

Assessment Cycle 2019-2020

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) (274)

Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development

Department: Social Work

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development. The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the School of Education and Departments of Health and Human Performance, Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

Northwestern State University Bachelor of Social Work Program. The mission of the Northwestern State University BSW Program is, within the scope of the University's mission, to develop entry-level generalist social work professionals who are competent to meet the growing need for practitioners in our state and regional work force (especially in rural central and western Louisiana). The program offers an appreciation of human diversity in developing lifelong learners and critical thinkers whose values and ethics are consistent with the profession of social work. In this rural setting, the NSU BSW Program maintains a commitment of service to the professional community and populations at risk who experience oppression due to social and economic injustice. This program seeks to provide a caring, student-centered environment that encourages professional development.

Explanation of Evaluation as it Relates to CSWE Accreditation. The NSU BSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and has been since 1977. As expected, assessment of program effectiveness has been a part of our

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accreditation expectations. In 2008 CSWE began to require programs to assess their effectiveness according to the concept of competencies. They implemented 13 competencies and required that each competency have two measures – one of which could be a student self-assessment. Our most recent reaccreditation (in 2015) was based on the 2008 Educational Policy and Educational Standards (EPAS). We utilized a student self-evaluation and our Field Evaluation (Field Instructor's evaluation of the student).

In 2015 CSWE revised the EPAS and the Competencies, resulting in 9 competencies requiring 2 measures each. Our program elected to change to the 2015 competencies for the 2017-2018 assessment cycle, to begin collecting data for our next accreditation cycle. There were no changes in the assessment plan and measures beginning during the 2017-2018 assessment cycle through the 2018-2019 cycle. The current assessment period is guided by the 2015 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which focus on student learning outcomes (competencies). This is referred to as a competency-based approach to student learning outcomes. This Competency-based approach requires identifying and assessing what students demonstrate in practice (referred to as practice behaviors). This approach involves assessing ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy. Programs are required to assess students on four dimensions throughout the curriculum: knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. Programs must assess a student's demonstration of competency in nine (9) specific areas of competency. Each competency must be measured incorporating at minimum two of the four dimensions. As stated in the 2015 EPAS Handbook, EPAS recognizes 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 social worker's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to unique practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. An individual social worker's competence is seen as developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning. (CSWE, 2015)

Methodology

Explanation of Assessment Tools. One change that has occurred since the 2017-2018 assessment cycle is that the NSU BSW program has elected, beginning with the 2019-2020 assessment cycle, to discontinue the use of Instruments for Program Evaluation created by the Social Work Education Assessment Project (SWEAP). SWEAP is a non-profit organization created by social work academics for the express purpose of helping develop proprietary empirically based and validated assessment instruments for BSW- and MSW-level programs. During the summer of 2019, the faculty evaluated the knowledge test results from the previous three years. After careful examination of the NSU and national results, and the questions themselves, the faculty came to the conclusion that the construction of items in the exam was concerning and the exam was less useful than an exit exam created by our program's faculty, a couple of whom are trained item writers for the national social work exams. The faculty elected

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to create their own knowledge exam titled the Exit Exam to replace the one used by SWEAP. After consultation with the CSWE accreditation specialist, faculty were told that the accreditation body would prefer a knowledge exam created by the department faculty. Both exams are structured similarly to ensure the same competencies are evenly evaluated on the knowledge dimension. After deliberation, the faculty voted to set the minimum score for students to meet competency on the exam as a 60 out of 100 versus SWEAP's score of a 50 out of 100. The rationale for the selection of 60 as a passing score is that the Social Work Department uses a grading scale for all tests and assignments that sets "failing" as less than 60.

The Exit Exam was created in the fall semester of 2019. Faculty submitted potential questions from each course content area. The questions were then edited by a committee of faculty and staff who have been trained in question writing and in assessment. The exam is composed of 100 multiple choice questions. 12 questions are devoted to Competency 1. The remaining Competencies are assessed by 11 questions each to ensure as equal weight as possible for each Competency. Though the exam is used to provide a composite score for each student, the results of each Competency area is analyzed to determine which specific areas that students are either meeting or not meeting competency. Analysis is completed through both tools provided by the online student learning management system and through statistical software.

In the spring of 2020, results from the fall semester exam were assessed by the exam committee. Results were analyzed using metrics provided by the learning management system. Questions were reviewed and edited using these metrics and best assessment practices. The results from the spring 2020 semester will be used to begin the process of rigorous reliability and validity testing to ensure the exam is effective and appropriate in measuring student competency regarding the expected knowledge of social work professionals entering into practice.

It is important to note that although our program developed our own Exit Exam and Field Instrument, these two measurement tools are comparable to the two instruments being used in previous years which were created by SWEAP. In the case of the Field Instrument, it is the exact same wording, which mirrors the EPAS competency and practice behavior wording.

Assessment Process:

The assessment process for the BSW program is as follows:

(1) Students are given the *Exit Exam* as a direct measure of knowledge across seven (7) curricular areas and all nine (9) EPAS 2015 Core Competencies at the end of SOWK 4190, Field Work. The *Exit Exam* is a knowledge-based test which allows for analysis of student knowledge gained through the program and will be used to pinpoint areas for curricular enhancement. This assessment is completed through Moodle by students. This measure evaluates the knowledge dimension for all competencies.

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Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, are assessed using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument allows agency field instructors to measure student achievement across various dimensions related to each EPAS competency, scored on a 5-point Likert scale, and allowing for qualitative feedback. Possible rating options are: 1- Lacking, 2- Inadequate, 3- Competent, 4 – Superior, 5 – Mastered. This measure evaluates the skills, values, and cognitive and affective processing dimensions for specific competencies and related practice behaviors.

(2) The Assessment Coordinator retrieves the exam results from Moodle and retrieves the data from the completed Field Instruments. The coordinator then evaluates the data to determine whether students have met competency benchmarks set by the program.

(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty, staff, the BSW Advisory Council, and other constituencies.

(4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching specific courses as necessary.

(5) The Assessment Coordinator, in consultation with Faculty and the Advisory Council, and in collaboration with the Department Head will propose curriculum and program changes.

Programmatic Changes

It is important to note that programmatic changes have been made which greatly impact this report. First, it must be noted that due to the disruption of the learning environment due to COVID-19 stay at home orders, it is expected that students did not have the same learning and internship opportunities between the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters. The exit exam was given during the stay at home orders and impacted the time it took students to take the exam due to limited proctor resources. It is expected that the preparation for students was greatly impacted due to the change in home-learning environments.

Second, prior to COVID-19, the BSW field education committee made the decision to pilot a new structure to the field placements due to the needs expressed by students. Traditionally, field instruction was offered in two options. A student could complete the internship (432 hours) either as a block placement in the fall or spring semester. Or a student could complete the 432 hours across the academic year (fall followed by the spring). Field Placement was not offered during the summer. Due to this, many students ready to begin field in a spring semester were forced to wait to take field in the succeeding fall, when they could graduate earlier if it were offered in the summer. The field faculty are piloting a summer session where students are able to complete their field placement in two semesters: the spring followed by the summer session. Four students elected to try this. These students completed the exit exam during the spring semester with the graduating seniors. This explains why the results are based on 56 students having taken the exit exam in AC 2019-2020 and only 52 students with field evaluations. For clarity, in the reporting of student learning outcomes below, an asterisk

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(*) will be used to highlight the difference. The four students will finish in the summer of 2020 and the field evaluations will be available in early August. These field evaluations will be added to this report and amended at that time.

Student Learning Outcomes (Expressed as EPAS Competencies):

Competency 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 at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Course Map: All required social work courses address some component of competency 1.

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation, students complete the *Exit Exam* (discussed in detail on pages 2 and 3) to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will score a 60% or higher on the exit exam. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

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Analysis: During the 2018-2019 assessment cycle measure of the knowledge-based test, the competency benchmark was not met as only 67% of 45 students met competency on the knowledge test. Based on those results, in AC 2019-2020 the faculty amended the curriculum in several classes including the field seminar course in order to better communicate to students the principles of ethical and professional behavior. The faculty also elected to hold a social work program convocation in March of 2020. As a result of the changes in 2019-2020, and utilizing the new exam, the competency benchmark was met with 80% of 56 students met competency which was 13% more than the year before.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will further modify classroom content in the field seminar courses and in the ethics course to ensure that students know ethical and professional expectations of the social work profession. The faculty will hold a social work program convocation to increase the opportunities to communicate expectations of the profession. Specifically, principles pertaining to ethical decision making, professional demeanor in behavior, appropriate use of technology, and the use of supervision and consultation will be targeted.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student's will be rated as "competent" or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: During the 2018-2019 assessment cycle, the competency was met with 93% of 42 meeting competency. Based on then analysis of these results, faculty determined to use the annual field orientation as a means of preparing field instructors to provide quality supervision. The BSW program also incorporated mid semester surveys to assess for issues arising in the field internship. As a result, in AC 2019-2020, students met this competency as measured by the Field Instrument with 96% of 52* students meeting competency.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to utilize throughout the field placement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of

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students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand 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 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 workers:

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

Course Map: All required social work courses address some component of competency 2, however the course whose content is solely about this competency is SOWK 4450, Cultural Diversity.

Measure: 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation students complete the *exit exam* to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will be rated as “competent” or above on each of the competencies assessed. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis: During the 2018-2019 assessment cycle, the students met this competency as 90% of 41 students met competency on the knowledge test. During the current assessment cycle, the percentage of students meeting competency dropped by 17% and the benchmark was not met. Only 73% of 56 students met competency on the exit exam during the assessment cycle. Although this competency was met in 2018-2019 cycle, emphasis on continuing to strengthen knowledge of diversity and difference

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occurred. Most notable was the decision of our Department ask the Center for Inclusion and Diversity to partner with us on a series offered to our students and to the college-wide community called “Voices of Diversity”. The intent is to have people experiencing the varying diversities speak to students about issues that would increase the student’s ability to engage with and assist that population. Our first offering was held on March 11, 2020 and the speaker was a person who was a quadruple amputee and his wife. They spoke on their story and on how to engage with people who have physical disabilities. We also continued to ensure that we use case examples and assignments in courses that focus on the various diversities.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will do a complete exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students are struggling with and to determine if modifications to the exam or curriculum are needed. Faculty will increase the amount and quality of content related to diversity. Further, the Social Work department will continue to work with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion to offer monthly substantive diversity talks and learning opportunities.

Measure: 2.2. (Direct – Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student’s will be rated as “competent” or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met

Analysis: 95% of 42 students met competency during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on then analysis of these results, faculty determined to continue to use the annual field orientation as a means of preparing field instructors to provide quality supervision. The BSW program also incorporated mid semester surveys to assess for issues arising in the field internship. As a result, in AC 2019-2020, students met this competency as measured by the Field Instrument with 98% of 52 students* meeting competency.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to see continuous improvement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities

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for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society 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 understand 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 workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

Course Map: The social work courses that primarily address this competency are: PSCI 2010 & 2020, and SOWK 3350: Economics and Social Work.

Measure 3.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation students complete the *Exit exam* to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will be rated as “competent” or above on each of the competencies assessed. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis: 80% of 45 students met competency on the knowledge test during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on then analysis of these results the exam was modified to better address the competency. As a result, the number of students meeting competency dropped by 19%. Only 61% of 56 students met competency on the exit exam during the assessment cycle. Even though this competency was met in 2018-2019, additional content on environmental justice was added to the SOWK 3350 course which addresses Economics and Social Work. This was to address the CSWE requirement to have content on environmental justice in our curriculum. We also continued emphasizing social, economic, and environmental justice in course assignments integrated throughout our curriculum. In particular, SOWK 3140: Social Work Practice with organizations and communities added an assignment in which

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students collaborated with community agencies to highlight a topic during a “community fair” they organized and held.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will make curriculum and programmatic changes to ensure students are supported in this competency area. The faculty member over this content area is introducing new content to strengthen student engagement and competency. Also, faculty are examining open source textbooks and materials to determine how to strengthen the content. An additional faculty member will teach in this content area. Faculty will also do a complete exam analysis to determine content and construct validity and to determine which areas of the specific competency the students are struggling with. This will allow for appropriate modifications to the exam.

Measure: 3.2. (Direct – Skills)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student’s will be rated as “competent” or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 100% of 45 students met competency during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, faculty determined to use the annual field orientation as a means of preparing field instructors to provide quality supervision. The BSW program also incorporated mid semester surveys to assess for issues arising in the field internship. As a result, in AC 2019-2020, students met this competency as measured by the Field Instrument with 98% of 52 students* meeting competency.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to see continuous improvement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice.

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

Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Course Map: The social work courses which primarily address this area are SOWK 2010: Critical Thinking and Writing in Social Work, SOWK 4030: Statistics, and SOWK 4040: Research Methods. All courses have content emphasizing the importance of empirical research and several outside of the research sequence require students to utilize empirical research.

Measure 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation students complete the *Exit exam* to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will be rated as “competent” or above on each of the competencies assessed. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis: 62% of 45 students met competency on the knowledge test during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Students have historically struggled to meet the competency benchmark on this related competency. This competency area has been targeted for improvement for the past several years as far back as 2013-2014 since this is the area in which our students struggle the most. Based on the analysis of these results improvements were made including implementing a new course entitled “Critical thinking and writing in Social work”, in which reading and understanding research was introduced, as well as the APA model of writing. Changes have also been made to link research activities and learning opportunities more closely to actual practice experiences in the intern agency. Because of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the percent of students meeting this competency increased by 6% in the current assessment cycle. 68% of 56 students met competency on the exit exam during the assessment cycle.

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Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, curriculum changes will be made in several courses in order to increase exposure to research and evaluation as it relates to practice. Students will increase the amount of use of statistical software in the statistics course. The types and scopes of research projects will be increased in order to focus on learner directed research projects. Faculty will work to implement a revised or new course in the sophomore or freshman year of studies in order to prepare students to more effectively understand and utilize research. This will allow for an earlier and more substantial introduction to research and evaluation for students in order to increase familiarity with the language and process of research.

Measure 4.2. (Direct –Cognitive & Affective Processing)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student's will be rated as "competent" or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 95% of 42 students met competency during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. This competency area has been targeted for improvement for the past several years since this is the area in which our students struggle the most. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 improvements included implementing a new course entitled "Critical thinking and writing in Social work", in which reading and understanding research was introduced, as well as the APA model of writing. Changes have also been made to link research activities and learning opportunities more closely to actual practice experiences in the intern agency. Because of these changes, in 2019-2020 94% of 52 students* met competency in the 2019-2020 assessment cycle.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to see continuous improvement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning. Research curriculum will be increased to support student competency and their ability to use research to inform practice in the field setting.

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Competency 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 at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts 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;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

Course Map: The social work courses which primarily address this competency are SOWK 2090: Social Welfare as a Social Institution and SOWK 4350: Contemporary Social Policy.

Measure 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation students complete the *Exit exam* to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will be rated as “competent” or above on each of the competencies assessed. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis: 42% of 45 students met competency on the knowledge test during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 curriculum changes included increasing the scope of policies that students analyzed in the policy course, and the number of students meeting competency rose by 17%, though the benchmark was not met. In the 2019-2020 AC, 59% of 56 students met competency on the exit exam during the assessment cycle.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to revamp the policy content by expanding the number of policy analyses that are done in the course, continuously update the content, and offer more learner-directed learning opportunities. Faculty will

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also do a complete exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students are struggling with and to determine if modifications to the exam is needed.

Measure 5.2. (Direct – Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student's will be rated as "competent" or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 100% of 42 students met competency during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 faculty determined to use the annual field orientation as a means of preparing field instructors to provide quality supervision. The BSW program also incorporated mid semester surveys to assess for issues arising in the field internship. As a result, in AC 2019-2020, students met this competency as measured by the Field Instrument with 94% of 52 students* meeting competency.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to see continuous improvement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact

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their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

Course Map: The social work courses which primarily focus on this competency are all of the “practice courses” – SOWK 3120: Generalist Practice with Individuals, SOWK 3130: Generalist Practice with Groups, SOWK 3140: Generalist Practice with Communities and Organizations, SOWK 3150: Generalist Practice with Families, SOWK 3180: Interviewing Skills, and SOWK 4190: Field Placement.

Measure 6.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation students complete the *Exit exam* to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will be rated as “competent “or above on each of the competencies assessed. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 44% of 45 students met competency on the knowledge test during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 faculty made programmatic and curriculum changes to better focus on engagement including faculty assignment changes. These changes were made primarily in the human behavior and interviewing courses. As a result, the percent of students meeting competency increased by 52% and the benchmark was met. 96% of 56 students met competency on the exit exam during the assessment cycle.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to follow through with curriculum and programmatic changes. Faculty will also do a complete exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students are struggling with, to determine if questions are appropriate, and to determine if modifications to the exam is needed.

Measure 6.2. (Direct –Cognitive & Affective Processing)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument

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measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student's will be rated as "competent" or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 98% of 42 students met competency during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 faculty determined to use the annual field orientation as a means of preparing field instructors to provide quality supervision. The BSW program also incorporated mid semester surveys to assess for issues arising in the field internship. As a result, in AC 2019-2020, students met this competency as measured by the Field Instrument with 98% of 52 students* meeting competency.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to see continuous improvement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;

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- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

Course Map: The social work courses which primarily focus on this competency are all of the “practice courses” – SOWK 3120: Generalist Practice with Individuals, SOWK 3130: Generalist Practice with Groups, SOWK 3140: Generalist Practice with Communities and Organizations, SOWK 3150: Generalist Practice with Families, and SOWK 3180: Interviewing Skills. In addition, SOWK 4900: Differential Diagnosis focuses on mental health assessment.

Measure 7.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation students complete the *Exit exam* to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will be rated as “competent “or above on each of the competencies assessed. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis: During the 2018-2019 assessment, the competency benchmark was met with 87% of 45 students met competency on the knowledge test. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020, emphasis continued to be placed on assessment across the system sizes – micro, mezzo and macro – since the competency was met. Also, the competency test was switched to one created by the faculty and edited by trained test item writers. However, in AC 12019-20202 the number of students meeting the competency fell by 37% as only 50% of 56 students met competency.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will provide curriculum changes to increase the number of mock assessments in appropriate courses. Faculty will also do a complete exam analysis to determine content and construct validity and to determine which areas of the specific competency the students are struggling with. This will allow for appropriate modifications to the exam.

Measure 7.2. (Direct –Cognitive & Affective Processing)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and

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Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student's will be rated as "competent" or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 100% of 45 students met competency during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 faculty determined to use the annual field orientation as a means of preparing field instructors to provide quality supervision. The BSW program also incorporated mid semester surveys to assess for issues arising in the field internship. As a result, in AC 2019-2020, students met this competency as measured by the Field Instrument with 98% of 52 students* meeting competency.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to see continuous improvement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;

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- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Course Map: The social work courses which primarily focus on this competency are all of the “practice courses” – SOWK 3120: Generalist Practice with Individuals, SOWK 3130: Generalist Practice with Groups, SOWK 3140: Generalist Practice with Communities and Organizations, SOWK 3150: Generalist Practice with Families, and SOWK 3180: Interviewing Skills.

Measure 8.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation students complete the *Exit exam* to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will be rated as “competent” or above on each of the competencies assessed. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 82% of 45 students met competency on the knowledge test during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 faculty made several curriculum changes and adopted a new exam. As a result, the percentage of those meeting competency increased by 14%. 96% of 56 students met competency on the exit exam during the assessment cycle.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to implement curriculum and programmatic changes. Faculty will also do a complete exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students are struggling with and to determine if modifications to the exam is needed.

Measure 8.2. (Direct –Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student’s will be rated as “competent” or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

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Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 98% of 42 students met competency during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 faculty determined to use the annual field orientation as a means of preparing field instructors to provide quality supervision. The BSW program also incorporated mid semester surveys to assess for issues arising in the field internship. As a result, in AC 2019-2020, students met this competency as measured by the Field Instrument with 98% of 52 students* meeting competency again.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to see continuous improvement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse 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 understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Course Map: The social work courses which primarily focus on this competency are all of the “practice courses” – SOWK 3120: Generalist Practice with Individuals, SOWK 3130: Generalist Practice with Groups, SOWK 3140: Generalist Practice with Communities and Organizations, SOWK 3150: Generalist Practice with Families, and SOWK 3180: Interviewing Skills. In addition, the Research sequence courses, SOWK

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4030: Statistics and 4040: Research Methods are important courses to this competency.

Measure 9.1. (Direct – Knowledge Dimension)

During their last semester and prior to graduation students complete the *Exit exam* to serve as a test of student knowledge of social work as it relates to the nine (9) EPAS Competencies. This measure directly addresses the knowledge dimension.

The NSU BSW benchmark is that 80% of the students will be rated as “competent” or above on each of the competencies assessed. This will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: 67% of 45 students met competency on the knowledge test during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020, after implementing the new exam, the number of students meeting competency dropped by 18%. Only 38% of 56 students met competency on the exit exam during the assessment cycle.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will implement new content in the research, practice, and field seminar courses to focus on learner-directed goals and to increase the number of various evaluations performed by students to evaluate work with clients. Faculty will also do a complete exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students are struggling with and to determine if modifications to the exam is needed.

Measure 9.2. (Direct – Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing)

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allows them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. Students are evaluated by field instructors using the *Field Instrument*. This instrument measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions. The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This means that, at NSU, 80% of student’s will be rated as “competent” or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: 100% of 42 students met competency during the 2018-2019 assessment cycle. 67% exceeded competency. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AC 2019-2020 faculty determined to use the annual field orientation as a means of preparing field instructors to provide quality supervision. The BSW program also incorporated mid semester surveys to assess for issues arising in the field internship.

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As a result, in AC 2019-2020, students met this competency as measured by the Field Instrument with 96% of 52 students* meeting competency.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty will continue to expand the field orientation to include digital resources for students and field instructors to see continuous improvement. The field orientation process allows the department to ensure that field instructors are adequately oriented to the process and best practices of supervision and assessment of students. Providing a digital resource repository will give opportunities for faculty to further the resources useful for field instructors to guide students in their learning.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results:

- In the fall of 2019, the faculty created and used the new exit exam which was analyzed and revised during the spring 2020 semester. The exam addresses the same nine competencies and 41 practice behaviors as the SWEAP instrument; however, the questions follow best practices in terms of phrasing and answer choices.
- Made staff and curriculum changes to the ethics course to support learning related to Competency 1.
- Made curriculum changes in the field seminar course to support learning and performance related to Competency 1.
- Held a convocation in the spring of 2020 to further communicate the principles of ethical and professional behavior.
- Continued to hold and modify a fall field orientation to prepare field instructors and students to the expectations and best practices of supervision and assessment of student competency.
- Modified research curriculum to focus on a wider range of learning directed research projects utilizing team-based learning to support learning related to Competency 4.
- Increased the number of policy analyses done in the policy course including increasing the scope of policies allowed to support learning related to Competency 5.
- Focused on factors of engagement in multiple practice courses including developing rapport and interviewing skills to support learning related to Competency 6.
- Faculty focused on additional intervention models to support learning related to Competency 8.

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As it relates to the exit exam, competency was met in three areas (Competencies 1, 6, and 8). The competency scores improved in five areas (Competencies 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8). And the competency scores dropped in four areas (Competency 2, 3, 7, and 9). Detailed analysis of the exam on the question level will be conducted using metrics provided by the learning management system as the exam was given digitally. Additionally, the faculty will begin the process of validity testing of the exam using content analysis methods and confirmatory factor analysis.

All competency benchmarks were met on the field instrument for students. The field instrument continues to serve as an important assessment piece as students are observed and rated by outside entities. This provides one of the most substantial critiques of the program as it is seen as the culmination of the student's ability to grasp and practice the skills learned throughout the curriculum.

Plan of Action Moving Forward

It is of concern that students did not meet set competencies on the knowledge test in six of the nine competency areas, however improvement was shown in several areas in 2019-2020. It is also of interest that all the competencies were met as measured by the Field Instrument. The program will take several actions in relation to these concerns. First, since the exam is new, faculty will perform a complete exam review including item analyses to determine if the exam measures what it intends to measure and if questions need further analysis. Mid-year analysis suggested that providing a study guide might help student better prepare for the exam. Formal structures may be put in place to help students prepare by offering/requiring students to meet in study groups. Also, faculty are considering assessing student competency at multiple points of a student's academic career instead of only at one point so that we can measure knowledge differences before and after entering the BSW program utilizing the exit exam or a different set of measures.

Another consideration will be to determine whether we have chosen the appropriate benchmark for the knowledge instrument as it does not easily translate with the benchmark previously set based on a different measurement tool. It may be that it is more appropriate to use the 50 percent score as meeting the competency benchmark. As noted, that was the passing score for the SWEAP exam. In addition, an assessment will be completed on the areas in which the students did not reach competency. The program will identify areas that need improvement and ways to implement changes in our curriculum to address those. Engaging in research informed practice and practice-informed research is a content area to which we are always attending, as is engaging in policy practice, engaging with clients, and evaluating practice with clients. We will continue to strengthen this area by giving students more opportunities to apply research efforts to their social work practice in field placement.

Lastly, programmatic changes were determined in the Fall of 2019 through an assessment of the curriculum using the deficiencies noted through the knowledge exam results at that time. The faculty adopted the use of a program convocation (face to face

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and online) to better acclimate students to the expectations of the program and the requirements to graduate.

The assessment process for the BSW program beginning in the Fall and Spring Semester of 2019-2020 is as follows:

(1) Students were given/will be given a new *Exit Exam* as a direct measure of knowledge across seven (7) curricular areas and all nine (9) EPAS 2015 Core Competencies. Given during the student's final semester, the new *Exit exam* will be a knowledge-based test and will allow for analysis of student knowledge gained through the program and will be used to pinpoint areas for curricular enhancement.

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, will be assessed using a similar *Field Instrument*. The SWEAP instrument was discontinued due to issues related to timing of receiving the results and the change in the knowledge-based test. This instrument allows agency field instructors to measure student achievement across various dimensions related to each EPAS competency, scored on a 5-point Likert scale, and allowing for qualitative feedback. Possible rating options will be similar enough to the SWEAP instrument which are: 1- Lacking Performance, 2- Inadequate performance, 3- Competent Performance, 4 – Superior Performance, 5 – Mastered Performance.

(2) The Assessment Coordinator collected the data from students and field instructors and analyzed the data using data analysis software. The coordinator will evaluate the data to determine whether students have met competency benchmarks set by the program.

(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty, staff, the BSW Advisory Council, and other constituencies.

(4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching specific courses as necessary.

(5) The Assessment Coordinator, in consultation with the Faculty and Advisory Council, and in collaboration with the Department Head, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curriculum and program changes.