

PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Standards for Social Work Education

1.0

Introduction

This document sets out Standards for Social Work Education that apply to students enrolled at Defiance College, beginning Summer 2006. These Standards were adapted, with permission from *the Standards for Social Work Education* established by the School of Social Work, University of Texas at Austin in 1997, revised 1998, 1999, 2005.

Because of the nature of professional social work practice, the Social Work Program at Defiance College has different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. The standards are linked to students' abilities to become effective social work professionals and are provided so that students and faculty can be clear about expectations and procedures to address academic performance concerns. The ultimate goal of the Standards is to help students have a successful experience in the Program.

Since becoming a professional is a gradual process, not all criteria are expected to be met at all times. Persons who teach and supervise students will assess student academic performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if standards are being met during a student's educational career. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the social work profession, combined with a professional's own experience and practice wisdom. It also represents the application of knowledge, values, and skills to making decisions in a helping process.

All social work students will be provided with and expected to read the Standards for Social Work Education, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, & Marriage and Family Therapist Board Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct. Students will then be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they have read, are aware of the contents of, and will abide by the documents. The form will be kept in students' files.

2.0

Criteria for Evaluating Academic Performance

In order to meet its responsibilities to provide quality professional education and to ensure that its graduates are able to function in a broad variety of professional situations, the Social Work Program evaluates the academic performance of its students in four general areas: Basic Abilities to Acquire Professional Skills; Mental and Emotional Abilities; Professional Performance Skills, and Scholastic Performance. Meeting the criteria for scholastic achievement is necessary but not sufficient to ensure continued enrollment in a program. Both professional behavior and scholastic performance comprise academic standards.

2.1

Basic Abilities Necessary to Acquire Professional Skills

2.1.1 Communication Skills

Demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.

a) *Written*: Writes clearly, uses correct grammar and spelling, and applies appropriate writing style, including American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation. Demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and to complete adequately all written assignments, as specified by faculty.

b) *Oral*: Communicates effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals. Expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others. Demonstrates sufficient skills in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to complete adequately all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty.

2.1.2 Interpersonal Skills

Demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively and appropriately to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to fulfill the ethical obligations of the profession. These include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others. Takes appropriate responsibility for own actions and considers the impact of these actions on others.

2.1.3 Cognitive Skills

Exhibits sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and apply it to appropriate situations in classroom and field. Demonstrates grounding in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research—including knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice. Exhibits ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and apply that knowledge to professional practice.

2.1.4 Physical Skills

Exhibits sufficient motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placement, with or without accommodations. (See section on *Accommodations for Disabilities* for clarification.)

2.2

Emotional and Mental Abilities Necessary for Performance in the Program and Professional Practice

2.2.1 Stress Management

Demonstrates ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms and/or available resources. Handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.

2.2.2 Emotional and Mental Capacities

Uses sound judgment. Seeks and effectively uses help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. Engages in counseling or seeks out support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties do any of the following:

- compromise scholastic and other performance,
- interfere with professional judgment and behavior, or
- jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the current Codes of Ethics by the National Association of Social Workers and the Ohio Counselor, Social worker, & Marriage and family Therapist Board).

2.3

Professional Performance Skills Necessary for Work with Clients and Professional Practice

2.3.1 Professional Commitment

Exhibits a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct in Ohio. Demonstrates commitment to the essential values of social work that includes the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).

2.3.2 Professional Behavior

Exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in classroom, field, and community. Appearance, dress, and general demeanor reflect a professional manner. Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.

Works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority. Advocates for him/herself in an appropriate and responsible manner and uses proper channels for conflict resolution. Shows a willingness to receive and accept feedback and supervision in a positive manner, as well as use such feedback to enhance professional development.

2.3.3 Self Awareness

Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one's own limitations as they relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.

2.3.4 Ethical Obligations

Current behavior, classroom and field performance demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice, noted in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct in Ohio. Ethical behaviors include:

Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct of the Ohio Counselor, Social worker, & Marriage and Family Therapist Board.

- No history of charges and/or convictions of an offense that is contrary to professional practice.
- Systematic evaluation of clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way. Suspension of personal biases during interactions with others.

Comprehension of another individual's way of life and values. Empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.

- Appreciation of the value of diversity. Effective and nonjudgmental relation to and work with others who are different from oneself. Appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system. No imposition of personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on clients.

Demonstration of respect for the rights of others. Commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination.

Maintenance of confidentiality as it relates to human service, classroom activities, and field placement.

- Demonstration of honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.
- Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist

2.4

Scholastic Performance

2.4.1 Undergraduate Students

Students are considered to be in academic difficulty if their overall GPA drops below 2.25. Students will be advised to withdraw from the program if their grade point average falls below 2.0 overall or 2.0 in major. Failure to maintain a passing grade in field placement will result in dismissal. A review will be called if a student earns a D or F in any required social work courses. An overall GPA of 2.0 is required for graduation.

Students must complete the prerequisites outlined in their appropriate courses of study, as outlined in the course catalog. Students may not have grades of incomplete (I) in any prerequisites if they are to continue course work.

2.5

Sources of Information for Academic Performance Criteria

Information about students' meeting academic performance criteria in the Social Work Program may include but is not limited to any of the following:

- Feedback or reference letters from faculty, work supervisors, or supervisors of volunteer human service activity or other field experiences

Feedback from agency-based field instructors

Observation of classroom, volunteer, or field behaviors

- Performance in oral and written assignments, examinations, social work skills labs, or other appropriate coursework
- Student personal statements or self-assessments
- Interviews with faculty or other professionals
- Taped interview situations (audio or video)
- Feedback from students, staff, university personnel (Defiance College or other colleges and universities), helping professionals, or community members
- Feedback from faculty in other social work programs that student may have attended
- Signed confidentiality statements, academic honesty statements, contract to adhere to NASW Code of Ethics or the Standards, other contracts between the School and the student.