Expected Outcomes: Possess necessary knowledge base

Auburn University Social Work Program produces graduates who possess generalist social work knowledge and are capable of addressing the problems unique to Alabama’s poor, advocating on behalf of the disenfranchised, including children and families at risk, and dealing with diverse populations, by establishing and maintaining community partnerships, and by developing and implementing research techniques and evaluative strategies designed to address these problems in a collaborative manner.

Related typical general education outcomes:

1. Information Literacy
6. Ability to Solve Open-Ended Problems
9. Informed and Engaged Citizenship
10. Intercultural Knowledge and Diversity Awareness

Assessment methods

Method: Field Evaluation

Each student is evaluated twice per semester based on a standard rubric while in field placement. The social work supervisor and field coordinator evaluate students’ core competencies and professional behaviors. We expect 85% of students to receive a score of ‘at expected level’ or higher.

Findings:

Summary of assessment data collected for current field students: A mean score of 4.20 was obtained from the field evaluations completed in the 2011-2012 school year.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We use the findings to improve field instructor trainings and social work field preparation courses that precede internship. Lowest scores are discussed in yearly faculty retreat and semiannual field instructor trainings to develop a means to address lower evaluation scores, i.e. fieldwork and course assignments. We focus on lower scored items in field instructor training and integrative seminar to raise scores to target level. Strengths identified include diversity and professional communication. Weaknesses were in research.

Additional comments:

None

Method: State licensure exam

The Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners mandates that all persons employed as Social Workers in the State of Alabama must pass the licensing exam. We expect an 80% pass rate for 1st time takers. We expect a 78% to pass among first-time takers, the current North American pass rate.

Findings:
The 2011-12 first-time pass rate is 77%, up 8% from 2010-2011. The total pass rate, which includes repeat takers, was 86%. This is up dramatically once again from the previous year.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We plan to continue current practices as long as the trend continues upward.

Additional comments:

None

Method: Course outcome evaluation

Current students evaluate degree to which each core competency is covered in social work classes. There are ten core competencies. 80% of students are expected to receive a 3.5 out of 5 on all items.

Findings:

The mean was 4.42 out of possible score of 5 on all courses outcomes for the field seminar courses in the 2011-2012 year. This is indicative of having prepared graduates for work in the social work field.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The findings guide us in what course content and assignments are most helpful in achieving the core competencies.

Additional comments:

None

Method: Employer/alumni survey

A bi-yearly survey is sent to employers of graduates evaluating preparation for practice. 35 items covering knowledge, skills, and values are assessed. A minimum score of 7 out of 10 is considered to meet expectations on all items.

Findings:

We did not conduct the survey in 2011.

How did you use findings for improvement?

None

Additional comments:

Due to acquisition of newly developed and updated survey tools, we have not submitted an employer survey in 2011.

Expected Outcomes: Knowledge of NASW Code of Ethics

Graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the National Assessment of Social Workers Code of Ethics, including values and diversity, commitment to the Code, and skills required to use the Code in practice.
Related typical general education outcomes:

- Analytical and Critical Reading
- Ability to Construct Arguments
- Ability to Solve Open-Ended Problems
- Informed and Engaged Citizenship

Assessment methods

Method: State licensure exam

The Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners mandates that all persons employed as Social Workers in the State of Alabama must pass the licensing exam. We expect an 80% pass rate for 1st time takers. We expect a 78% to pass among first-time takers, the current North American pass rate.

Findings:

Summary of Assessment Data collected for current field students: A mean score of 4.2 was obtained from the field evaluations on item 3 from the rubric relevant to ethics completed for the 2011-2012 school year. Of the four practice behaviors assessed, the lowest score was a 4.1 on analyzing one’s practice in relation to social work standards.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Lowest scores are discussed in yearly faculty retreat and semiannual field instructor trainings to develop a means to address issues of assisting students to assess their practice behaviors.

Additional comments:

None

Method: Course outcome evaluation

Current students evaluate degree to which each core competency is covered in social work classes. There are ten core competencies. 80% of students are expected to receive a 3.5 out of 5 on all items.

Findings:

The target was 80% of students will get a 3.5 or above on a 5-point scale on program objective number 2. Course outcome mean for item 2 was 4.5.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We plan to operationalize each practice behavior under Question 2 to address where in the curriculum students can further assess practice relative to professional standards.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes: Experience in social welfare generalist practice

All students complete both a part-time field practicum and a full-time field internship as well as engaging in numerous service learning projects under the supervision of social work practitioners.
Related typical general education outcomes:

6  Ability to Solve Open-Ended Problems
8  Oral Communication
10 Intercultural Knowledge and Diversity Awareness

Assessment methods

Method: State licensure exam

The Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners mandates that all persons employed as Social Workers in the State of Alabama must pass the licensing exam. We expect an 80% pass rate for 1st time takers. We expect a 78% to pass among first-time takers, the current North American pass rate.

Findings:

The 2011-2012 first-time pass rate is 75%, up from 2010-2011. The total pass rate, which includes repeat takes was 86%. This is up dramatically from the previous year.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Students may only sit for licensure exam if they graduate from an accredited social work program. We are making attempts to prepare students in areas where the results were lower than 78%. Test preparation materials are being utilized with students as they enter the internship placements.

Additional comments:

We plan to purchase practice test materials in addition to using the practice tests we currently own.

Method: Field Evaluation

Each student is evaluated twice per semester while in field placements by a social work supervisor. The social work supervisor and field coordinator evaluate students’ skills, and professional behaviors. We expect 85% of students to receive a score of ‘at expected level’ or higher (3 or higher) on all items. These items reflect competencies related to generalist practice skills.

Findings:

Summary of assessment data collected for current field students: A mean score of 4.2 was obtained from the field evaluations completed for the 2011-2012 school year. This represents an increase in scores from 2010-2011.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We investigated the lowest score -- critical thinking, especially in regard to planned change processes and have added course content in Social Work Methods III class.

Additional comments:

None

Method: Pre-post tests in Service Learning Coursework

Pre-and post-tests in service learning coursework to assess meaningfulness of service learning coursework and readiness for field placement
Findings:

Student evaluations were utilized in lieu of pre- and post- tests evaluations and gave overwhelmingly positive feedback for usefulness of service learning in preparation for field placement.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We have continued utilizing service learning projects in most courses and have used faculty meetings to coordinate efforts to avoid duplication of effort and maximal student learning.

Additional comments:

None