

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE INDICATORS
COUNSEL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

ADVANCED LEVEL OF PRACTICE
SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION CONCENTRATION STUDENTS

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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 in the Social Administration concentration:

- apply ethically-informed decision-making frameworks and skills when working with communities, organizations, and government agencies, and when analyzing policies, conducting research, and engaging in management practices;
- demonstrate understanding of the position of organizations and organizational leaders in implementing policies ethically and treating clients and employees ethically;
- recognize and navigate incongruities within inter-professional relationships; and
- recognize the multiple and conflicting goals of human service organizations and the implications for practice.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience. 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 in the Social Administration concentration:

- apply and communicate understanding of the dynamics of diverse populations within organizational settings;
- identify and communicate understanding of the relationship between institutional oppression and policies, research, communities, and organizational practices; and
- recognize and understand the role of power and disadvantage in relation to social difference.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social and Economic 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 in the Social Administration concentration:

- use a range of knowledge bases to understand the systematic implications of policies and organizational practices for the rights and conditions of client populations and marginalized groups;
- apply analytic frameworks to understand the distribution of political, economic, and organizational resources;
- understand the political and economic incentives facing multiple stakeholders in promoting social and economic justice; and
- understand strategies, avenues, and tactics of advocacy engaged in by economic, political, and organizational actors.

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. 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 in the Social Administration concentration:

- develop an understanding of descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, and processes for establishing causality in human service and policy research;
- estimate the effects of an intervention, program, or policy on a population of individuals or organizations using inferential statistics;
- present research findings clearly and effectively to varied policy and practice audiences; and
- become critical consumers of empirical evidence based on a firm understanding of research design and methods.

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 in the Social Administration concentration:

- recognize the role of political, economic, and organizational actors in shaping policy;
- demonstrate a critical understanding of the political processes, economic incentives, and organizational behavior that create, implement, and alter public policies; and
- translate understanding of broad political and institutional dynamics into the day to day policy and organizational concerns of social work practice.

Competency 6: Engage with Groups, Organizations, and Governmental Institutions

Social workers understand that engagement is an important aspect of social work practice within groups, organizations, and governmental institutions. Social workers understand theories of economic, political, and organizational behavior, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to understand engagement by clients and constituencies, including groups, organizations, and governmental agencies. Social workers recognize how dynamics of coalition-building and inter-organizational collaboration may facilitate engagement by clients, constituencies, and other social actors. Social workers in the Social Administration concentration:

- identify and analyze mechanisms facilitating participation and engagement at various levels; and
- attend to the interorganizational and collaborative factors and incentives that may strengthen or undermine coalitions and partnerships.

Competency 7: Assess Groups, Organizations, and Governmental Institutions

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 in the Social Administration concentration:

- understand and assess political, economic, and organizational conditions in relation to opportunities for change; and
- analyze the impacts of power, agency, and dependency on political, economic, and organizational behavior.

Competency 8: Intervene with Groups, Organizations, and Governmental Institutions

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 in the Social Administration concentration:

- apply knowledge of economic, political, and organizational theory to inform policy, community, and organizational interventions; and
- understand policy practice as a mode of intervention with implications for groups, organizations, and government actors.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Groups, Organizations, and Governmental Institutions

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 in the Social Administration concentration:

- evaluate the impacts of programs and policies using inferential statistics;
- evaluate the impacts of economic, political, and organizational practices on groups, organizations, and government institutions; and
- evaluate the relative success of organizational strategies.