will consider either suspension or termination of a student from the program. The Graduate School specifies several conditions under which a student will be denied continued enrollment at Kansas State University (see Graduate Handbook policy G.1, www.ksu.edu/grad/policy.htm). Should any of these conditions be met, the Chair will inform the student of the faculty's concern, in writing. The Chair will also inform the student of his or her right to petition for reinstatement. The student will in turn have an opportunity to respond in writing.

Reinstatement

Consistent with Graduate School policies, a student who has been denied continued enrollment may petition for reinstatement to the same curriculum or for admission to a different one. Petitions for readmission are heard and decided by a standing Readmission Committee.

Students whose petitions are granted are readmitted on probation as a condition of readmission. In such cases, the Readmission Committee usually stipulates enrollment in a specific number of hours or courses, as well as other conditions. To regain regular status, the reinstated student must satisfy conditions described in Graduate Handbook policy F.3 (www.ksu.edu/grad/policy.htm) for removal from probation.