

**Frostburg State University  
BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Last Completed on July 19, 2017**

**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 four semester cohorts beginning Fall 2015 when EPAS 2015 was adopted.

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 accreditation 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.

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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. If there is insufficient data on a given item it is treated as not meeting the benchmark. When deemed necessary due to missing data, the social work faculty can opt to complete a given rating based on the appropriated items in the students portfolio. Otherwise, the missing data has the effect of not meeting the benchmark.

## RESULTS

The cumulative data on the four semester cohorts (n=59) show that 88.4 to 97.8 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 of 80%. Only one competency (Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice) falls below 90%, with 88.4%. While more than meeting the standard, it could be argued that this competency is more challenging for novice social workers in that research methods involves skills that develop over more time, especially with graduate school training. It has been observed in previous assessments that in some areas, like research and social policy, the field supervisors tend to rate students better than do the students themselves. It might be that this is a measure of student uncertainty and unrealistic expectations in challenging areas. For the Spring 2017 cohort there was a 23% difference between students and supervisors in rating Competency 4, which is about double the difference of all other competencies,

which have a combined average difference of 12%. In other words, seasoned professionals with more realistic expectations of the competency of graduating seniors to incorporate research methods with social work practice have a much higher assessment of the graduating students than do the students themselves. Perhaps students have unrealistic expectations for themselves and/or simply feel less competent than they actually are compared to their seasoned professional peers at their internship site. Even with this handicap of sorts, the rating in Competency 4 remains well above the benchmark of 80%, and the students certainly cannot be thought of as over confident in this area.

## CONCLUSION

There were no competencies for which Frostburg graduates fell below the CSWE standard of 80%. The one competency that fell below 90% will be monitored as additional data is accumulated, but these results indicate no cause for radical change. The matter of student confidence and realistic expectations will be addressed by the faculty for further consideration.

Table 1. CSWE Reporting Form.

COMPETENCY (EPAS 2015 Standards)	COMPETENCY BENCHMARK	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING BENCHMARK (Main Campus, Undergraduate Only)			
		AY 2015/2016 (N=22)	Fall 2016 (N=13)	Spring 2017 (N=24)	Aggregate of All Cohorts (N=59)
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	4 on a 5-point scale	95.8	98	96	96.4
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice	4 on a 5-point scale	94.6	97	100	97.3
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	4 on a 5-point scale	95.4	92	92	93.3
Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice	4 on a 5-point scale	88.6	100	82	88.4
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	4 on a 5-point scale	89.5	97	92	92.2
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	4 on a 5-point scale	94.1	100	100	97.8
Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	4 on a 5-point scale	95.2	100	98	97.4
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	4 on a 5-point scale	97.2	100	97	97.7
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	4 on a 5-point scale	94.5	90	97	94.5