

**Frostburg State University
BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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By

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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 2015, and conforms to the Educational Policies and Academic Standards [EPAS] 2015. The previous social work program assessment plan was closed out with a final report dated July 22, 2015 (n=76). This report reflects data on the first two cohorts consisting of social work students graduating Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 (AY 2015/16). These two semesters provide a small N of 22 students, so these results are considered somewhat tentative while additional data is accumulated in following years.

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 fully accredited until June 2023 (program accreditation must be reaffirmed every eight years). Additionally, each program is required to publicly post results of their assessment plan at least every two years, according to the following CSWE standard:

Form AS4 (B) Duplicate and expand as needed. Provide table(s) to support self-study narrative addressing the *accreditation standards* below.

This form is used to assist the COA in the evaluation of the program's compliance with the accreditation standards below:

4.0.2 The program provides its most recent year of summary data and outcomes for the assessment of each of the identified competencies, specifying the percentage of students achieving program benchmarks for each program option.

4.0.3 The program uses Form AS 4(B) and/or Form AS 4(M) to report its most recent assessment outcomes for each program option to constituents and the public on its website and routinely up-dates (minimally every 2 years) its findings.

All Council on Social Work Education programs measure and report student learning outcomes. Students are assessed on their mastery of the competencies that comprise the accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education. These competencies are dimensions of social work practice that all social workers are expected to master during their professional training. A measurement benchmark is set by the social work programs for each competency. An assessment score at or above that benchmark is considered by the program to represent mastery of that particular competency.

METHODOLOGY

All programs professionally accredited by CSWE measure and report student learning outcomes. Under EPAS 2015, students are assessed on their mastery of the 9 core competencies included in the accreditation standards of CSWE. These competencies are dimensions of social work practice that all social workers are expected to acquire during their baccalaureate 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 9 core competencies. Each core competency is measured by two to five measurable objectives (31 total). The student's rating is then based on a combination of two measures, a rating on the 31 measurable objectives by the student's field supervisor and the student's own self-assessment on those 31 items. The measurable objectives for each core competency are then averaged to determine the percentage of graduates who meet the benchmark for each core competency, as required by CSWE.

RESULTS

The cumulative data on the two cohorts (n=22) show that 88.6 to 97.2 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. These data indicate no problem areas falling below the CSWE benchmark. Only two competencies, Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice, and Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice, fall below 90 percent. While more than meeting the standard, it could be argued that each of these competencies are more challenging for novice social workers in that research methods and social policy are skills that develop over more time, especially with graduate school training. It had been observed in the previous assessment plan that sometimes the field supervisors tend to rate students better than do the students themselves. In the case of competency 4, Field Instructors rated 90.9% of graduates above the benchmark and 86.3% of the students rated themselves above the benchmark. For competency 5, Field Instructors rated 90.9% of students above the benchmark and 88.1% of the students rated themselves at or above the benchmark. It may be that students in these challenging areas lack confidence due to unrealistic expectations, but the Field Instructors have more realistic expectations for graduating students. 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 students and new hires in their agency and with what is expected of them.

CONCLUSION

There were no competencies for which Frostburg graduates fell below the CSWE standard. The two competencies that fell below 90 percent will be monitored as additional data is accumulated, but these results indicate no cause for radical change.

Table 1. CSWE Reporting Form.

COMPETENCY	COMPETENCY BENCHMARK	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING BENCHMARK (Data for AY 2015/2016, N=22)			
		Program Option #1 (Main Campus)	Program Option #2 (Other campus)	Program Option #3 (Online Program)	Aggregate of All Program Options
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	4 on a 5-point scale	95.8	none	none	95.8
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice	4 on a 5-point scale	94.6	none	none	94.6
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	4 on a 5-point scale	95.4	none	none	95.4
Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice	4 on a 5-point scale	88.6	none	none	88.6
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	4 on a 5-point scale	89.5	none	none	89.5
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	4 on a 5-point scale	94.1	none	none	94.1
Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	4 on a 5-point scale	95.2	none	none	95.2
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	4 on a 5-point scale	97.2	none	none	97.2
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	4 on a 5-point scale	94.5	none	none	94.5