

School of Social Work
St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas
Core Competencies of the BSW Program

BSW Core Curriculum for Generalist Practice

The SCU/UST BSW curriculum prepares its graduates for social work practice grounded in the core competencies and practice behaviors of generalist practice. The ten core competencies outlined by the Council on Social Work Education are listed below [C2.1.1–C2.1.10 (a-e)], and are followed by a description of characteristic knowledge, values, skills, and a list of the practice behaviors that operationalize our BSW generalist curriculum.

C2. 1.1 —Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social Workers

- 1-advocate for client access to the services of social work at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- 2-practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
- 3-attend to professional roles and boundaries;
- 4-demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
- 5-engage in life-long professional learning; and
- 6-use supervision and consultation.

C2. 1.2 —Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

- 1-continuously recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
- 2-make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (NASW, 2008) and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/ International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles (IFSW, 2004), of the Minnesota Board of Social Work (MBSW, 2005) and as appropriate other codes of ethics;
- 3-tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
- 4-apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

C2.1.3 —Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

- 1-distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, community and cultural resources, and practice wisdom;
- 2-analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, evaluation, and ending;
- 3-demonstrate effective oral communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues;
- 4-demonstrate effective written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues; and
- 5-utilize skills and processes of critical thinking to guide communication and decision-making.

C2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersection of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers

- 1-engage in cultural self-study;
- 2-recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power;
- 3-engage in continuous self-assessment of one's social location within social power structures to minimize the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
- 4-recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences;
- 5-view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants; and
- 6-recognize and appreciate strengths across cultures.

C2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

- 1-understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and the changing nature of those systems;
- 2-advocate for human rights and social and economic justice;
- 3-engage in practices that advance social and economic justice; and
- 4-engage in advancing social and economic justice by applying *Social Work for Social Justice Principles*, the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights, and other perspectives on social justice.

C2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

- 1-use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
- 2-use research evidence to inform practice.

C2.1.7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers

- 1-utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of engagement, assessment, prevention/intervention, evaluation, and ending;
- 2-critically analyze and apply knowledge to understand person and environment; and
- 3-apply the multidimensional concepts of bio/psycho/social/spiritual/cultural perspective to social work practice on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

C2.1.8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers

- 1- understand the impact that social and organizational policy and agency delivery systems has on individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities;
- 2- analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance well-being and a just society; and
- 3- collaborate with colleagues and individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities for effective policy action.

C2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers

- 1 -continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and
- 2- provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

C2.1.10 (a)–(e)—Engage, assess, intervene, evaluate and end with client systems of all sizes (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities).

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes: identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

C2.1.10 (a)—Engagement

Social workers

- 1 -mindfully prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- 2 -establish rapport and build effective relationships;
- 3 -use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
- 4 -use the collaborative relationship to develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

C2.1.10 (b)—Assessment

Social workers

- 1 -collect, organize, and interpret client system data;
- 2 -assess client system strengths and challenges;
- 3 -develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
- 4 -select appropriate prevention/intervention strategies.

C2.1.10 (c)—Prevention/ Intervention

Social workers

- 1 -help client systems address problems and foster resiliency;
- 2 -negotiate, mediate, and advocate with client systems;
- 3 -initiate actions to implement prevention/ intervention strategies to enhance client system capacities; and
- 4 -initiate actions consistent with organizational goals.

C2.1.10 (d)—Evaluation

Social workers

- 1- critically analyze, and evaluate interventions;
- 2 -continuously monitor progress toward goals and respond accordingly; and
- 3 -evaluate outcomes through use of multiple sources and types of data.

C2.1.10 (e)—Ending

Social workers

- 1 -facilitate transitions and endings; and
- 2 -plan for, integrate, and promote sustainable and transferable client system change.

The practice behaviors presented here form the basis for the assessment of students' progress throughout the curriculum of the SCU/UST BSW program.

Adapted from the Council on Social Work Education. (2008). *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*.