

Division of Social Work
MSW Program Assessment
June 28, 2013

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MSW Program Annual Assessment
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The Division of Social Work curriculum is guided by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), specifically the Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS). The EPAS, like curriculum, continue to evolve and reflect the changing nature of the field of Social Work as well as the latest data regarding Social Work pedagogy. Our last accreditation in 2008 was based on CSWE's 2001 evaluation criteria. Shortly after our re-accreditation, CSWE introduced the 2008 EPAS criteria, which will apply to our next accreditation in 2016. Historically, we have assessed our programs on "educational program objectives;" the new 2008 accreditation standards brings further definition to our outcome measures in addressing "practice competencies." Over the last 3 years, the Division has been incrementally incorporating these new standards. The Division has historically used three means of evaluation 1) Field evaluations (wherein field instructors and students measure behavioral outcomes of professional education); 2) the alumni survey (past students are asked about their professional experience: skills and challenges, what their education prepared them for and what was lacking) and 3) course embedded assignments in all core courses which are designed to measure a student's competency in specific learning objectives across the curriculum. The three means of assessment incorporate both direct and indirect measures as well as formative and summative methods. All measures are tied to the division and university's mission and are linked to accreditation standards.

In 2011-12, the Social Work Assessment Committee decided to narrow and refine the current collection of data surrounding the MSW Program Assessment. The decision was to discontinue the use of course embedded assignments, in favor of focusing our resources on refinement of both the Student Field Evaluation and Alumni Survey instruments.

Alumni Survey

The survey gathered self-efficacy data on alumni's perception of their knowledge, values and skills base for practice, as well as other satisfaction and employment measures. The 2007 survey provided important input into the program's Self-Study preliminary to the re-accreditation process that culminated in 2008.

In Spring 2013, a number of second year MSW students (under the supervision of a Social Work research faculty member) revised the Alumni Survey in a "Survey Monkey" format and emailed it to over 300 alumni (2007-2011 graduates). The data (both quantitative and qualitative) are currently being analyzed and will be presented at the Faculty Retreat in August. The following preliminary findings will help set the agenda for the Faculty Retreat:

78% of respondents are employed in full-time permanent positions.

91% of those employed full-time are working in Social Work positions.

Most are employed in Child Protective Services and Mental Health Agencies

Most eventually want to work in either mental health or a medical setting.

In retrospect, they were most satisfied with their Practice classes (both years)

And least satisfied with their Research and Advanced Policy classes.

The skills they felt most confident in were cultural sensitivity and application of social work values.

The skills they felt least confident in were utilizing research methods in their practice and utilization of computer technology.

There is a great deal of qualitative data that accompanies the brief findings stated here. A more detailed report will help guide the Division in our work in 2013-14 surrounding curriculum restructuring. A comprehensive review of that analysis along with the curriculum revisions will be included in the 2013-14 MSW Program Assessment.

Student Field Evaluation

Student Field Evaluation data are completed by field instructors at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters for all students enrolled in Field classes. On-site agency field instructors and practice faculty review the results of each student's evaluation, and adjust course content and practicum learning activities to help students strengthen the competencies as needed. In addition, field evaluation data are aggregated and presented to the faculty on an annual basis. The data are used to update course content, particularly in the practice sequence (SWRK 204A, 204B, 204C & 204D.) This instrument was updated in Fall 2011 to reflect the new professional competency-based accreditation standards.

The *Student Field Evaluation* is constructed to mirror the student *Learning Agreement*, which outlines 9 competencies. Under each competency, a range of behavioral indicators are identified. Students are expected to score between 3-5 in each competency by the end of their second semester of field. In addition, we expect 90% of the students to score 3 or above in each of the competencies by the beginning of the second semester of field. Competencies that don't meet the 90% benchmark are targeted for curriculum review.

Field instructors (agency supervisors of the student's practicum) rate the student and students rate themselves on all behavioral indicators, according to a 5 point scale:

- 1=Unacceptable performance
- 2= Beginning Skill Development
- 3= Progressing in Demonstration
- 4= Consistent Demonstration of High Level of Skill Development
- 5= Exceptional Demonstration of Skill Development

2012-13 MSW Program Assessment

The Social Work Faculty will be meeting in curricular sequence meetings this year to look at the current learning objectives used in each course and the assignments used to measure learning. Over the next two years, each course in the curriculum will change from learning objectives to practice competencies, accompanied with a means of measuring the mastery of the

competencies. In 2012-13, the Social Work Assessment Committee prioritized “practice skills” as the focus of this year’s assessment.

The Student Field Evaluation measures an overall competency referred to as Practice Skills which include three areas or components: *Engagement, Assessment, and Intervention*. Each of these areas has four behavioral indicators or means of measuring the competency: *Engagement*: 1) Establishes effective working relationships with clients/client systems; 2) able to develop and maintain trust, communicate empathy, and respect; 3) effectively prepares for work with clients; and 4) develops mutually agreed upon focus of work and desired outcomes with clients. *Assessment*: 1) Collects, organizes and interprets client data; 2) assesses client’s strengths and limitations; 3) develops mutually agreed on intervention goals and objectives; and 4) selects appropriate intervention strategies. *Intervention*: 1) implements intervention strategies; 2) helps clients resolve problems; 3) negotiates, mediates, and advocates for clients; 4) facilitates transitions and endings for clients.

There are four scores attached to each of the questions: Student’s self-assessment and the Field Instructors assessment at the end of Fall and Spring semesters. Scores from the completed field evaluation forms for Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 were input manually into an Excel spreadsheet. For this analysis, the following data sets are used:

	# of Students and Field Instructors		
	BSW/FI	MSW I/FI	MSWII/FI
Fall 2012	68/68	72/72	93/93
Spring 2013	68/68	72/72	93/93

The overall scores from all the items on the Student Field Evaluation indicate social work competencies improved over the course of the two year program. It was the Division's goal that the mean Spring scores reach 4.0.

Table 1: Differences in Rating between Semesters – Students and Field Instructors

		Mean	SD	Paired t-score	df	p	Sig
MSWI Students	Fall 2012	3.20	0.327	22.59	143	.00001	*
	Spring 2013	4.06	0.21				
MSWI Field Instructors	Fall 2012	3.26	0.25	35.06	143	.00001	*
	Spring 2013	4.26	0.19				
MSWII Students	Fall 2012	3.74	0.229	29.08	185	.00001	*
	Spring 2013	4.37	0.169				
MSWII Field Instructors	Fall 2012	3.74	0.292	18.14	185	.00001	*
	Spring 2013	4.52	0.234				

Statistically significant findings:

1. All MSWI and MSWII students and their field instructors indicated a significant increase ($p < .01$) in students' performance between Spring and Fall semesters.
2. The increases are about one (1) point for MSWI (3.1 to 4.1 for students, 3.2 to 4.2 for FI).
3. The increases for MSWII are about 0.6 to 0.8 points for MSWII (3.7 to 4.3 for students, 3.7 to 4.5 for FI). While the numbers are smaller than those for MSWI, they are higher numbers.

Table 2: Overall Differences between Students' and Field Instructors' Ratings

		Mean	Independent t-score	df	P (two)	Sig

MSWI Students vs. Field Instructors	Fall 2012 students	2.25	-0.56	120	0.576	Not
	Fall 2012 FI	2.40				
MSW I Students vs. Field Instructors	Spring 2013 Students	2.86	-0.8	120	0.425	Not
	Spring 2013 FIs	3.14				
MSWII Students vs. Field Instructors	Fall 2012 students	2.53	-0.62	128	0.536	Not
	Fall 2012 FI	2.72				
MSW II Students vs. Field Instructors	Spring 2013 Students	2.96	-1.05	128	0.296	Not
	Spring 2013 FI	3.33				

Findings:

1. There are no statistically significant differences between students' self-rating and FI's rating.

2. Both MSW I and MSW II students rated themselves lower than their field instructors rated them. (For MSW1 (Student 2.2 vs. FI 2.4 for Fall; Student 2.8 vs. FI 3.1 for Spring) and MSWII students (Student 2.5 vs. FI 2.7 for Fall; Student 2.9 vs. FI 3.3 for Spring). **Table 3: MSW I Changes from Fall to Spring Semester within Competencies**

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COMPETENCIES	MSWI Fall	MSWI Spring	Change
	Area Mean	Area Mean	
1. Student identifies as a professional social worker and conducts self accordingly:	3.49	4.19	0.70
2. Student applies social work ethical principles to guide professional practice:	3.40	4.16	0.76
3. Student applies critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments:	2.96	3.90	0.94

4. Student engages diversity and difference in practice:	3.26	4.23	0.97
5. Student advances human rights and social and economic justice:	2.76	3.88	1.12*
6. Student engages in research-informed practice and practice-informed research:	2.80	3.71	0.91
7. Student applies knowledge of human behavior and the social environment:	3.02	3.91	0.89
8. Student engages in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being, and deliver effective social work services:	2.87	3.77	0.90
9. Engagement	3.31	4.30	0.99
10. Assessment	2.97	3.97	1.00
11. Intervention	2.98	4.01	1.03*
Average	3.07	4.00	0.93

*Largest changes

The overall scores from all the items on the Student Field Evaluation indicate social work competencies improved over the course of the academic year, i.e., students' Fall semester scores were lower than Spring.

Table 4: MSW II Changes from Fall to Spring Semester within Competencies

COMPETENCIES	MSWII Fall	MSWII Spring	Change
	Area Mean	Area Mean	
1. Student identifies as a professional social worker and conducts self accordingly:	3.87	4.47	0.60
2. Student applies social work ethical principles to guide professional practice:	3.91	4.46	0.55
3. Student applies critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments:	3.60	4.22	0.62

4. Student engages diversity and difference in practice:	3.88	4.47	0.59
5. Student advances human rights and social and economic justice:	3.53	4.17	0.64
6. Student engages in research-informed practice and practice-informed research:	3.38	4.04	0.66
7. Student applies knowledge of human behavior and the social environment:	3.57	4.27	0.70
8. Student engages in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being, and deliver effective social work services:	3.40	4.09	0.69
9. Engagement	3.92	4.51	0.59
10. Assessment	3.69	4.39	0.70
11. Intervention	3.57	4.33	0.76*
12. Leadership	3.46	4.39	0.93*
Average	3.65	4.32	0.67

*Largest changes

The overall scores from all the items on the Student Field Evaluation indicate that students' skills improved over the course of the 2 year program. Students met the 4.0 goal for end-of-the-year competency in each of the categories.

Table 5 Comparison of BSW, MSWI and MSWII Students

COMPETENCIES	BSW Change	MSWI Change	MSWII Change
1. Student identifies as a professional social worker and conducts self accordingly:	0.90	0.70	0.60
2. Student applies social work ethical principles to guide professional practice:	0.83	0.76	0.55
3. Student applies critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments:	1.00	0.94	0.62
4. Student engages diversity and difference in practice:	1.00	0.97	0.59

5. Student advances human rights and social and economic justice:	2.00*	1.12*	0.64
6. Student engages in research-informed practice and practice-informed research:	1.00	0.91	0.66
7. Student applies knowledge of human behavior and the social environment:	1.00	0.89	0.70
8. Student engages in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being, and deliver effective social work services:	2.00*	0.90	0.69
9. Engagement	1.00	0.99	0.59
10. Assessment	1.00	1.00	0.70
11. Intervention	1.00	1.03*	0.76*
12. Leadership			0.93*
Average	1.16	0.93	0.67

Findings

1. BSW students had larger changes than MSWI or MSWII students. BSW changes were most noteworthy in the areas of human rights and social justice MSWI's were greater in human rights and intervention skills, and MSWII's were more in the area of intervention skills.
2. Critical thinking changes were greater for BSW (1) than MSWI (.94) and MSWII (.62).
3. Leadership is a MSW II only variable

Summary

The Division has historically used three means of evaluation: Field evaluations, alumni surveys and course embedded assignments. In accordance with the new EPAS and the emphasis on assessing student competencies, the Division has most recently focused its attention on updating curriculum to reflect “competencies.” This has been most evident in the refinement of the Student Field Evaluation. Although the Practice courses have not been updated to reflect the CSWE change from “learning objectives” to “competencies,” our data indicate that the current curriculum content is teaching “competencies.” Importantly, the Division’s goal of all MSW II students achieving a mean score of 4 in Spring semester on all competencies in their Field evaluation was reached. More specifically, the Assessment Committee’s analysis of competencies regarding the Practice Skills: Engagement, Assessment and Intervention revealed that the goal of 4 was reached with an average increase of 1.5 between Fall MSW I and Spring MSW II evaluations.

The Curriculum Sequence Committees will meet at the annual Social Work Fall retreat in August to look at this year’s results from the Student Field Evaluation. As the Division moves forward in updating the current curriculum to reflect “competencies,” the results of the Field Evaluation become particularly important.

The 2013-14 competency focus will be determined by the Assessment Committee when they meet in the Fall 2013.