

# ОСВРТИ И ПРИКАЗИ

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## **COMPETENCIES FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: A MODEL FOR INFORMING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT IN THE UNITED STATES\***

### **Summary**

Social work profession promotes human and community well-being through its quest for economic and social justice and prevention of violation of human rights. Social work education is basis and key factor for shaping the profession's future and competent professionals. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to accredit baccalaurea-

\* This paper includes substantial content from the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=13780>

te- and master's-level social work programs.

Core competencies form the base for curriculum for social work education in United States. The competencies are identified as the explicit curriculum. The resulting practice behaviors that may be used to operationalize the curriculum and assessment methods are general and advance practice.

In this paper the author presents the core competences which form the base for curriculum development and subsequent assessment of educational outcomes as well as the resulting practice behaviours.

*Key words:* social work education, explicit curriculum, implicit curriculum, general practice, advanced practice, diversity

## **1. SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific

inquiry, social work's purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons.

Social work educators serve the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education—at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels—shapes the profession's future through the education of competent professionals, the generation of knowledge, and the exercise of leadership within the professional community.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to accredit baccalaureate- and master's-level social work programs. EPAS supports academic excellence by establishing thresholds for professional competence. It permits programs to use traditional and emerging models of curriculum design by balancing requirements that promote comparability across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate their curricula reflective of institutional mission and goals. The EPAS was revised most recently in 2008 to reflect the emerging requirement in higher education in the United States as well as globally that educational outcomes be demonstrated through quantifiable measurement.

For social work education in the United States, core competencies form the base for curriculum development and subsequent assessment of educational outcomes.

## 2. CORE COMPETENCIES

Competency-based education is an outcome performance approach to curriculum design. Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. *The ten core competencies listed below are followed by a description of characteristic knowledge, values, skills, and the resulting practice behaviors that may be used to operationalize the curriculum and assessment methods.*

The competencies are identified as the **explicit** curriculum which constitutes the program's formal educational structure and includes the courses and the curriculum. Social work education is grounded in the liberal arts, which provide the intellectual basis for the professional curriculum and inform its design. The explicit curriculum achieves the competencies through an intentional design that includes the *foundation offered at the baccalaureate and*

*master's levels and the advanced curriculum offered at the master's level.* The BSW curriculum prepares its graduates for generalist practice through mastery of the core competencies. The MSW curriculum prepares its graduates for advanced practice through mastery of the core competencies augmented by knowledge and practice behaviors specific to an advanced specialization.

### 2.1. GENERALIST PRACTICE

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person and environment construct. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice. Generalist practitioners incorporate diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. BSW practice incorporates all of the core competencies.

### 2.2. ADVANCED PRACTICE

Advanced practitioners refine and advance the quality of social work practice and that of the larger social work profession. They synthesize and apply a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills. In areas of specialization, advanced practitioners assess, intervene, and evaluate to promote human and social well-being. To do so they suit each action to the circumstances at hand, using the discrimination learned through experience and self-improvement. Advanced practice incorporates all of the core competencies augmented by knowledge and practice behaviors specific to a specialization at the Master's level.

### 2.3. SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY: FIELD EDUCATION

Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. Professionals have pedagogical norms with which they connect and integrate theory and practice. In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated

components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies.<sup>1)</sup>

### 3. CORE COMPETENCIES AND ASSOCIATED PRACTICE BEHAVIORS – THE EXPLICIT CURRICULUM

*1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.*

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers

- advocate for client access to the services of social work;
- practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
- attend to professional roles and boundaries;

1) Lee S. Shulman, Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, 2005, pp. 52-59.

- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
- engage in career-long learning; and
- use supervision and consultation.

*2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.*

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

- recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
- make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers

Code of Ethics<sup>2)</sup> and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles<sup>3)</sup>;

2) National Association of Social Workers (approved 1996, revised 1999). *Code of Ethics for Social Workers*. Washington, DC: NASW.

3) International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work. (2004). *Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles*. Retrieved January 2, 2008 from <http://www.ifsw.org>

- tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
- apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

*3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.*

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

- distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
- analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
- demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

*4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.*

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender

identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers

- recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
- gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
- recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and
- view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

*5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.*

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure

that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

- understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
- advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
- engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

*6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.*

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

- use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
- use research evidence to inform practice.

*7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.*

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and

knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers

- utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
- critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

*8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.*

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. In this regard social workers:

1. analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
2. collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

*9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.*

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to



respond proactively. Social workers:

1. continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and
2. provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

*10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.*

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

*Engagement* means that social workers:

1. substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals,

families, groups, organizations, and communities;

2. use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
3. develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

In the framework of *assessment* social workers:

- collect, organize, and interpret client data;
- assess client strengths and limitations;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies

In *intervention* social workers:

1. initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
2. implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
3. help clients resolve problems;
4. negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
5. facilitate transitions and endings.

In the *evaluation* a social workers critically analyze, monitor, and *evaluate* interventions.

### 3.1. ADVANCED PRACTICE BEHAVIOR

At the master's level of education, social work students gain advanced levels of knowledge and develop advanced practice

ce behaviors in a specialization. Each of the 10 core competencies has direct applicability to the advanced practice behaviors. The curricular and instructional autonomy of a social work program has prevailed in the determination of content and skills for advanced practice; for the most part this continues to be the case in US social work education in that we rely heavily on a program's definition and description of context (purpose and mission) in delineating its educational goals and outcomes beyond the core competencies. However, we have recently begun to develop guidelines for advanced practice behaviors in several specialization areas: gerontology; substance use prevention; clinical social work; and social work with the military. Advanced generalist practice behaviors are also being developed as a specialization that is especially appropriate to geographically rural and underserved areas. We expect additional statements of advanced practice<sup>4)</sup> specializations to be developed over the coming few years.

#### 4. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT – THE IMPLICIT CURRICULUM

The **implicit** curriculum refers to the educational environment in which the explicit curriculum

4) For examples of advanced practice statements, the reader is directed to <http://www.cswe.org/CentersInitiatives/CurriculumResources/CompetenciesforAdvancedPractice.aspx>.

is presented. It is composed of the following elements: the program's commitment to diversity; admissions policies and procedures; advisement, retention, and termination policies; student participation in governance; faculty numbers and qualifications; administrative structure; and resources. The implicit curriculum is manifested through policies that are fair and transparent in substance and implementation, the qualifications of the faculty, and the adequacy of resources dedicated to the achievement of the program's goals. The culture of human interchange; the spirit of inquiry; the support for difference and diversity; and the values and priorities in the educational environment, including the field setting, inform the student's learning and development. The implicit curriculum is as important as the explicit curriculum in shaping the professional character and competence of the program's graduates. Heightened awareness of the importance of the implicit curriculum promotes an educational culture that is congruent with the values of the profession.<sup>5)</sup>

#### 5. ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The recent 2008 shift from a content based curriculum model to one based on explicit compe-

5) Elliot W. Eisner, *The educational imagination: on the design and evaluation of school programs* (3rd ed.). Macmillan, New York, 2002 .



tencies and demonstrated achievement of those competencies by students in a social work program has been cautiously embraced by some programs and enthusiastically adopted by others. All 750 social work programs in the United States are required to comply with the EPAS standards at the time of their review for initial accreditation or for reaffirmation of current accredited status. Revision of these standards is expected in 2015 and the work is currently taking place that will produce a refinement of the current accreditation standards. Attention is being paid to assessment of competence, development of consensus understanding of what constitutes advanced practice in a specialization, and the particulars of compliance with standards related to the implicit curriculum or the contextual requirements for quality in the social work program.

The CSWE Office of Social Work Education and Research serves as the arm of accreditation that performs surveys and analysis of the accreditation process as well as the point of data compilation and analysis regarding the outcomes assessment<sup>6)</sup> as measured against the competencies and operationalized through the practice behaviors. As programs develop assessment measures, they may be guided by work done by

colleague and peer institutions/ programs as well as resources developed by CSWE.

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ЗА ДЕЛАТНОСТ  
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ИНФОРМИСАЊЕ  
ОБРАЗОВАЊА  
СОЦИЈАЛНОГ РАДА И  
РЕЗУЛТАТИ ОЦЕЊИВАЊА  
У СЈЕДИЊЕНИМ  
АМЕРИЧКИМ ДРЖАВАМА

Резиме

Професија социјалног рада промовише благаостање људи и заједнице кроз економску и социјалну правду и спречавање кршење људских права. Образовање за социјални рад основа и кључни фактор за обликовање будућности ове професије и за стварање компетентних стручњака. Савет за образовање социјалних радника користи образовну политику и акредитационе стандарде за акредитацију програма социјалног рада на основним и мастер студијама.

Кључне компетенције чине основу наставног плана и програма за образовање у области социјалног рада у Сједињеним Америчким Државама. Ове компетенције чине експлицитни курикулум. Праксе којима се операционализује наставни програм и методе процене су

6) The reader is directed to <http://www.cswe.org/CentersInitiatives/CurriculumResources.aspx> to see resources available for outcomes assessment.

општа пракса и напредна пракса.

У овом раду су представљене кључне компетенције које чине основу развоја наставних програма и накнадног вредновања образовних исхода, као и понашања у пракси.

*Кључне речи:* образовање за социјални рад, експлицитни наставни програм, имплицитни наставни програм, општа пракса, напредна пракса, разноликост

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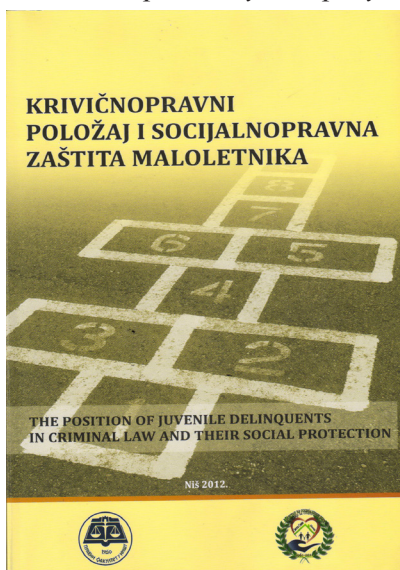
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## **КРИВИЧНО ПРАВНИ ПОЛОЖАЈ И СОЦИЈАЛНО- ПРАВНА ЗАШТИТА МАЛОЛЕТНИКА**

Малолетничка деликвенција је предмет интересовања научника и стручњака различитих области и проучава се са кривичноправног, криминолошког, криминалнопсихолошког, психијатријског, виктимолошког и других аспеката. О овој појави је до сада објављен велики број истраживања и студија.