

Foundation Competencies (Macro and Clinical)

Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. This framework for teaching and for assessing students' performance takes a **holistic view of competence**; that is, the demonstration of competence is **informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the student's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment** in regard to specific practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. The student's progress in mastering holistic competence is developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning.

Each of the nine competencies describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice. Social workers apply critical thinking to frameworks of ethical decision-making in practice. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social Workers understand the role of other professions in inter-professional settings. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social work interns:

- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior and appearance
- participate in ethical decision making in consultation with their field instructor using the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant laws and regulations
- use reflection to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes;
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior;
- communicate clearly and professionally in a timely manner in writing and verbally

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2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. As a consequence, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social work interns:

- apply at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels their understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituents as experts of their own experiences;
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with clients and constituents

3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers utilize strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social Work interns:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights;
- engage in practices that advance social, economic and environmental justice within the social work intern role

4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-

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disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

Social Work interns:

- critically analyze quantitative and qualitative research findings;
- use research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery

5. Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand 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 understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings and engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings.

Social work interns:

- are familiar with social policies at the local, state, and federal levels that impact well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- analyze, formulate, and advocate, where appropriate, for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

There are several shared principles related to engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation of practice that apply to the competencies 6 - 9. These include:

- value the importance of human relationships which are the basis of all social work practice
- critically evaluate and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment to facilitate practice with clients and constituents
- value the importance of inter-professional collaboration and communication recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary and inter-organizational participation
- understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their social work practice
- apply knowledge about human diversity that characterizes and shapes human experience and relationships

6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Social workers understand and use strategies to engage clients and constituencies.

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Social work interns:

- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage clients and constituencies

7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Social workers utilize a range of methods to ensure comprehensive assessment and recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process.

Social Work interns:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients, constituents and other relevant sources
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, values and preferences of clients and constituents in keeping with available resources and agency mission

8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Social workers utilize methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituent goals.

Social Work interns:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituents
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituents
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals

9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers utilize qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social Work interns:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels
- document practice outcomes