# Social Work Program BSW Assessment 2013-15

## Social Work Program Assessment Plan

The Social Work Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and adheres to its accreditation standards that require each program to have an assessment plan and procedures through which to evaluate program outcomes. Our Social Work program assessment plan is tied to the 2008 EP Competencies. Each individual course contains student learning objectives and outcomes that link back to the EP Competencies. The Social Work program uses all assessment information to affirm or improve our course content in relation to our learning objectives.

## Social Work Mission

The social work program's guiding philosophy is based on two broad traditions: generalist social work practice and the land-grant university heritage.  The program mission is to prepare social workers for beginning practice in a diverse society and to equip students with the knowledge and skills essential to the general tasks of promoting social welfare in institutions such as education, health, employment, housing and criminal justice.  The program provides grounding in the fundamental generalist skills, knowledge, and values of social work, such as critical thinking, clarification of personal values, awareness of diversity, professional use of self, and communication and interpersonal relationship skills.

## Social Work Program Goals

The two fundamental goals that guide the Social Work Program are:
1.     To prepare students for employment as generalist social workers through education in a professional foundation curriculum and selected liberal arts education coursework.
2.     To prepare students for advanced professional education.

## Advanced Placement Test (APT) and Generalist Practice Test (GPT)

The Social Work Program Advanced Placement Test (APT) and Generalist Practice Test (GPT) results are each used as part of the evaluation process to determine student readiness to move forward in the Social Work program. The APT is one of the indicators to assess if students are ready to move into the Advanced Standing junior year practice classes.  The APT tests student knowledge of the content in the three introductory classes (SW 1010, 2100, 2400).  The GPT is one of the indicators to assess if junior social work majors are ready to move into their senior year practicum placements.  The GPT tests student knowledge of the content in the four junior year practice classes (SW 3050, 4100, 4150, 4160). Students need to score 70% or better on either exam to advance to the next level. The exam results are analyzed by subject area (e.g. material pertaining to Introduction to Social Work) to evaluate teaching effectiveness of those content areas (see Table 1 below) and also how well we are meeting program teaching

objectives. The APT/GPT results are also linked to the CSWE 2008 EP Competencies (see Table 2 below). Faculty members discuss all assessment results at the first Social Work faculty meeting of each academic year.

| Table 1.  Social Work Assessment Exam Results 2013 - | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **APT mean scores by subject** Area | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| 1010 Intro | 86.3 | 75.1 | 72.8 |
| 2100 HBSE | 87.1 | 76.9 | 71.8 |
| 2400 Diverse Populations | 92.8 | 92.6 | 89.8 |
| **GPT mean scores by subject Area** | | | |
| 3050 Practice I (individuals) | 81.0 | 82.8 | 81.4 |
| 4150 Practice II (groups) | 75.8 | 73.6 | 73.4 |
| 4160 Practice III (communities) | 77.0 | 95.0 | 81.6 |
| 4100 Research Methods | 67.4 | 75.4 | 78.1 |

**CSWE 2008 EP Competencies**

Each social work class has stated learning objectives that are linked to these competencies.  While each competency is not evaluated in every class, all the competencies are evaluated in the overall curriculum.

EP 2.1.1    Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
EP 2.1.2    Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
EP 2.1.3    Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
EP 2.1.4    Engage in diversity and difference in practice
EP 2.1.5    Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
EP 2.1.6    Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
EP 2.1.7    Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
EP 2.1.8    Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work.
EP 2.1.9    Respond to contexts that shape practice.
EP 2.1.10   Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Specific questions on the APT/GPT exams that address each competency.

EP 2.1.1      Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly
<u>Practice Behaviors</u>
- Advocate for clients
- Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development
- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance and communication
- Engage in career-long learning

APT Questions: 1, 5, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20
GPT Questions: 1, 2, 3, 20

EP 2.1.2      Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice
<u>Practice Behaviors</u>
Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice
Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics
APT questions: 2, 3, 4, 7, 21
GPT questions: 4, 5

EP 2.1.3      Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
<u>Practice Behaviors</u>
Distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based evidence and practice wisdom.
Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation
Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues
APT questions: 24, 27, 31, 37
GPT questions: 6, 21, 30, 37

EP 2.1.4      Engage in diversity and difference in practice
<u>Practice Behaviors</u>
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 understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
View selves as learners and engage clients as informants.
APT questions: 6, 8-10, 14, 15, 23, 40-50
GPT questions: 7, 21, 22, 25, 31

EP 2.1.5	Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
Practice Behaviors
Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice
Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice
APT questions: 6, 12, 13, 14, 16, 23
GPT questions: 32, 35

EP 2.1.6	Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
Practice Behaviors
Use practice experience to inform research
Use research evidence to inform practice
GPT questions: 18, 23, 24, 38, 39, 40

EP 2.1.7	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
Practice Behaviors
Use conceptual frameworks to guide assessment, intervention and evaluation
Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment
APT questions: 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36
GPT questions: 9, 10, 41, 33

EP 2.1.8	Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and
	to deliver effective social work.
Practice Behaviors
Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being
Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action
Not assessed in APT or GPT.

EP 2.1.9	Respond to contexts that shape practice.
Practice Behaviors
Appraise and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological
	developments and societal trends to provide relevant services
Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to
	improve the quality of social services
APT questions: 37, 38
GPT questions: 24, 29, 33, 35

EP 2.1.10	Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups,
	organizations, and communities.
Practice Behaviors
Prepare for effective action with individuals, families, groups, communities, and
	organizations
Use empathy and other interpersonal skills
Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes
Assess client strengths and limitations

Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients
Help clients resolve problems
Critically analyze, monitor and evaluate interventions
APT questions: 33, 39
GPT questions: 21-29, 30-36, 37-50

| Table 2. Social Work Program Competencies APT/GPT Exam Results | 2013 Means | 2014 Means | 2015 Means |
|---|---|---|---|
| EP 2.1.1. Identify as a professional social worker conduct oneself accordingly | APT 81.0% GPT 81.6 | APT 78% GPT 77.4% | APT 76.7% GPT 84% |
| EP 2.1.2. Apply social work ethical principles to professional practice | APT 87.3% GPT 90.6 | APT 80.6% GPT 88.5% | APT 73.8% GPT 86.3% |
| EP 2.1.3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments | APT 89.9% GPT 63.6 | APT 90.8% GPT 89% | APT 82.2% GPT 83.8% |
| EP 2.1.4. Engage in diversity and difference in practice | APT 87.8% GPT 82.8 | APT 63.4% GPT 91% | APT 85.5% GPT 70.2% |
| EP 2.1.5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice | APT 84.7% GPT 79.3 | APT 76.2% GPT 96% | APT 71% GPT 80.3% |
| EP 2.1.6. Engage in research-informed practice practice-informed research | APT 90.5% GPT 80.6 | Not assessed GPT 80% | Not assessed GPT 81.2% |
| EP 2.1.7. Apply knowledge of human behavior a the social environment | APT 79.1% GPT 67.3 | APT 74.3% GPT 91.3% | APT 63.3% GPT 73.6% |
| EP 2.1.8. Engage in policy practice to advance s and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work | APT 88.9% GPT 88.9 | Not assessed in APT/GPT | Not assessed in APT/GPT |
| EP 2.1.9. Respond to contexts that shape practi | APT 87.1% GPT 79.5 | APT 91.5% GPT 89.5% | APT 78% GPT 81.1% |
| EP 2.1.10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evalu with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities | APT 87.9% GPT 85.5 | APT 83.1% GPT 80.5% | APT 73% GPT 75.9% |

**Data-Based Decision Making**

In an effort to continuously improve, assessment data and outcomes are discussed by the faculty and with other constituencies on an ongoing basis. Below are examples of how this is done.

*Monthly Faculty Meetings and Semi-annual Retreats.* Discussion of assessment results occurs on an ongoing basis at monthly faculty meetings, the annual fall faculty retreat, and the annual spring practicum faculty retreat. During these meetings faculty members discuss assessment outcomes and propose plans to remedy any issues determined to be problematic. We also discuss ways to share with our constituencies what we are doing and what changes we are considering. Student representatives are invited to these meetings when the agenda suggests their input is needed. As needed, we gather feedback from our constituencies regarding the change process. For example, recently we discussed ways to improve the professional seminars taught in conjunction with the field practicum experiences. We learned from the student self assessment data collected over the past two years that students needed more time to process their practicum experiences in ways that help them develop program competencies. We responded by adjusting the seminars to include more time for processing experiences, connecting those experiences with practice behaviors and competencies.

*Field Instructor Trainings.* Field Instructor orientation/training occurs at the beginning of each fall semester to welcome field instructors to the new academic year and to familiarize them with the requirements of the field experience. Field instructors are provided with information about the program, including pertinent program assessment results, as well as information about student requirements for the year, and the faculty liaison with whom they will be working. During a recent field instructor training we discussed how the learning contracts can be used to help students focus on practice behaviors and competencies they need to give more attention to during the field practicum experience. Field instructors provided feedback regarding the learning contracts, how the foundation learning contract could be improved to help students develop competencies that they feel less confident about.

*Student Focus Groups.* Program administrators meet with students near the conclusion of each academic year to gather feedback about the program and to share and discuss program information including assessment findings. Student input gathered during these meetings is shared with all faculty and helps inform faculty discussions about assessment outcomes and their implications for program modifications. During a recent focus group, students shared ideas for improving the curriculum in relation to program competencies which were then discussed during the spring practicum faculty retreat and incorporated into the redesigning of the professional seminars to allow more time for processing agency experiences in ways that help develop competencies.

*Annual Department Newsletter.* Each year the Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology Department publishes a newsletter with information regarding assessment data, faculty hires, awards, retirements, visiting scholar presentations, workshops, and student projects and accomplishments. This allows the department to update alumni, the community, and other programs across the country regarding current events and changes that are made in connection with assessment outcomes. The newsletter is used to solicit feedback from constituents which is used to inform assessment-driven program changes.

*Website Updates.* Our social work webpage is another avenue we use to update our constituencies and solicit their feedback. It is updated regularly with current events, announcements, and news concerning the social work program. There is also an assessment link on the website (http://socialwork.usu.edu/ProgEvalOutcomes.aspx). The website provides contact information for program administrators and faculty.