

Memorial University School of Social Work
Field Education Manual
CASWE-ACFTS Standards for Accreditation (2014)
Core Learning Objectives for Students

3.1 Curriculum

Preamble

The social work curriculum is organized around specific learning objectives for students which link student learning objectives to the promotion of excellence in social work education, scholarship, and practice with a social justice focus. These learning objectives for students reflect the values, knowledge and skills that social work students are expected to acquire and demonstrate upon completion of the social work program and are applicable to social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social work programs use learning objectives for students in designing and delivering their curricula and field education.

The curriculum at the Baccalaureate level (BSW curriculum) provides students with knowledge and skills for generalist practice, while the curriculum at the Master level (MSW curriculum) provides knowledge and skills in research/scholarship, professional leadership, social work supervision and advanced practice, and/or areas of specialization. Schools use the core learning objectives for students as points of reference for both BSW and MSW programs. Learning objectives for students applicable only to MSW programs are specified to reflect an advanced level of knowledge and skills in selected major areas of social work practice as mentioned above.

The Core Learning Objectives for Students are as follows:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and adopt a value perspective of the social work profession

- i) Social work students develop professional identities as practitioners whose professional goal is to facilitate the collective welfare and well-being of all people to the maximum extent possible.

ii) Social work students acquire ability for self-reflection as it relates to engaging in professional practice through a comprehensive understanding and consciousness of the complex nature of their own social locations and identities. Students develop an awareness of personal biases and preferences to advance social justice and the social well-being of social work service users.

2. Adhere to social work values and ethics in professional practice

i) Social work students have knowledge of the relevant social work codes of ethics in various professional roles and activities and institutional contexts, with a particular emphasis on professional responsibilities towards vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

ii) Social work students acquire skills to monitor and evaluate their own behaviours in relation to the relevant codes of ethics.

3. Promote human rights and social justice

i) Social work students understand their professional role in advancing human rights and responsibilities and social justice in the context of the Canadian society and internationally.

ii) Social work students have knowledge of the role social structures can play in limiting human and civil rights and employ professional practices to ensure the fulfillment of human and civil rights and advance social justice for individuals, families, groups and communities.

4. Support and enhance diversity by addressing structural sources of inequity

i) Social work students recognize diversity and difference as a crucial and valuable part of living in a society.

ii) Social work students have knowledge of how discrimination, oppression, poverty, exclusion, exploitation, and marginalization have a negative impact on particular individuals and groups and strive to end these and other forms of social injustice.

5. Employ critical thinking in professional practice

- i) Social work students develop skills in critical thinking and reasoning, including critical analysis of assumptions, consistent with the values of the profession, which they apply in their professional practice to analyze complex social situations and make professional judgments.

- ii) Social work students are able to apply critical thinking to identify and address structural sources of injustice and inequalities in the context of a Canadian society.

- iii) MSW students are able to apply knowledge of a variety of social work theories and perspectives to critically analyze professional and institutional practices.

6. Engage in research

- i) Social work students acquire knowledge and skills to critique, apply, or participate in social work research.

- ii) Social work students at both levels of university education are prepared to apply social work knowledge, as well as knowledge from other disciplines, to advance professional practice, policy development, research, and service provision.

- iii) MSW students acquire knowledge and skills in conducting social work research and competence in evaluating professional practices.

7. Participate in policy analysis and development

- i) Social work students have knowledge of social policies in relation to the wellbeing of individuals, families, groups, and communities in Canadian and global contexts.

- ii) Social work students have knowledge and skills to identify negative or inequitable policies and their implications and outcomes, especially for disadvantaged and oppressed groups, and to participate in efforts to change these.

- iii) MSW students have knowledge and skills to contribute to the development and implementation of new and more equitable social policies.

8. Engage in organizational and societal systems' change through professional practice

i) Social work students acquire knowledge of organizational and societal systems and acquire skills to identify social inequalities, injustices, and barriers and work towards changing oppressive social conditions.

ii) Social work students develop ability to critically assess the social, historical, economic, legal, political, institutional and cultural contexts of social work practice at local, regional, provincial, national, and international levels.

iii) MSW students are prepared to take leadership roles in organizational and societal systems and to work towards changing oppressive social conditions.

9. Engage with individuals, families, groups, and communities through professional practice

i) Social work students are equipped with knowledge and skills to competently perform various interactive practices such as engagement, assessment, intervention, negotiation, mediation, advocacy, and evaluation.

ii) Social work students have relevant knowledge and skills to actively promote empowering and anti-oppressive practice.

iii) Social work students acquire skills to practice at individual, family, group, organization, community and population levels including advocacy and activism.

iv) Social work students are prepared for interprofessional practice, community collaboration, and team work.

v) MSW students develop knowledge and skills in advanced practice, and/or in specialized practice with individuals, families, groups, and/or communities.