



# **Social Work Program**

# **Self Study Report**

# **2011-2012**

**Volume I**

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## 4. Assessment

### Educational Policy 4.0—Assessment

Assessment is an integral component of competency-based education. To evaluate the extent to which the competencies have been met, a system of assessment is central to this model of education. Data from assessment continuously inform and promote change in the explicit and implicit curriculum to enhance attainment of program competencies.

**4.0.1** The program presents its plan to assess the attainment of its competencies. The plan specifies procedures, multiple measures, and benchmarks to assess the attainment of each of the program's competencies (AS B2.0.3; AS M2.0.4).

Gannon's Social Work Program has developed and implemented a comprehensive approach to assessing the Program's ability to attain the 10 core competencies and their related 40 measurable practice behaviors. This comprehensive assessment includes specific procedures, multiple measures and benchmarks.

**Assessment Procedures.** Social work faculty members are responsible for working together collaboratively to develop methods, tools and instruments for evaluating student achievement of the practice behaviors related to each member's individual courses. Each faculty member is responsible for administering the practice behavior evaluation instruments relevant to their courses and submitting student scores from these instruments of evaluation to the Field Coordinator at the conclusion of each course. The Field Coordinator is responsible for summarizing all the outcomes annually for presentation at the final Social Work Program faculty meeting of the academic year, usually in mid-May.

The final Social Work Program faculty meeting of the academic year, which occurs shortly after the close of the spring term, is conducted for the purpose of reviewing the assessment outcomes and devising Program modifications and improvements to enhance student performance.

**Multiple Assessment Measures.** As previously noted in Table 4, pages 14-16, each competency is operationalized through a number of practice behaviors. The number of practice behaviors utilized as indicators for each competency ranges from two to six. There are a total of forty practice behaviors.

For each of the forty practice behaviors there are a number of practice behavior measures, or instruments for assessing student competency in the practice behavior. The number of instruments utilized for measuring student competency on any given practice behavior ranges from two to seven. These assessment instruments include, but are not limited to: field instructor evaluations, final exams, reflection papers, self efficacy measures, peer evaluations, article portfolios, class assignments and final papers. The document entitled 'Social Work Program Competencies: From Practice Behavior to Curriculum Content' (See Appendix I) lists the evaluation

instruments utilized for each of the ten competencies and their related practice behaviors. In addition, this document reports the specific course in which these practice behaviors evaluations are administered. Directly below this text, readers will find an excerpt from Appendix I to serve as an example for EP 2.1.1.

Student Learning Outcome		Curriculum Content (All PBs have minimum of two measures, PB2-4 & PB6 have three measures)			
Competency	Practice Behaviors (PB)	Course	Course Objective	Course Unit (or week)	Evaluation Instrument
Identify as a professional social worker (EP 2.1.1)	PB1. Advocate for client access to services	<i>SCWK 491 Field Placement II</i>	1. Competency itself, encompassing practice behaviors-- PB2, PB3, PB4 & PB6	Week 16	Comp Exam Quest. VII A (PB 2) Comp Exam Quest. VII C (PB 6) Comp Exam Quest. VII D (PB 4) Comp Exam Quest. VII E (PB 3)
	PB2. Practice personal reflection & self-correction				
	PB3. Attend to professional roles/boundaries				
	PB4. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, communication				
	PB5. Commitment to career-long learning & growth				
	PB6. Use supervision & consultation				
		<i>SCWK 491 Field Placement II</i>	1. Competency itself, encompassing all related practice behaviors (PB1-PB6)	These evaluations are conducted quarterly to permit student feedback and growth. However, only the last quarter is utilized as for purposes of the program self-study.	*Field Instructors' final quarterly evaluation of their student's performance in placement (1.4 to 1.10) PB1-PB6  *Student's own final self-evaluation (1.4 to 1.10) PB1-PB6

Furthermore, readers are directed to Appendix XVIII entitled Practice Behavior Instruments, which is a collection of the actual assignments the Social Work Program is utilizing to evaluate the practice behaviors related to the competencies.

**Benchmarks for Assessment.** The Gannon Social Work Program has set the goal that 80% of our students will achieve a minimum of a 3.0 (80% or better) on each competency. A 'B' (80%) by definition is above average. However, it is consistent with the University and Program mission of striving for excellence in the competencies.

**4.0.2** The program provides evidence of ongoing data collection and analysis and discusses how it uses assessment data to affirm and/or make changes in the explicit and implicit curriculum to enhance student performance.

Evidence of the Gannon Social Work Program's assessment process can be found in the documents in Appendix XVII, entitled 'Results for Assessment of Practice Competencies'. This document reports and summarizes the data collected from the practice behavior instruments throughout the 2011-2012 academic year. Readers will find an excerpt from Appendix XVII to serve as an example for EP 2.1.1. on the following page.

<b>Competency:</b> Identify as a professional social worker (EP 2.1.1)			
<b>Competency Benchmark</b>	<b>Practice Behavior</b>	<b>Mean for Practice Behavior Measures (% Achieving 3.0)</b>	<b>Percent Contribution to Benchmark</b>
Minimum 3.0	PB1. Advocate for client access to services	Self Eval 1.5      3.7273 (91% )	16.6%
		Instr.Eval 1.5      3.36 (82% )	
		MEAN 3.5436      86.5%	
	PB2. Practice personal reflection & self-correction	Comp. Quest VII.A 3.3 (82% )	16.6%
		Self Eval 1.6      3.7273 (91% )	
		Instr.Eval 1.6      3.36 (82% )	
		MEAN 3.46243      85%	
	PB3. Attend to professional roles/boundaries	Comp. Quest VII.E 3.7 (82%)	16.6%
		Self Eval 1.7      3.7273 (91%)	
		Instr.Eval 1.7      3.27 (82%)	
		MEAN 3.56576      85%	
	PB4. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, communication	Comp. Quest VII.D 3.7 (91% )	16.6%
		Self Eval 1.8      3.8182 (91% )	
		Instr.Eval 1.8      3.46 (91% )	
		MEAN 3.6594      91%	
	PB5. Commitment to career-long learning & growth	Self Eval 1.4      3.8182 (91%)	16.6%
Instr.Eval 1.4      3.64 (91% )			
MEAN 3.7291      91%			
PB6. Use supervision & consultation	Comp. Quest VII.C 3.0 (73%)	16.6%	
	Self Eval 1.10      3.7273 (91% )		
	Instr.Eval 1.10      3.3636 (64% )		
	MEAN 3.36363      76%		
<b>Results for Competency:</b>		<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Est. Percent of Students Achieving Competency</b>
		<b>3.55</b>	<b>85.75%</b>

Upon review of the summarized student outcomes in the ‘Results for Assessment of Practice Competencies’ in Appendix XVII it was apparent that although sections of the curriculum are strong, several changes in the curriculum are warranted.

In summary of the collected data, the Gannon Social Work Program met its benchmark of 80% or more of the students achieving a 3.0 or better for the following competencies:

Category #1. Achieved Benchmark

Percent of students

Achieving competency

- 86% (EP 2.1.1) Identify as a professional social worker
- 80% (EP 2.1.2) Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice
- 82% (EP 2.1.4) Engage diversity and difference in practice
- 81% (EP 2.1.5) Advance human rights and economic/social justice

The Gannon Social Work Program is very near meeting its benchmark, with no less than 77% of the students achieving a 3.0 or better for the following competencies:

Category #2. Nearly Achieved Benchmark

Percent of students

Achieving competency

- 79% (EP 2.1.3) Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
- 77% (EP 2.1.6) Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
- 77% (EP 2.1.7) Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment
- 79% (EP 2.1.8) Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services
- 78% (EP 2.1.10c) Engage, assess, **intervene** and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

The Gannon Social Work Program is somewhat short of meeting its benchmark of 80% of the students achieving a 3.0 or better for the following competencies:

Category #3. Considerably Short of Benchmark

Percent of students

Achieving competency

- 73% (EP 2.1.9) Respond to contexts that shape practice
- 66% (EP 2.1.10a) **Engage**, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
- 67% (EP 2.1.10b) Engage, **assess**, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
- 73% (EP 2.1.10d) Engage, assess, intervene and **evaluate** with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

Based upon these outcomes, the Social Work Program affirmed some curriculum content, specifically content related to the Category #1 and some of Category #2; and also instituted several changes to enhance student performance, particularly in content related to the competencies in Category #3. These changes are enumerated in the following section 4.0.3.

**4.0.3** The program identifies any changes in the explicit and implicit curriculum based on the analysis of the assessment data.

As noted on the preceding page, based on the analysis of the assessment data there were three general categories of competency outcomes. These consisted of outcomes for which the program 1) achieved its benchmark, 2) nearly achieved and 3) fell considerably short of achieving its benchmark. The Social Work Program instituted the following changes in the implicit and explicit curriculum pertaining to outcomes from **seven competencies** in final two categories.

(1)

Percent of students

Achieving competency

77% (EP 2.1.6) Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

There are three problematic practice behavior measures related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.6. First, the field instructors are rating only 64% of the students at the benchmark for PB2, 'use of research to improve practice'. Through faculty discussion and conversations with field instructors and students, the problem has been identified as a lack of awareness on the part of field instructors of the students' research projects. Students complete single subject designs as well as an empirical article portfolio that collects literature on recent evidence-based practice findings related to their field placements. Students are not necessarily sharing these assignments with their Field Instructors. Therefore, two changes will be instituted: 1) In the September Field Instructor Training a segment will be devoted to explaining to Field Instructors the student assignments related to this competency and preparing them to provide guidance for and evaluation of student work. 2) The competency exam will explicitly state the expectation that students will communicate with their field instructors the content concerning the planning, implementation and conclusion stages of their research assignments.

The second problematic practice behavior measure related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.6, is that only 14% of the students achieved the benchmark in the Research Methods course final paper. Social Work students typically struggle with this course, with the majority of the students scoring a 'C' on the final paper and improving to a 'C' in their research paper class presentation after correcting errors in their research design based on instructor feedback on their

papers. The course instructor, Lichtenwalter, will strive to enhance student learning by dividing the final paper assignment into segments that are due throughout the term. Therefore, students will receive feedback enabling the correction of each discrete section prior to submitting the final paper.

Lastly, only 73% of the students are achieving the benchmark in the Competency Exam Question V.A, which pertains to the application of evidence-based practices to the students' field settings. This is a bit perplexing, because student scores are outstanding on their Empirical Article Portfolio, which is a similar assignment in SCWK 400 Integrated Seminar I course. This will be addressed by providing students with a more thorough review of the expectations of Competency Exam Question V.A. in the SCWK 401 Integrated Seminar II course.

(2)

Percent of students

Achieving competency

77% (EP 2.1.7) Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

There are two problematic practice behavior measures related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.7. First, the field instructors are rating only 73% of the students at the benchmark for PB1, 'utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention and evaluation.' Through faculty discussion and conversations with field instructors and students, the problem has been identified as the failure of the Social Work Program to create a standardized opportunity for students to routinely communicate their knowledge of theoretical frameworks to Field Instructors. Students can utilize appropriate frameworks as evidenced in Competency Exam Question IV.B, but simply lack a formal opportunity to adequately communicate this to Field Instructors. This will be addressed by instituting a formal requirement for students to convey this information to Field Instructors within their weekly supervision meeting and for students to document that they have done so within the weekly summaries sheets that accompany the time sheets.

The second problematic practice behavior measure related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.7. is the direct result of the last minute substitution of Dr. Baker as the instructor for SCWK 221 HBSE I in the fall 2011 term and his use of alternative instruments to capture PB2 'critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment'. The Social Work Program will reinstitute the previously designed final exam for the SCWK 221 course, a cumulative exam that was developed over four years of teaching the class. The faculty believes this to be a better measure for the practice behavior.

(3)

Percent of students

Achieving competency

73% (EP 2.1.9) Respond to contexts that shape practice

There are several problematic practice behavior measures related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.9. First, the field instructors are rating only 64% of the students at the benchmark for every practice behavior, PB1-PB3. Through faculty discussion and conversations with field instructors and students, the Social Work Program has decided to address this through formally instituting two field placement requirements that were common activities of the students who achieved a better than 3.0 for this competency. These two requirements are 1) when attending staff meetings at their field placements, students will contribute information that demonstrates their ability to attend to changes (ex. scientific/technological development and/or emerging societal trends) 2) students will be required to conduct staff trainings within their field placements on one or more of such contemporary developments impacting their practice setting.

Furthermore, the Social Work Program will be adding an additional practice behavior measure as a measure for Competency 2.1.9 PB1-PB3. This will be an assignment from SCWK 401 Integrated Seminar that involves students presenting the background on, and leading a class discussion about, a controversial issue in contemporary social work. Examples of articles students utilized in presenting contemporary controversies are the following:

Crisp, B. R., & Gillingham, P. (2008). Some of my Students are Prisoners: Issues and Dilemmas for Social Work Educators. *Social Work Education*, 27(3), 307-317.

Gomory, T., Wong, S. E., Cohen, D., & Lacasse, J. R. (2011). Clinical Social Work and the Biomedical Industrial Complex. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 38(4), 135-165.

Little, J. and Franskoviak, P. (2010). So glad you came! Harm reduction therapy in community settings. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 66 (2), p175-188.

(4)

Percent of students

Achieving competency

66% (EP 2.1.10a) **Engage**, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

There is a significant problem with the practice behavior measures related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.10a. Only 33% of the students achieved the benchmark for PB3, 'develop mutually agreed upon focus of work and desired

outcomes'. This year was the first year the Social Work Program attempted to gather these practice behavior measures from the SCWK 360 Interview Skills course and the process revealed several weaknesses in the instruments. First, the instructor, Chuck Murphy, defined 'focus of work and outcomes' as specific measurable goals/objectives. Due to time constraints and class size, which limited the number of in-class practice sessions, there was insufficient time for students to achieve competency at this level. For the fall 2012 term, Murphy will define and evaluate this more broadly as 'mutually agreed upon focus of work and general outcomes'. This will impact the student scores on both their final exam and their graded practice interviews.

Furthermore, Murphy found that the number of instructor evaluated interview practice sessions he planned for the class could not be accomplished within the allotted timeframe. Therefore, he is planning more student (peer) evaluation sessions to increase the opportunities for skill building on every aspect of interviewing and engagement.

(5)

Percent of students

Achieving competency

67% (EP 2.1.10b) Engage, **assess**, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

There are problems with student scores on the practice behavior measures related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.10b. Most significant is that the measures are rating only 56% of the students at the benchmark for PB1, 'collect, organize and interpret client data.' Parris Baker is providing the instructional support as well as designing and administering the instruments to evaluate student competencies in this arena. In an effort to improve our students' skill and ability in conducting client assessments, Baker has determined to address shortcoming primarily this through changes in instructional content with the following corrective actions:

1. Increase the number of in-class assignments focused on case studies.
2. Increase number of professional social work presenters who can discuss the process of conducting comprehensive client assessment/client intake.
3. Increase number of journal readings that involve the application of system and ecological theory.
4. Provide increased number of in-class practice opportunities for students to use the DAP (Data, Analysis/Assessment, Progress/Plan) tool

(6)

Percent of students

Achieving competency

78% (EP 2.1.10c) Engage, assess, **intervene** and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

There are two problematic practice behavior measures related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.10c. First, the measures are rating only 74% of the

students at the benchmark for PB1, ‘initiate actions to achieve organizational goals.’ This is primarily due to student outcomes as measured by the Macro Practice Paper, assigned in SCWK 363 General Practice with Organizations and Communities. The course instructor, Lichtenwalter, will strive to enhance student learning by dividing the Macro Practice Paper assignment into segments that are due throughout the term. Therefore, she can re-emphasize problematic content in the class room and students will receive feedback enabling the correction of each discrete section of the paper prior to submitting the final paper.

The second problematic practice behavior measures are related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.10c. These measures are rating only 77% of the students at the benchmark for PB1, ‘help clients resolve problems’. This is primarily due to student outcomes on the assignment related to SCWK 361 Introduction to Generalist Practice. In an effort to improve our students’ skill and ability, the instructor, Dr. Baker, intends to institute the following changes in instructional content.

- 1) Include more in-class practice opportunities
- 2) Increase the number of outsiders (as opposed to classmates) on which students have an opportunity to practice

(7)

Percent of students

Achieving competency

73% (EP 2.1.10d) Engage, assess, intervene and **evaluate** with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

There are two problematic practice behavior measures related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.10d. First, the Field Instructors are rating only 55% of the students at the benchmark for PB1, ‘critically analyze, monitor and evaluate interventions.’ Through faculty discussions and conversations with field instructors and students, the problem has been identified as a lack of awareness on the part of field instructors of the students’ research projects. Students complete single subject designs as well as an empirical article portfolio that collects literature on recent evidence-based practice findings related to their field placements. Students are not necessarily sharing these assignments with their Field Instructors. Therefore, two changes will be instituted: 1) In the September Field Instructor Training a segment will be devoted to explaining to Field Instructors the student assignments related to this competency and preparing them to provide guidance for and evaluation of student work. 2) The competency exam will explicitly state the expectation that students will communicate with their field instructors the content concerning the planning, implementation and conclusion stages of their research assignments.

The second problematic practice behavior measure related to student outcomes on competency 2.1.10d was the result of an administrative error. The instructor, Lichtenwalter, failed to issue a separate grade for part C of the Marco Paper. She corrected the paper in it’s the entirety issuing only one score. This will be corrected by the calculation of a separate grade on the formative and summative evaluations required within the assignment.

**4.0.4** The program describes how it makes its constituencies aware of its assessment outcomes.

The Social Work Program makes its constituencies aware of its assessment outcomes in three different ways. First, a summary of the annual assessment outcomes are shared at the spring Field Instructor's meeting, leading a discussion soliciting ideas for enhancing the attainment of program competencies. Second, a summary of the annual assessment outcomes are shared at a Social Work Club meeting, leading a discussion soliciting ideas for enhancing the attainment of program competencies. Third, a summary of the annual assessment outcomes are posted to the Gannon Social Work Program web site.

**4.0.5** The program appends the summary data for each measure used to assess the attainment of each competency for at least one academic year prior to the submission of the self-study.

The summary data assessing the attainment of each competency and the related practice behaviors for one full academic year, 2011-2012 can be found in Appendix XVII Results for Assessment of Practice Competencies 2011-2012.

