

Frostburg State University
BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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By

Terry Russell, Ph.D., MSW
Professor of Social Work and
Chair, Department of Social Work

(Questions and comments can be directed to trussell@frostburg.edu)

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires that the following data be made public and that it be updated every two years. This assessment plan went into effect Fall 2012, and at this update six graduating cohorts are available, Fall 2012 through Spring 2015. The cumulative data now includes a total of 76 graduates over these six semesters. The CSWE standards were changed in 2015, so future assessments will be conducted under the new standards. The social work program at Frostburg is fully accredited by CSWE and is in compliance with all regulations. The program was reaffirmed for accreditation June 2015, and is currently reaffirmed for accreditation until June 2023 (program accreditation must be reaffirmed every eight years).

METHODOLOGY

All programs professionally accredited by CSWE measure and report student learning outcomes. Under the 2008-2015 standards, known as EPAS 2008, students are assessed on their mastery of the 13 competencies that comprise the accreditation standards of CSWE. These competencies are dimensions of social work practice that all social workers are expected to acquire during their professional training. Each social work program sets a measurement benchmark for each competency, typically 4 on a 5-point scale. An assessment score at or above that benchmark is considered by the program to represent mastery of that particular competency.

The data below is based on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest rating. Like most programs, the Frostburg benchmark is 4 on this 5-point scale, and the CSWE standard is that at least 80% of graduates score at or above the program benchmark on each of the 13 Core Competencies. Each Core Competency is measured by one to six measurable objectives (41 total). The student's rating is then based on a combination of two measures, a rating on 41 measureable objectives by the student's field supervisor and the student's own self assessment on those 41 items. This provides a combination of students' confidence in their own abilities and the opinion of an experienced professional in the field who is familiar with new hires in their agency and with what is expected of them. These two measures were averaged to arrive at the data below.

RESULTS

The cumulative data on the six cohorts (n=76) shows that 87 to 100 percent of graduates met the program benchmark of 4 on the 5-point scale for each social work competency (see Table 1). This meets and exceeds the CSWE standard that 80 percent of all graduates meet the program benchmark. It also provides the department with empirical data on various aspects of the curriculum, which would identify problem areas if any existed.

No problem areas have been identified at this point based on the cumulative data for these six cohorts. On one competency, to engage diversity in practice, 100% of all 76 graduates met the benchmark. For 9 of the 13 competencies, 90 to 97% met the benchmark, exceeding CSWE standards. For three competencies, 87 to 89% met the benchmark, still well above the CSWE standard of 80%. There were no competencies for which Frostburg graduates fell below the CSWE standard.

CONCLUSION

The only three competencies for which less than 90% of graduates met the program benchmark of 4 include "Respond to Practice Contexts" (87%), "Engage in Research Informed Practice and Practice Informed Research" (88%), and "Engage Policy Practice to Advance Well-Being and Deliver Services" (89%). It could be argued that these competencies more than the others can only reach full realization with on-the-job experience and/or graduate school training. This data indicates Frostburg graduates are competent and well prepared for both their first professional social work job and for graduate school in social work.

Table 1. CSWE Reporting Form.

COMPETENCY	COMPETENCY BENCHMARK	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING BENCHMARK (N = 76)
Identify as a Professional Social Worker	4	95
Apply Ethical Principles	4	93
Apply Critical Thinking	4	93
Engage Diversity in Practice	4	100
Advance Human Rights/ Social and Economic Justice	4	92
Engage Research Informed Practice/ Practice Informed Research	4	88
Apply Human Behavior Knowledge	4	95
Engage Policy Practice to Advance Well-Being and Deliver Services	4	89
Respond to Practice Contexts	4	87
Practice Engagement	4	97
Practice Assessment	4	96
Practice Intervention	4	90
Practice Evaluation	4	93