

**Boston University School of Social Work**  
**Field Education Department**

Student Evaluation Form FAQ

- CSWE has broken social work practice into 9 areas of competency which social work students are expected to master by the time they graduate with their MSW degrees. These are the guiding pedagogy for social work education, especially field education, and include the following:
  - Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
  - Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
  - Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
  - Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
  - Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
  - Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, Communities
  - Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, Communities
  - Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, Communities
  - Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, Communities
- Furthermore, CSWE defines competence as being comprised of the following “dimensions” which are integral components of a “holistic” (or overall) competence in social work practice:
  - **knowledge** (generic and specialist theoretical and empirical),
  - **skills**
  - **values** (judgement, assumptions, critical thinking, decision making),
  - **affective and cognitive processes** (emotions, reflection, self-awareness).
- When evaluating your student’s performance in their placement, we ask you to rate your student’s competence development on the nine practice areas as defined by CSWE. We additionally ask you to rate your student’s competence development on **two of the dimensions** of competence --- **knowledge** and **skills** – for each of the nine competencies.
- The evaluation form, found in SONIA, provides a definition of each competency, student behaviors that are evidence of competence (these lists are not exhaustive), and a drop-down section for you to rate the student on their knowledge and skills related to each competency. Also note that both field instructor and student are expected to write a short summary or description of the student’s assigned activities/tasks which relate to the competency and/or describe HOW the student demonstrated the competency in their work. Please refer to the competencies for more info as to what is expected at each level.
- You are then asked to rate the student on the overall competency, taking into account all of the dimensions **knowledge, skills, values and affective cognitive processes**.
- The rating scale is pre-competence, emerging competence, competence and advanced competence, and each of these ratings is defined on the form.

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- Ratings should be assigned based on level of learning, e.g. a final evaluation for a generalist practice student should be measured by skills and knowledge needed to move to a an advanced year placement.
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- We would like to emphasize the importance of direct observation (by you and others) as a source of your knowledge about your student's competence. Direct observation is considered a "best practice" in field instruction of students.

A few questions you may have:

- How much "weight" do I give to each of the dimensions in assigning a rating for each overall competency?

***This will require a judgment on your part about how each dimension is related to a particular competency. For example, in competencies 6-9 which are practice-related, you might weigh skills, values and affective processes as more relevant than knowledge. Other factors might include whether the student is in a foundation or advanced placement, the nature of specific assignments, your student's learning style, agency context, etc.***

- It seems that knowledge and skills are sometimes closely related and hard to evaluate separately. What should I do?

***Yes, this will sometimes be the case. We ask you to use your best judgment – this is not an exact science. We also recognize that, in some instances, your student may demonstrate competence in knowledge and emerging competence in skills or vice versa.***

- When are evaluations due?

***Evaluations are due roughly a month prior to the end of each academic term. Specific dates are available on the BUSSW Field Education calendar.***

- Who do I contact if I need clarification or help?

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***For assistance with content, the rating scale or other aspects of the evaluation process, please contact your student's field liaison/field advisor.***

***For technical assistance in accessing the SONIA database or evaluation form:***

***Please contact [sswolpfe@bu.edu](mailto:sswolpfe@bu.edu) or [sswfed@bu.edu](mailto:sswfed@bu.edu)***

- We have included a narrated Webinar and text document (attached) that will provide additional information about competency-based evaluation and this new form. You can find the Webinar here:

[https://mymedia.bu.edu/media/Field+Instructor+Evaluation+of+Student+webinar/1\\_1r7mfgmy](https://mymedia.bu.edu/media/Field+Instructor+Evaluation+of+Student+webinar/1_1r7mfgmy)

Thank you for the contribution you are making to BUSSW students' learning and professional development.