

EWU Programmatic SLO Assessment

AY 2015-16 and “Closing the Loop” for AY 2014-15

Degree/Certificate: Master of Social Work (MSW)

Major/Option: Social Work

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Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2015-16

Part I – for the 2015-16 academic year: Because Deans have been asked to create College-Level Synthesis Reports annually, the template has been slightly modified for a) clarity for Chairs and Directors, and b) a closer fit with what the Deans and Associate Deans are being asked to report.

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.
 - SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;
 - SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;
 - SLO is met without change required

Strategies and methods: Two measures are used to collect data for assessing Eastern Washington University (EWU) School of Social Work (SSW) attainment of SLOs by our Master of Social Work (MSW) students. These measures include a student self-administered survey (MSW Foundation Survey), and a faculty field instructor assessment (Field Assessment) an Alumni Survey. Both measures apply a five point scale to assess competency for the traits that make up the SLO, and a score of three or higher is the benchmark for a MSW Program student to have attained competency in a specific trait.

Student Survey: The MSW Foundation Survey data are collected from students who are in their last academic quarter of their foundation year of the program using an on-line instrument administered through Qualtrics™. Students are recruited near the end of the quarter through three email messages sent by the BASW Program Director to all students who are enrolled in all sections of the Senior Capstone class. The messages invite students’ participation in the survey and provide a link to the electronic survey. For the 2015-2016 academic year these email messages were sent to students on May 12th, June 1st and June 17th, 2016, and the electronic survey was closed on July 15th, 2016. MSW Foundation Survey data are directly downloaded in SPSS™ format and analyzed by the BASW Program Director. The report is reviewed by the MSW Program Committee and the social work faculty at regularly scheduled meetings in fall quarter,

with the full faculty review occurring on October 7, 2016. Based on the reviews program changes were recommended by the committee and full faculty, to be implemented under the direction of the MSW Program Director in collaboration with the Director of Field Education, staff, and faculty teaching in the MSW Program.

Student Survey Sample: For the 2015-16 academic year, there were 72 students recruited to participate in the MSW Foundation Survey and 13 completed the survey, resulting in an 18% response rate. The MSW Foundation Survey had a 19.8% margin of error assuming a 95% confidence level and 20% probability of a correct response (based on using five point Likert scale items), and a sample of 56 respondents would have been necessary to attain a 5% margin of error.

Field Assessment: The Field Assessment data are collected from students' Agency Field Instructors (AFIs) through the electronic Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) system used by the SSW Office of Field Education. AFIs rate each student on the practice behaviors that make up the Core Competencies, and these ratings are discussed with the students and their Faculty Field Instructors. These assessments must be completed by the end of each quarter, and for this program assessment students' scores from their final quarter in the foundation year of the MSW Program were used. For the 2015-2016 academic year these AFI ratings were completed by June 20th, 2016. Field Assessment data are downloaded in Excel™ format then imported into SPSS™ format for analysis by the BASW Program Director.

Field Assessment Sample: For the 2015-16 academic year, the Field Assessment was based on evaluations of 107 students, which is 98% of the 109 students who began their foundation practicum, because two students were unsuccessful in their practica before the final quarter, when assessment data are collected. The MSW Field Data had a 1% margin of error assuming a 95% confidence level and 20% probability of a correct response (based on using five point Likert scale items).

3. Observations gathered from data:

- a. **Findings:** Results from the data sources were placed in SPSS data files for analysis, which involved these steps for each of the data sources:
 - a. Recoding the five point scale data into a dichotomous nominal variable indicating if the student achieved competency on the specific practice behavior;
 - b. Calculating the percent of students achieving competency on each practice behavior;
 - c. Calculating the average percent of students achieving competency on each practice behavior comprising a core competency within each of the measures;
 - d. Calculating the average percent of students achieving competency for each core competency across each of the measures, which is the percent of students achieving competency.
 - e. Data from the MSW Foundation Survey and Field Assessment were combined in step 4 of this process, and the Alumni Survey data were recoded and analyzed separately because they were collected from graduates of several cohorts, and should therefore not be blended with one cohort's data.

This approach afforded consistency across measures as they were integrated to identify a clear percent of students attaining core competencies.

The criterion used to determine students' competency across each measure was a score of three or higher on the five point scale. For the MSW Program 80% or more of students achieving competency on each of the SLOs is the criterion for program success. Summary data and outcomes from the MSW Foundation Survey and the Field Assessment are provided for each program SLO in Table 1.

Table 1. Percent of students achieving each MSW Program SLO during the 2015-16 academic year.

Student Learning Outcome	Percent Achieving Outcome Competency
Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly	100.0%
Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice	100%
Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments	98.7%
Engage diversity and difference in practice	100.0%
Advance human rights and social and economic justice	99.9%
Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research	94.2%
Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment	100.0%
Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services	94.2%
Respond to contexts that shape practice	98.1%
Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	
Engagement	100%
Assessment	99.0%
Intervention	100%
Evaluation	95.8%

- b. Analysis of findings:** As one can see in Table 1, the MSW Program has attained the 80% SLO attainment benchmark across all of the program SLOs. The two SLOs with the *lowest average percent* of students attaining the competency benchmark were (a) engaging in policy practice, and (b) engaging in research-informed practice. Given that the policy practice SLO was identified as a targeted area for improvement in the 2014-15 SLO report, the emphasis in this report will remain on policy practice. For the policy practice core competency the average rating of *students self-assessed* competency attainment, and their *field instructors* was 94.2%.

4. What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?

a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings:

Since the assessment findings from the 2014-15 SLO assessment identified community and policy practice as areas for improvement, SSW faculty members have applied for and received funding from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), our national accrediting body, to revise our BASW curriculum in these areas. *This process is rooted in both the 2014-15 and 2015-16 SLO assessment results, and results from the BASW Program project shall also inform MSW Program curriculum revisions.* Known as the Community Engagement Initiative planning grant, the proposed goals and outcomes are as follows:

- 1) Research historical avenues of access and exclusion to policy engagement by members of communities experiencing poverty.

Expected outcomes:

- Students will analyze the historical trends, missing/invisible stories, and documented inequities by race, ethnicity, gender, and income.
- Students will identify three areas of social concern for in-depth policy research and analysis.

- 2) Develop an “advocacy in action” exchange between social work students and key stakeholders who play a role in policy development and implementation in rural communities and Spokane.

Expected outcomes:

- Students will meet with policy makers and providers associated with the areas of social concern.
- Students and policy makers and providers will identify at least three rural communities or Spokane neighborhoods with the highest rate of poverty or poor indicators.

- 3) Strategize the implementation of the exchange via student led community forums, research, and creative avenues during fall and winter quarters.

Expected outcomes:

- Students will learn from community members their perspective of the social concern in their community.
- Students will assess with community members the community strengths and resources to be engaged in implementing an “advocacy in action” exchange.

b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

The Community Engagement Initiative planning grant would be the foundation for a three phase planning process to develop a model to use in two separate macro courses in the BASW program, which will also be applied to the MSW Program. Some activities are already completed or are underway, and some will take place during winter quarter of 2017:

Phase One - Summer of 2016. Social work faculty, Drs. Beth Halaas, Tim Hilton, and Deb Svoboda, assigned to the Community Engagement Initiative organized the human rights framework for use in the Initiative, examined the literature on specific areas related to poverty for student review, and completed an application to the EWU Institutional Review Board for data collection on the student educational outcomes and the experiences of the students and policy makers.

Phase Two - Fall Quarter of 2016. Dr. Beth Halaas is engaging approximately 60 social work majors in their senior year in the “advocacy in action” exchange. All undergraduate social work students enrolled in the *Social Work with Communities* (SOWK 477) course are involved in some facet of the exchange, and implementing the “advocacy in action” exchange. Communities involved in the exchange include Airway Heights, Spokane Valley, and the Cheney School District.

Phase Three - Winter Quarter of 2017. Dr. Tim Hilton will engage 50 social work majors in their junior year in the “advocacy in action” exchange through his course on *Social Policy Analysis*. The students will be responsible for integrating the research and assessments done with initial community partners, partnerships with policy makers and providers to conduct the policy analysis or development related to the areas of concern for the specific rural communities.

Evaluation. During Fall Quarter of 2016, students in the SOWK 477 – Social Work with Communities class, are being asked to complete a questionnaire on two occasions, at the beginning and end of the quarter, about the SLOs associated with this class, and class activities that contributed to advancing their knowledge and skill with these SLOs. During Winter Quarter of 2017 students in the SOWK 470- Social Policy Analysis class, will be asked to participate in a similar process. Additionally, the community groups who the SOWK 477 students work with are being invited to participate in key informant interviews and focus groups about how the students worked with them, and these will occur during Winter Quarter of 2017. The results of the student questionnaires and community member qualitative data will be used to inform revisions to the SOWK 477 and SOWK 470 courses. These data will also be used to inform revisions to the courses SOWK 530 and SOWK 531, which are on Organizational and Community Practice and Social Welfare Policy, respectively. The MSW Program course revisions shall be developed during the 2016-17 academic year and implemented during the 2017-18 academic year.

5. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

Two converging factors are leading the School of Social Work to begin a revision of our assessment method: (1) Consistently low response rates on our student self-assessment surveys; and (2) A new mandate from our national accrediting body that our program assessment measures be performance based, rather than student self-assessments. During summer quarter of 2016 the BASW Program Director worked with EWU staff who operate the Canvas learning platform to create an assignment level assessment system for program outcomes, and this is being beta tested by the program director and one faculty colleague right now. Once the beta testing is complete the faculty will be involved in discussing this approach to assessing SLOs. Members of the School of Social Work Assessment Committee want to continue using students' self-assessed competency as an internal tool, apart from our accreditation requirements, and the committee is discussing using course level mini-surveys for students to assess their own competency with the SLOs associated with specific courses. Both of these approaches are in developmental phases right now, and will be implemented during the 2017-18 academic year at the earliest.

NEW: PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP
FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2014-15 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

In response to the university's accrediting body, the [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#), this section has been added. This should be viewed as a follow up to the previous year's findings. In other words, begin with findings from 2014-15, and then describe actions taken during 2014-15 to improve student learning along, provide a brief summary of findings, and describe possible next steps.

PLEASE NOTE: The College-Level Synthesis report includes a section asking Deans to summarize which programs/certificates have demonstrated “closing-the-loop” assessments and findings based on the previous year's assessment report.

Working definition for closing the loop: *Using assessment results to improve student learning as well as pedagogical practices. This is an essential step in the continuous cycle of assessing student learning. It is the collaborative process through which programs use evidence of student learning to gauge the efficacy of collective educational practices, and to identify and implement strategies for improving student learning.”* Adapted 8.21.13 from <http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/closing-loop.html>.

1. Student Learning Outcome(s) assessed for 2014-15

Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

2. Strategies implemented during 2015-16 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2013-14 assessment activities.

Faculty members from the School of Social Work received funding from our national accrediting body (CSWE) to develop and pilot the Community Engagement Initiative in our SOWK 470 (Policy Analysis) and 477 classes. The details of this project are described in the previous section on program changes being made based on the assessment results. As one can see in that section, evaluation data, in addition to routinely collected SLO assessment data, are being collected and will be utilized to inform our teaching of Social Policy and Community Practice at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

The MSW Program Director and curriculum committee will use data that are collected specifically about the undergraduate policy practice and community practice courses to directly inform their revisions of the corresponding courses (SOWK 530 and SOWK 531) in the MSW Program. These revisions will be developed during the 2016-17 academic year and implemented during the 2017-18 academic year.

3. Summary of results

At this juncture, it is premature to assess the impact of the larger Community Engagement Initiative. Nonetheless, simply initiating a course that focuses on social work practice with communities has slightly improved the target SLO of “Engaging in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.” Table 1 displays the data on the targeted SLO for the 2014-15 and 2014-16 academic years, with the percentages being an average of competency as assessed by practicum field instructors and student self-assessments.

Table 1. Average SLO competency as assessed by practicum field instructors and student self-assessments for the 2014-15 and 2014-16 academic years.

Core Competency	AY 2014-15 Percent Achieving Competency	AY 2015-16 Percent Achieving Competency
Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services	94.5%	94.2%

4. What **further changes to curriculum, are projected based on closing-the-loop data, findings and analysis?** At this point the effects of the curriculum changes based on the Community Engagement Initiative need to be thoroughly assessed, and this approach will be refined, based on those assessments, including both routinely collected SLO assessment data and additional data being collected and analyzed that are specific to the Community Engagement Initiative.