

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

2023-2024 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 committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

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 and liberal arts foundation, to graduate competent and ethical generalist social work professionals prepared to meet the needs of diverse populations at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, locally to globally. Our teaching, advising, and student engagement focuses on a responsive student-centered approach, both on campus and online, that encourages and develops life-long learners and critical thinkers. Students and faculty engage in service and leadership that enhances human well-being, embraces human diversity, promotes human rights, and advances social and economic justice. The program's foundational perspectives include person-in-environment, strengths, research-informed practice, scientific inquiry and the values and ethics of the social work profession.

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

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since 1977. Assessment of program effectiveness has been a part of 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 2023) was based on the 2015 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 changed to the 2015 competencies for the 2017-18 assessment cycle, to begin collecting data for our next accreditation cycle. There were no changes in the assessment plan and measures beginning during the 2017-18 assessment cycle through the 2020-21 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 the 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 competency in nine (9) specific areas. 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. During the summer of 2019, the faculty elected to create their own knowledge exam titled the Exit Exam to replace one used previously. After consultation with the CSWE accreditation specialist, faculty were told that the accreditation body would prefer a knowledge exam created by the department faculty. The exam is structured to ensure the 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. 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 and implemented 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

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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 are 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.

Following each semester of implementation since the fall semester of 2019, results have been assessed by the Exit 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 each semester are being used to continue 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 and to guide programmatic changes for the department to ensure learning is enhanced in coursework throughout the program. It must be noted that only the exam committee know the content of the exam to ensure that faculty are not teaching to the exam but rather are focusing on strengthening connections between course content and professional competency.

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 4040: Research Methods for Social Workers, the corequisite for SOWK 4190, Field Work. The *Exit Exam* is a knowledge-based test which allows for analysis of student knowledge gained through the program and is used to pinpoint areas for curricular enhancement. This assessment is completed through Moodle by students. This measure evaluates the knowledge dimension for all competencies.

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 utilizing Excel and SPSS software. Results for both the Exit Exam and data is loaded and analyzed to determine how many students scored a minimum passing score for each competency.

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(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.

(6) The Exit Exam committee reviews exam metrics provided by Moodle to determine if questions are performing well and to determine if wording changes are needed to ensure questions are both clear and that they measure the intended competencies and practice behaviors. Modifications to questions are made prior to the next offering of the Exit Exam.

Programmatic Changes

During the 2020-21 assessment cycle, COVID-19 stay at home orders disrupted the implementation of in-person instruction and field placements which potentially affected the knowledge exam and field learning outcomes. During the 2021-22 academic cycle, continued COVID-19 social distancing measures and student choice in relation to online versus in-person courses led to decreased class numbers in the in-person offerings. Consequently, courses taught online saw an increase in the number of students from previous semesters. Courses were taught both face-to-face and online (synchronously and asynchronously). Some courses were taught in-person with faculty allowing students with potential symptoms to join the class in real time using Webex. Other classes utilized in-person and Webex to enhance learning potential for students, particularly in the field seminar.

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 piloted summer sessions in 2020 and 2021 where students completed their field placement in two semesters: the spring followed by the summer session. Eleven (11) students have taken part in the pilot during this time period. These students completed the Exit Exam during the spring semester with the graduating seniors. The result of the pilot was very successful in that students were able to graduate a semester earlier and both students and field instructors noted that the summer session allowed for enhanced learning, both in terms of opportunities for learning and students being able to complete their field internship in a way that fit their schedule.

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In 2021-22, the field education committee elected to continue the summer internship option in 2022-23 and in 2023-24. Six students will complete their field internships in the summer session of 2024. These students completed the Exit Exam during the spring semester with the graduating seniors per the policy of students taking the Exit Exam at the end of SOWK 4040.

At the end of the spring 2023 semester, two key faculty members retired from the Department of Social Work; (1) Dr. Ruth Weinzettle, the department chair, and (2) Mrs. Patricia Clark, the field coordinator. Mrs. Denise Bailey, Associate Professor was named the acting field coordinator in May of 2023, and Dr. Susan Campbell was named acting department chair beginning in July of 2023. Randolph Hoffpauir assumed duties as the interim field coordinator in August of 2023 and was named as the permanent field coordinator in May of 2024. In the fall of 2023, all interim and final field evaluations were collected via Qualtrics.

Limitation of Data Analysis:

Due to changes in personnel and the change in the process of completion of field evaluations, one field evaluation was not completed in the Fall of 2023. All individuals, however, completed the exit exam. The number of completed exit exams for AC 2023-2024 is 40, and the number of completed field evaluation forms at the writing of this report is 33 with six more to be completed in August of 2024. An updated report will be provided to NSULA in August of 2024.

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

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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.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 95% of 55 students meeting competency. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty used signage related to the competencies and ethical principles in the classrooms to aid in classroom instruction of these principles throughout the curriculum. The faculty held 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 were targeted. These changes improved students' ability to 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. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 98% of 40 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will further incorporate posted signage related to the competencies and ethical principles in the curriculum of each course to aid in classroom instruction of these principles. Faculty will implement a new module in all online courses which will infuse digital copies of the signs into the online learning environment for all students. 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. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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 students 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:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 46 students meeting competency. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty further modified classroom content in the field seminar courses and in the ethics course to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations. The department held the field orientation in both in-person and online synchronous formats to focus on enhanced evaluation methods to ensure students are evaluated appropriately on the field instrument. The department focused on the use of digital evaluations and surveys to support feedback for students, instructors, and faculty. These changes had a direct impact on the students’ ability to complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allowed them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will further modify and update classroom content in the field seminar courses and in the ethics course to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations. Additional standardized content will be incorporated into online courses to capture this effort with online students. The department will hold the field orientation in both in-person and online synchronous formats to focus on enhanced evaluation methods to ensure students are evaluated by field instructors appropriately on the field instrument. Field faculty will be recruiting graduated students to hold a peer-to-peer question and answer portion to engage students differently. The department will continue to focus on the use of digital evaluations and surveys to support feedback for students, instructors, and faculty. These changes will improve the students’ ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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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 (renumbered to SOWK 3090 and renamed "Human Diversity" beginning 2021-22 academic year).

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 met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 87% of 55 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty further expanded the Cultural Diversity course to focus on all forms of human diversity, with specific focuses on anti-racist and anti-oppressive topic. These changes improved students' ability to understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 98% of 40 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will

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further modify the expanded Human Diversity course to focus on incorporating discussions on racial identity and intersectionality. Lastly, faculty will meet in the fall of 2024 to complete an exam analysis to determine content and construct validity, to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling in, and to make appropriate changes to the exam. These changes will improve the students' ability to understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape human experience and are critical to the formation of identity, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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 students 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:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty included additional models of assessment in the field seminar which seek to understand facets of human diversity and work with clients on micro, macro, and mezzo levels. These changes improved students' ability to understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to complete a field internship at an outside agency, which allowed them to practice social work under the supervision of a field instructor. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will continue to include models of assessment in the field seminar which seek to understand facets of human diversity and work with clients on micro, macro, and mezzo levels. These changes will improve the students' ability to understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape human experience and are critical to the formation of identity, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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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 benchmark will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 98% of 55 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty further incorporated literature related to privilege, power, and oppression into course content and focused on methods of combatting inequity and intolerance. These changes improved the students’ ability to 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. Faculty also completed an exam analysis to determine content and construct validity and determined which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with. This allowed for appropriate modifications to the exam. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 85% of 40 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following

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changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will further incorporate evidenced-based practices in diversity education into course content and focus on methods of combatting inequity and intolerance. The faculty will also meet in the fall of 2024 to complete an exam analysis to determine content and construct validity, determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with, and make modifications to the exam as needed. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure: 3.2. (Direct – Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing Dimension)

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 students 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:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 46 students meeting competency. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty focused on the use of digital evaluations and surveys of students and faculty to ensure consistent feedback in the field setting. Further, students were directed to recommend or propose policy changes which enhanced client well-being as it relates to advancing human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice in the policy and field courses. These changes improved the students' ability to 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. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will focus on the use of digital evaluations and surveys of students and faculty to ensure consistent feedback in the field setting. Further, students will be offered additional opportunities to recommend or propose policy changes which would enhance client well-being as it relates to advancing human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing

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to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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:

- 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 2090: Intro to Policy and Research, SOWK 4030: Statistics, and SOWK 4040: Research Methods. All courses have content emphasizing the importance of empirical research and several courses 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 benchmark will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 85% of 55 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty further developed the Intro to Policy and Research course which introduces students to principles of research in social work earlier in the program curriculum. Faculty also incorporated assignments in the statistics course which utilize contextual data sets to perform statistical analysis and make practice related decisions. These changes improved the students’ ability to understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work, and in evaluating practice. As a result of these

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changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 80% of 40 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will continue to modify the new course titled Intro to Policy and Research which introduces students to principles of research in social work earlier in the curriculum. This change will not be measured on the assessment until the fall of 2024 as students receiving the curriculum change will be assessed at that time in their final semester of the program. Faculty will incorporate assignments in the statistics course which utilize contextual data sets to perform statistical analysis and make practice related decisions. Lastly, faculty will meet in the fall of 2024 to complete an exam analysis to determine content and construct validity, to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with, and to make appropriate modifications to the exam. These changes will improve the students' ability to understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 4.2. (Direct – Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing Dimension)

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 students 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:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 46 students meeting competency during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty incorporated the use of research article analyses and presentations of those analyses in the research course to directly tie principles of research to informing the students' practice in the field internship. These changes improved the students' ability to understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing the science of social work and in evaluating their practice. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will incorporate the use of Artificial Intelligence to aid students' understanding of research

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and how to implement true practice evaluation. Students will be trained on how to use AI ethically and responsibility to complete research from start to finish. Final projects in research will change from research proposals to single system evaluations in order to complete real evaluation. These changes will continue to improve the students' ability to understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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 benchmark will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 95% of 55 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23

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results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty continued to modify a newer course titled Intro to Policy and Research to facilitate the introduction of earlier content related to policy in the social work curriculum. This allowed students to have a firm knowledge of the history of certain policies and fundamentals of policy development to enhance the learning in SOWK 4350. These changes improved the students' ability to understand that human rights and social justice, as well as how social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Faculty also completed an exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with and determined if modifications to the exam were needed. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 83% of 40 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will further refine the Intro to Policy and Research course to facilitate the introduction of policy content earlier in the social work curriculum. This will allow for students to have a firm knowledge of the history of certain policies and fundamentals of policy development to enhance their learning in SOWK 4350. Faculty will use a pre-test/post-test evaluation design to better connect the two courses so that policy analysis can be better supported in 4350. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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 students 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:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 46 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, students were offered opportunities to recommend or propose policy changes which would enhance client well-being as it relates to agency and community level policies. These changes improved students' ability to 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. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students

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meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, students will complete a new and refined policy analysis assignment which will require students to use one of 4 or 5 standard policies to aid faculty in providing better feedback of student learning and competency. This change will continue to improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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 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 benchmark will be used to make

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program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 55 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty utilized signage in every classroom regarding the Generalist Intervention Model (GIM) to facilitate discussions in all courses to enhance student competency in the phases and aspects of engagement. Faculty incorporated additional assignments regarding engagement of individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Roleplay assignments in the Interviewing course were modified to help students focus on the skills of engagement. These changes improved students' ability to 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. Faculty completed an exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with and determined if modifications to the exam were needed. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 98% of 40 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will continue to incorporate the use of signage in the classrooms pertaining to engagement models and CSWE competencies in all courses and develop a standard module using digital versions of the signage in all online courses. The faculty will further incorporate additional assignments regarding engagement of individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Roleplay assignments in the Interviewing course (SOWK 3180) are being modified to help students focus on the skills of engagement. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 6.2. (Direct – Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing Dimension)

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 students will be rated as "competent" or above on each competency (scored a three or higher on the five-point scale).

Finding: Target was met.

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Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 46 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty began using digital evaluations and surveys to assess students' engagement skills in the field setting. Students were provided additional resources to enhance their engagement skills. These changes improved students' ability to 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. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will use digital evaluations and surveys to assess students' engagement skills in the field setting. Students will also be provided additional resources to enhance their engagement skills. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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;
- 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.

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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 benchmark will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 96% of 55 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty utilized signage in every classroom regarding the Generalist Intervention Model (GIM) to facilitate discussions in all courses to enhance student competency in the phases and aspects of engagement. Faculty incorporated additional assignments regarding assessment of individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Roleplay assignments in the Interviewing course were modified to help students focus on the steps and skills related to assessment. These changes improved the students’ ability to 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. Faculty also completed an exam analysis to determine content and construct validity and to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with. This allowed for appropriate modifications to the exam. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 98% of 40 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will further incorporate signage that have been placed in every classroom regarding the Generalist Intervention Model (GIM) to facilitate discussions in all courses to enhance student competency in the phases and aspects of engagement. Faculty will also create standardized modules to infuse into all online courses for the benefit of online students specifically. Faculty are incorporating additional assignments regarding assessment of individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Roleplay assignments in the Interviewing course are being further modified to help students focus on the steps and skills related to assessment. These changes will improve the students’ ability to understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive

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process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 7.2. (Direct – Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processing Dimension)

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 students 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:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 46 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results. To drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty focused on discussing the continual process of assessment in the field seminar. Special attention was given to diversity-related assessments. These changes improved students’ ability to 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. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will focus on discussing the continual process of assessment in the field seminar. Special attention will be paid to diversity-related assessments. These changes will improve the students’ ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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,

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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;
- 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 benchmark will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 95% of 55 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty modified models of intervention as they relate to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice with oppressed clients/client groups on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. These changes were put in place to improve the students’ ability to 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. Faculty also completed an exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with and to determine if modifications to the exam were needed. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 95% of

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40 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will incorporate models of intervention as they relate to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice with oppressed clients/client groups on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. These changes will not be measured in the assessment outcomes until the spring 2024 as those students receiving the change in curriculum will not be evaluated until their final semester. Faculty will meet in the fall of 2024 to complete an exam analysis to determine content and construct validity, to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with, and to make appropriate changes to the exam. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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 students 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:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met with 100% of 46 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty prioritized intervention in the field orientation and field seminar sessions. These changes improved students' ability to 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. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will prioritize intervention in the field orientation and field seminar sessions. These changes will improve the students' ability to understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on

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behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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 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 benchmark will be used to make program changes where required.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was not met as only 62% of 55 students met competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. This was a 21% increase from the previous year. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive

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improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty implemented a new course titled Intro to Policy and Research. By introducing concepts related to research earlier in the social work curriculum, it is believed students will be better equipped to understand evaluation as an ongoing process throughout practice; however, this change will not be seen in the evaluation results until the spring of 2025. Students continued to do single system design project in SOWK 3120: Practice I. In SOWK 4040, students continued with those designs to understand how to conduct evaluation of practice at a higher level. The departmental research committee worked to align the various evaluation projects throughout the social work curriculum to ensure that there is a linear flow to increase competency in evaluation as students' progress through the program. Faculty also completed an exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with and to determine if modifications to the exam were needed. As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-24, the target was not met as only 65% of 40 students met competency; however, this was a 3% increase from the previous year continuing an upward trend in students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will require students to take the Intro to Policy and Research (SOWK 2090). By introducing concepts related to research in the students' first or second semester, it is believed students will be better equipped to understand evaluation as an ongoing process throughout practice. Students will do single system designs in SOWK 3120: Practice I. Students in research will be required to use the previous single system evaluation designed from SOWK 3120 and apply it to their field internship. Faculty will also begin teaching students how to appropriately and ethically utilize Artificial Intelligence to aid in completing evaluation in their field setting. In SOWK 4040, students will continue with those designs to understand how to conduct evaluation of practice at a higher level. SOWK 4040 faculty will provide students with an additional preparation session focused on research and evaluation specifically. The departmental research committee is working to align the various evaluation projects throughout the social work curriculum to ensure that there is a linear flow to increase competency in evaluation as students progress through the program. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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 students 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:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met with 100% of 46 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-23 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2023-24, faculty focused on evaluation of practice in the field internship as crucial to student competency. In the fall of 2023 and spring of 2024, faculty provided an overview of evaluation to students and field instructors during the field orientation. These changes improved the students' ability to 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. As a result of these changes in AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will focus on evaluation of practice in the field internship as crucial to student competency. In the fall of 2024, faculty will provide an updated overview of evaluation to students and field instructors during the field orientation. These changes will improve the students' ability to 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, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2022-23 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2023-24.

In 2022-23, competency was met in all areas except for competency nine (9) on the exit exam. The result was the same for the 2023-24 year with students meeting competency in all areas except for competency nine on the exit exam. All the competencies were met as measured by the Field Instrument. While competency was not met for competency nine for the third year, improvements were seen in the other eight competencies on the exit exam and field evaluation results.

The departmental Exit Exam committee completed evaluations of exam results after each semester, with the most recent analyses happening in the summer and fall of 2023. This review included item analyses to determine if the exam measured what it intended to measure and if questions needed further analysis. Additionally, the exam was included as points in the field seminar to aid in providing incentive for students to do well on the exam. Also, faculty considered assessing student competency at multiple points of a student's academic career instead of only at one point so that faculty could measure knowledge differences before and after entering the BSW program utilizing the

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Exit Exam or a different set of measures.

The program identified areas that needed improvement and ways to implement changes in our curriculum to address those. Engaging in evaluation is a content area to which faculty are always attending. Faculty strengthened this area by giving students more opportunities to apply research and evaluation efforts to their social work practice in the field seminar course and throughout the courses offered.

Lastly, faculty continued the use of a program convocation (face to face 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 2019-20 was as follows:

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

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, were 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 allowed 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 were 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 evaluated the data to determine whether students met competency benchmarks set by the program.

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

(4) Individual meetings were 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, proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curriculum and program changes.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2023-24

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and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2024-25:

- Faculty will further utilize signage in the classroom related to the competencies and ethical principles in the classrooms to aid in classroom instruction of these principles throughout the curriculum. Faculty will develop ways to translate signage to online courses by creating a template to be used by faculty in all online courses in Moodle.
- 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.
- Faculty will further modify classroom content in the field seminar courses and in the ethics course to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations by focusing on ethical uses of Artificial Intelligence in coursework to help guide students for ethical use of technology in future practice.
- The department will hold the field orientation in both in-person and online synchronous formats to focus on enhanced evaluation methods to ensure students are evaluated appropriately on the field instrument. The field director will utilize graduated students in future orientations to hold a peer-to-peer question and answer portion to increase student competency and decrease levels of anxiety.
- The departmental field coordinator will utilize surveys and a tracking system to assess other ideas for improvement by both students and field instructors.
- The department will prioritize the use of digital evaluations and surveys to support feedback for students, instructors, and faculty.
- Faculty will refine opportunities for students to recommend or propose policy changes in the two policy courses which would enhance client well-being as it relates to advancing human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice. Students will be required to complete the policy analysis assignment utilizing 4-5 specific policies to increase faculty ability to guide students in best practices for completing policy analyses.
- Faculty will further refine the course titled Intro to Policy and Research (SOWK 2090) which introduces students to principles of research and policy in social work to introduce foundational concepts sooner. By introducing concepts related to research in the students' first or second semester, it is believed students will be better equipped to understand evaluation as an ongoing process throughout practice. Students will continue to do single system designs in SOWK 3120: Practice I. In SOWK 4040, students will continue with those designs to understand how to conduct evaluation of practice at a higher level to facilitate the introduction of earlier content related to policy in the social work curriculum. By introducing policy earlier in the curriculum which includes an overview of the history of certain policies and fundamentals of policy development, this will enhance learning in SOWK 4350. A pre-test/post-test design will be implemented in SOWK 2090 and 4350 in order to measure student competency in policy over time.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

- The departmental research committee is working to align the various evaluation projects throughout the social work curriculum to ensure that there is a linear flow to increase competency in evaluation as students progress through the program. Final assignments in SOWK 4040 (research) will require students to complete an evaluation project related to their field using a single system design.
- Faculty will incorporate assignments in the statistics course which utilize contextual data sets to perform statistical analysis and make practice related decisions.
- Faculty will incorporate additional assignments regarding engagement of individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Roleplay assignments in the Interviewing course will be modified to help students focus on the skills of engagement.
- Faculty will focus on discussing the continual process of assessment in the field seminar. Special attention will be paid to diversity-related assessments.
- Faculty will infuse models of intervention as they relate to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice with oppressed clients/client groups on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- Faculty will provide an overview of evaluation to students and field instructors during the field orientation.
- Students will be given the opportunity to participate in a study session focusing specifically on strengthening their knowledge of evaluation practices with clients in order to address the issue with competency nine.
- Lastly, faculty will begin requiring online students to complete a “15 minute check in” twice per semester in courses to increase student competency of all competencies. These checks in will allow for higher levels of retention in the program over time.