

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

2024-2025 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 since 1977. Assessment of program effectiveness has been a part of accreditation

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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.

In 2015, CSWE revised the EPAS and the competencies, resulting in 9 competencies requiring 2 measures each. Our program elected to change to the 2015 competencies for the 2017-18 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 2024-25 cycle. The current assessment period is guided by the 2015 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which focus on student learning outcomes (competencies) and is referred to as a competency-based approach to student learning outcomes. This competency-based approach requires identifying and assessing what students demonstrate in practice (referred to as practice behaviors). This approach involves assessing ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy. Programs are required to assess students on four dimensions throughout the curriculum: knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. Programs must assess a student's demonstration of competency in nine (9) specific areas of competency. Each competency must be measured incorporating at minimum two of the four dimensions. As stated in the 2015 EPAS Handbook, *EPAS recognizes a holistic view of competence; that is, the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the social worker's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to unique practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. An individual social worker's competence is seen as developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning* (CSWE, 2015).

Our most recent reaccreditation (in 2024) 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).

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

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in assessment. The exam is composed of 100 multiple choice questions. Twelve questions are devoted to Competency 1. The remaining competencies are assessed by 11 questions each to ensure as equal weight as possible for each competency. Though the exam is used to provide a composite score for each student, the results of each competency area is analyzed to determine which specific areas that students are either meeting or not meeting competency. Analysis is completed through both tools provided by the online student learning management system and through statistical software.

Following each semester of implementation from 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 that 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

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 students took part in the pilot during that time. The results of the pilot were very successful in that students were able to graduate a semester earlier and both students and field instructors noted that the summer session allowed 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.

In 2021-22, the field education committee elected to continue the summer internship. Ten students will complete their field internships in the summer session of 2025. 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: Dr. Ruth Weinzettle as the department chair and Mrs. Patricia Clark as the field coordinator. Dr. Susan Campbell was named interim department chair beginning in July of 2023 through June 30, 2025. 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.

Beginning In the fall of 2023, all interim and final field evaluations were collected via

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Qualtrics.

Due to changes in CSWE accreditation requirements for the Fall of 2025, the program will update all competency measures to the 2022 EPAS which is required of all programs nationally. The field evaluation form will be updated to include the revised competencies and the majority of the competencies will remain the same. The Exit Exam will be updated with new questions to cover new required constructs.

Limitation of Data Analysis:

Due to changes in curriculum with field being offered in the summer, there are fewer field evaluations than the number of completed exit exams. The number of completed exit exams for AC 2024-2025 is 45, and the number of completed field evaluation forms at the writing of this report is 34 with 11 more to be completed in August of 2025. An updated report will be provided to NSULA in August of 2025.

Student Learning Outcomes (Expressed as 2015 EPAS Competencies):

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

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

Social workers:

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

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

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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.

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

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-24, the target was met with 98% of 40 students meeting competency. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty continued to use 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 2024-25, the target was met with 84% of 45 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will update the exit exam to ensure it effectively measures the new 2022 EPAS required by CSWE. Posted signage related to the competencies and ethical principles in the curriculum of each course will be updated to aid in classroom instruction of these principles. Faculty will update the online modules in all online courses which will infuses digital copies of the signs into the online learning environment for all students. Faculty will continue to 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.

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

Students in SOWK 4190, Field Work, complete a field internship at an outside agency,

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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 benchmark 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 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 40 students meeting competency. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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 continued to 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 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 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will update all classroom content in the field seminar courses and in the ethics course to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations for the 2022 EPAS. 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 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

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diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social workers:

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

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

Benchmark: 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 2023-24, the target was met with 98% of 40 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty further expanded the Human Diversity course to focus on all forms of diversity, with specific focuses on anti-racist and anti-oppressive topics as required by CSWE, including the use of team teaching in the face-to-face offering of the course. 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 2024-25, the target was met with 93% of 45 students meeting competency on the Exit

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Exam.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in the diversity course to ensure that students meet all competency requirements for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will 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 2025 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 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 33 students meeting competency. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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 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 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting the competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following

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changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in the field seminar courses to ensure that students meet expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty 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.

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.

Benchmark: 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 2023-24, the target was met with 85% of 40 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty further incorporated literature related to privilege, power, and oppression into course content and focused on methods of

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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 analysis allowed for appropriate modifications to the exam. As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-25, the target was met with 98% of 45 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, Faculty will update all classroom content in the corresponding courses to ensure that students meet expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will further incorporate evidenced-based practices in diversity education, human behavior, and economics courses into course content and focus on methods of combatting inequity and intolerance. The faculty will also meet in the fall of 2025 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 benchmark 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 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 40 students meeting competency. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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

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as it relates to advancing human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice in the policy and field courses. Students also participated in a two-day legislative trip to Baton Rouge to meet with lawmakers and child welfare professionals. 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 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting competence.

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 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 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 2090: Intro to Policy & 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.

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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.

Benchmark: 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 2023-24, the target was met with 80% of 40 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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 changes, in AC 2024-25, the target was met with 80% of 34 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will update all classroom content in the research series courses to ensure that students meet expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will further modify SOWK 2090: Intro to Policy and Research which introduces students to principles of research in social work earlier in the curriculum. 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 2025 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

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measures student achievement across various dimensions related to each Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions.

Benchmark: The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This benchmark 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 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 40 students meeting competency during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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 2024- 25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in the field seminar courses and in the research series courses to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will incorporate the use of Artificial Intelligence to aid student understanding of research 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 mock studies and single system evaluations in order to complete simulated evaluations. 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

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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: Intro to Policy & Research 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.

Benchmark: 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 2023-24, the target was met with 83% of 40 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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 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 2024-25, the target was met with 84% of 45 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will update

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all classroom content in the policy courses to ensure that students meet competency related to professional expectations for the 2022 EPAS. 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 process will allow for students to have a firm knowledge of the history of certain policies and fundamentals of policy development to enhance the 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.

Benchmark: 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 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 40 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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. Students were also given the opportunity to attend a 2-day legislative trip and met with Louisiana lawmakers and child welfare professionals. As a result of these changes in AC 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in the policy courses to ensure that students meet the expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will recruit policy students to attend another 2-day legislative trip which will be enhanced by the requirement of policy evaluations of

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specific Louisiana House/Senate Bills. 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.

Benchmark: 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.

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Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-24, the target was met with 98% of 40 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty continued to utilize 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 further refined 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. Students in the families course began using a simulation model to assess for engagement with clients. Faculty completed an exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency the students were struggling with and determined if questions were appropriate if modifications to the exam were needed. As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 45 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in the corresponding courses to ensure that students meet engagement expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will update signage and 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. Faculty will further incorporate additional assignments regarding engagement of individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Roleplay assignments in the Interviewing course will be further refined to help students focus on the skills of engagement and further use of simulation will be strengthened in the families course. 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

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80%. This benchmark 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 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 40 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in the field seminar to ensure that students meet the expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will further the use of 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 including the use of simulation to allow students to practice engagement with mock clients. 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.

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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.

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.

Benchmark: 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 2023-24, the target was met with 98% of 40 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty continued to utilize 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 2024-25, the target was met with 96% of 45 students meeting competency.

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Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-2024, faculty will update all classroom content in the corresponding practice courses to ensure that students meet the expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will further incorporate signage that has 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. Students will further utilize simulation in multiple courses to practice the skills of assessment in a supportive learning environment. 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.

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.

Benchmark: The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This benchmark 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 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 40 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty continued to focus 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 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting competency.

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Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in the field seminar courses to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations for the 2022 EPAS. 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, 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.

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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.

Benchmark: 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 2023-24, the target was met with 95% of 40 students meeting competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, 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 2024-25, the target was met with 91% of 45 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AY 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in practice courses to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations for the 2022 EPAS. 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. Faculty will meet in the fall of 2025 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

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Competency. The *Field Instrument* assesses students on the Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processing dimensions.

Benchmark: 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: I

n AC 2023-24, the target was met with 100% of 40 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty continued to prioritize 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 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2024-25, faculty will update all classroom content in the field seminar to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will further 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 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-

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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.

Benchmark: 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 2023-24, the target was not met as only 65% of 40 students met competency on the Exit Exam during the assessment cycle. This change was a 3% increase from the previous year. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results and to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty refined SOWK 2090: Intro to Policy and Research. By introducing concepts related to research earlier in the social work curriculum, students will be better equipped to understand evaluation as an ongoing process throughout practice. 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. These changes are expected to 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. Faculty also completed an exam analysis to determine which areas of the specific competency that the students were struggling with and to determine if modifications to the exam were needed. Even with the program changes in AC 2024-25, the target was not met as only 60% of 34 students met competency.

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Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will continue requiring students to take SOWK 2090, Intro to Policy and Research. 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. 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 evaluations 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. The exit exam questions pertaining to competency 9 will be completely rewritten and updated to match the curriculum expectations required in all research courses and practice courses with evaluation. Faculty will co-teach sessions on evaluation in corresponding practice courses to ensure consistency of evaluation concepts in multiple courses. 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.

Benchmark: The measurement benchmark at NSU for each competency is 80%. This benchmark 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 2023-2024, the target was met with 100% of 40 students meeting competency as measured by the Field Instrument. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, and

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to drive improvement in AC 2024-25, faculty focused on evaluation of practice in the field internship as crucial to student competency. In the fall of 2024 and spring of 2025, 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 2024-25, the target was met with 100% of 34 students meeting competency.

Decision:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-26, faculty will update all classroom content in the field seminar courses and in the research courses to ensure that students meet ethical and professional expectations for the 2022 EPAS. Faculty will further focus on evaluation of practice in the field internship as crucial to student competency. In the fall of 2025, 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.

Pilot Student Engagement Tracking via Weekly Advisor Surveys

In academic year 2024–2025, the BSW program piloted a weekly tracking system designed to gauge student engagement through advising and faculty office hour interactions. The system was implemented from August 2024 through May 2025 and asked faculty to submit a short survey estimating the number of students they advised or met with each week, along with the amount of time spent both during and outside of class.

While participation varied significantly across faculty, with one individual completing the survey weekly and others responding intermittently, the tool provided an initial glimpse into student-faculty engagement patterns. Across the academic year, over 500 total contact hours were logged, reflecting time spent with more than 250 student interactions.

As recorded in Qualtrics, eight faculty/staff submitted 113 surveys. Response rate ranged from a low of 1 response to 32 responses, culminating in a mean of 14.13 surveys completed by faculty and staff. Faculty noted that 363 students utilized advising and office hours during this time. Faculty noted that they spent 317.49 hours advising and tutoring during office hours, and 599 “after hours” or hours outside of their posted office hours. On average across the 113 surveys recorded during the time period, faculty and staff advised 3.21 students each, for an average of 3.27 hours

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during office hours and 5.3 hours outside of office hours. While these statistics are not considered valid from a research methods standpoint, it does provide faculty and administration with the following inferences. Students employ faculty outside of office hours far more than during office hours. This utilization could easily be explained by comparing the time period of office hours to student course schedules. Secondly, faculty are engaging with students on a regular basis for those that did provide multiple responses in Qualtrics. Administration and faculty may need to further evaluate the needs of students and how to best communicate with them in ways that meet their scheduling needs.

This pilot tool was not intended as a validated or reliable instrument of measurement. Given the voluntary nature of submissions and lack of standardization across reporting, the data should be interpreted with caution. Nonetheless, this effort represents a first step toward more systematic tracking of how students engage with faculty outside of formal coursework.

For 2025–2026, the program will revise and improve the engagement tracking system, with goals of enhancing participation, increasing consistency, and ensuring that results can better inform retention and support strategies moving forward. An advising survey specific to the advisor-advisee experience is being considered as well.

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 2023-24 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2024-25.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the BSW program demonstrated meaningful progress in multiple competency areas through intentional pedagogical changes and programmatic refinements. Where previous assessment cycles identified inconsistencies or unmet benchmarks, the faculty implemented targeted interventions including strengthened course alignment, assignment redesigns, and early semester checkpoints for student feedback. These adjustments directly supported measurable improvements in outcome attainment across several key competencies.

For example, areas such as engagement with policy practice and ethical decision-making showed increased proficiency rates among students following curriculum adjustments and enhanced integration of case-based learning strategies. In other areas, such as assessment and intervention planning, results were more mixed. While some performance measures were met or improved, others remained below target, often connected to challenges in field placement quality or inconsistent student preparation.

Data from student performance, course evaluations, and pilot initiatives (such as the weekly advising engagement survey) informed these improvements. While not all results demonstrated linear progress, the cumulative effect of targeted faculty action reflects a pattern of ongoing reflection, analysis, and revision—core to our continuous improvement model.

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Evidence of Impact

Beyond competency performance, several indicators affirm the broader impact of the BSW program during the 2024–2025 year:

- **Graduate School Placements:** Graduates of the AC 2024- 2025 were successfully admitted to MSW programs at institutions including Tulane University, Stephen F. Austin University, Louisiana State University, and Florida Atlantic University, with all accepted under advanced standing status (a one-year degree program).

- **Student Achievement:**

Presentations: Three students presented at NSU's research day in the spring of 2025; two completing presentations and one presenting a poster. One student presented at the state social work conference, NASW-La.

Scholarships: The department awarded over \$24,300 in scholarships for academic, service, and financial need along with the Title IV-E grant that sponsored \$37,500 for the Child Welfare Scholars Program stipends.

Honor Society: Twelve students were admitted to the Phi Alpha National Honor Society for Social Work.

- **Community and Academic Engagement:** The department hosted and contributed to multiple academic events.

The department sponsored nine, no cost Lunch and Learn events virtually and in person for faculty, students, alumni, and the local professional community.

Three faculty participated in two virtual Lunch and Learns sponsored by the Department of Nursing.

Four faculty presented at the following national conferences: The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors and Federation of Business Disciplines.

Four faculty presented at NSU Research Day.

- **Faculty and Staff Recognition:** Faculty were recognized at both the college and national levels.

Seven faculty were each awarded a \$2,000 stipend by the department to attend national conferences.

The Title IV-E grant of \$9.9 million continued and was led by the Title IV-E director, a social work instructor.

A college-level faculty service award recognizing impactful student support efforts was awarded to a social work instructor and Title IV-E grant staff.

Two faculty members will be attending the 2025 CSWE Faculty Institutes this summer.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

The assessment process for the BSW program beginning in the Fall and Spring Semesters of 2024-25 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 *Exit Exam* was a knowledge-based test that allowed for the 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*. 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, as well as allowing for qualitative feedback. Rating options were as follows: 1- Lacking Performance; 2- Inadequate performance; 3- Competent Performance; 4 – Superior Performance; and 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 2024-25 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2025-26:

In preparation for the 2025–2026 academic year, the BSW program will build on lessons learned through both direct competency assessment and broader programmatic initiatives:

Engagement Tracking: The weekly advisor survey will be revised to ensure higher participation and more consistent data collection. Improved instructions, automation, and increased accountability will be explored to better track student engagement and support. A student advisee survey, conducted in the General Studies Department, is being evaluated for the Social Work Department to include the advisee perspective.

Curriculum Refinement: Continued work will focus on better aligning field education

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

experiences with classroom learning to close observed gaps in competencies related to assessment and intervention. Faculty will also expand the integration of ethical decision-making models across practice courses.

The faculty participated in a 2022 EPAS training during the spring semester to prepare for the curricular changes related to the 2022 EPAS.

Specific changes:

- In Fall 2025, the program will adopt the revised 2022 EPAS competencies required by CSWE. The program will update all competency-based assessment tools to comply with 2022 CSWE accreditation standards, beginning Fall 2025.
- The Exit Exam will be updated with new questions to reflect constructs in the 2022 EPAS.
- The Field Evaluation Form will be modified to align with the new competency structure.

Graduate Preparation: With the department's MSW program launching in August of 2025, the BSW program will embed specific graduate readiness checkpoints into its senior year curriculum. This graduate focused curriculum includes writing workshops, graduate school information sessions, test preparation, licensing information sessions, and focused advising for graduate school.

Faculty and Student Engagement: Faculty will continue to pursue service learning, research collaboration, and conference participation with students. Additional academic outreach initiatives and classroom-to-community partnerships are also planned to enhance student retention and preparation. This initiative includes providing students with the opportunity again to see legislation and policy development at the State Capital as well as discussions with Child Welfare Administrators and other service providers in the state.

- Initial steps were taken to track faculty-student advising interactions through a new weekly survey tool.
- Program will improve this initiative in 2025–2026 with greater participation incentives and clearer protocols to enhance student access and faculty support visibility.
- The department will continue to award the faculty stipend for the AC 2025-2026 to encourage faculty to participate in national conferences and research opportunities.
- The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors conference is scheduled in New Orleans for the Spring of 2026. Discussion about how to recruit students for this event are in the preliminary phase.

Program Expansion: As the MSW program's first cohort begins, lessons from BSW assessment will inform MSW course and program evaluation processes. The BSW and MSW programs will continue to collaborate to support a vertically aligned social work

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

education continuum at Northwestern State.

- Through the Title IV-E grant, psychology students will be recruited beginning in the fall of 2025 in order to help recruit more students into the scholars' program. The number of stipends offered will increase from 6 to 11 at NSU.
- The program will continue to support the summer field internship model, with 10 students completing the summer internships in August of 2025.
- Modifications to field evaluation reporting are planned due to shifts in field course timing, ensuring alignment with assessment reporting cycles.
- BSW Alumni Engagement: an alumni survey was created in 2024 to evaluate the BSW alumni in the social work profession and engage them in the development of future social workers and their professional development. The first step is to develop an up-to-date social work alumni database which is in process.