

Learning Contract: Definitions & Tips

UB SSW – Accreditation and Curriculum

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the School of Social Work's accrediting body, has begun to place a greater emphasis on the behavioral outcomes of social work education. As a result, schools of social work are now required to identify a set of core social work competencies against which student success can be measured. Additionally, practice behaviors that are associated with (or operationalize) each competency must be determined.

UB SSW Learning Contracts

In regards to field education, CSWE asserts that: 1) a student's learning in field should reflect a program's core competencies; and 2) learning contracts should be designed around a program's competencies and related practice behaviors. UB SSW competencies and practice behaviors were approved in the spring of 2009, and now appear in the field learning contract as "objectives". "Practice behaviors/expected outcomes" are listed below each objective.

Example of Education Policy

In Social Work, the signature pedagogy is field education. Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a professional socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. ***The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting.*** (Excerpted from Accreditation Review Brief, 2008)

Questions you might ask yourself as you are identifying learning activities

What specific competencies are required for professional practice in my setting?

How can the students and I individualize the learning contract and tailor activities to the needs of the community which is being served?

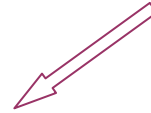
How is each competency (each objective on the learning contract) manifested in this setting? How might they be operationalized?

What will I observe the student doing (*think behaviorally - what will I see or hear*) once they are competent in a particular area. What will *come out* of their experience?

What competencies would I hope to observe in a well-trained colleague...*and then*, what competencies are students expected to have attained at the end of their placement (relative to a student's stage of professional development)?

“Anatomy” of a Learning Contract

UB SSW
Competency...



Competency 1: Identify as a professional social worker, apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice and conduct oneself accordingly.

...and related
practice behaviors.



Practice Behaviors/ Expected Outcomes

- a) Identify and demonstrate the value base of the social work profession, its ethical standards, and relevant laws including the NASW Code of Ethics.
- b) Demonstrate adherence to professional social work roles and their boundaries
- c) Engage in self-reflection and monitoring
- d) Identify professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication
- e) Seek supervisory input and manage authority in relationships in a professional manner to enhance your professional growth and development
- f) Accept constructive criticism from others to enhance social work skills, and to promote professional growth
- e) Identify the importance of self-care in professional social work practice, and develop a self care plan
- f) Identify and manage personal values such that professional values guide practice
- g) Identify means of improving client access to social work services

Sample Page From Learning Contract- See Page 3

Competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice to advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Expected Outcomes for Competency #2

Mid Placement

Final Placement

	AC	C	EC	IP	UP
Identify personal biases and values and their impact on one's practice with diverse client systems	—	—	—	—	—
Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice, and human rights	—	—	—	—	—
Recognize the role of trauma-informed care in the promotion of human rights	—	—	—	—	—
View oneself as a learner and engage others as expert informants	—	—	—	—	—
OVERALL RATING OBJECTIVE #2 (Evaluation of Activities Listed Below and Practice Behaviors)	—	—	—	—	—

AC	C	EC	IP	UP
—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—

Learning Experiences: List 2 Activities which at completion will exemplify the competency listed above.

1) _____

Target Date for Completion: _____

2) _____

Target Date for Completion: _____

Narrative Evaluation- Include evidence to support “Overall” rating of activities and practice behaviors, and strategies to achieve competence.

Mid-placement:

Final:

Student comment on learning experiences:

Mid-placement:

Final:

<p>Key: AC Advanced Competence Expertly demonstrates awareness, knowledge and skills as a graduate social work intern</p> <p>C Competence Consistently demonstrates awareness, knowledge and skills as a graduate social work intern</p> <p>EC Emerging Competence Demonstrates beginning awareness, knowledge and skills as a graduate social work intern</p> <p>IP Insufficient Progress Rarely demonstrates awareness, knowledge and skills as a graduate social work intern</p> <p>UP Unacceptable Progress Never demonstrates awareness knowledge and skills as a graduate social work intern</p>
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