**FAQ: Student Learning Activities**

**What are Student Learning Activities?**

Student Learning Activities is part of the AMFE tool used to document the learning plan for each student. This plan is divided into specific behaviors under each of the nine (9) competencies. The Learning Activities in the AMFE tool serve as a written contract approved by the field instructor/agency, faculty liaison/university and the social work student detailing what opportunities need to happen to ensure that the student develops the emerging level competencies required of all graduating social work students.

**Who completes the Learning Activities?**

The student takes the lead and works jointly with the field instructor to create the student’s Learning Activities.

**When do I complete the Learning Activities?**

Students should have a completed, signed (by both the field instructor and the student) plan within the first four weeks of the first semester the student begins their field experience. *See Field Calendar for exact due date.*

**How often do I create the Learning Activities?**

Each AMFE tool covers an entire academic year, two consecutive semesters. However, Learning Activities can be revised any time during the two semesters up until the end of the fourth week of the second semester.

**Why should I care about this document?**

Each student’s AMFE tool reflects the specific learning goals for their field placement experience and indicates those tasks their assigned agency/organization view as essential in developing the competencies needed to become a professional social worker.

Social work competencies are approved by The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE is a non-profit national association representing graduate and undergraduate programs of professional social work education. CSWE‘s intention is to promote and strengthen the quality of social work education through the preparation of competent social work professionals.

**What do you mean by competency and competent?**

The School of Social Work and Family Sciences is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). We support and abide by the CSWE Commission on Accreditation’s Educational Policies for social work education, including an approach that is competency-based. The University of Akron School of Social Work and Family Sciences lists these competencies and practice behaviors in each syllabus to emphasize their importance in social work education. Each graduate of the School of Social Work and Family Sciences is expected to demonstrate mastery of these competencies and practice behaviors. While not all competencies and practice behaviors are addressed in each course, all are listed in each syllabus. By the time students complete the social work major, they will be assessed on each of the competencies and practice behaviors identified in the syllabi. This process is part of the overall assessment plan of the undergraduate social work program.

The 2015 EPAS recognizes competence as holistic; this means that the demonstration of competence is informed by the appropriate knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. Each of the nine social work competencies listed in the EPAS is followed by a paragraph that describes the competency. This description contains dimensions of the competency necessary for learning and developing competence throughout the course of a program.

These dimensions are:

* **Knowledge**
* **Values**
* **Skills**
* **Cognitive and Affective Processes**

The description and dimensions as written in the EPAS should be reflected in the generalist social work curriculum. This curriculum prepares students for the demonstration of competence through the behaviors associated with the competency.

**Understanding Generalist Practice**

**Generalist Practice is defined as practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.**

* Grounded in liberal arts and person-in-environment framework
* Uses scientific inquiry, ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo and macro levels
* Engages diversity in practice and advocates for human rights and social and economic justice
* Recognize and build upon the strengths and resiliency of all human beings

For generalist practice, baccalaureate and master’s programs are required to implement the nine social work competencies and any additional competencies in their curricula relevant to their context. For generalist practice, programs may use some or all the behaviors listed in the EPAS or develop other behaviors that represent observable components of each competency that integrate the dimensions (CSWE Commission on Accreditation, 2017).

**What are the nine (9) competencies?**

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

**As I review the nine (9) competencies, I notice information with bullets under each category, what is this and why do I care?**

Per CSWE (2017): “Dimensions-Each of the nine social work Competencies listed in the EPAS is followed by a paragraph that describes the Competency. This description contains Dimensions of the Competency necessary for learning and developing competence throughout the course of a program.

The Dimensions are: Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive and Affective Processes.

Behaviors-The bullet points under the paragraph for each Competency in the EPAS are a set of Behaviors that integrate the Dimensions of the Competency. Competence in real or simulated practice can only be demonstrated by Behavior and Behavior cannot be demonstrated without incorporation of the knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes associated with the Competency.”

“CSWE defines social work Behaviors as "Observable actions that demonstrate an integration of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. Cognitive and affective processes (includes critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment)."

• Critical thinking is an intellectual, disciplined process of conceptualizing, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing multiple sources of information generated by observation, reflection and reasoning.

• Affective reactions refer to the way in which our emotions influence our thinking and subsequently our behavior.

• Exercise of judgment is the capacity to perceive and discern multiple sources to form an opinion.

Student learning outcomes are the stated behaviors, knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that students are expected to demonstrate as a result of engagement in the explicit and implicit curriculum."

**What is the approval process for the Learning Activities?**

After extensive discussion and writing between the field instructor and student, the field instructor and student will sign the student Learning Activities, giving their full approval of the plan. The faculty liaison from the university assigned to the student and their agency will then review and if in agreement will also sign this document. This document is frequently reviewed to ensure movement and growth by student.

**How do I use this Learning Activities?**

Students will review this plan to ensure that they have the opportunities to develop the identified social work skills. This plan is also used by both the student and the field instructor, in conjunction with the student evaluations, to determine how well, you, the student are growing and developing.

**How do I create my customized Student Learning Activities?**

* Meet with field instructor and discuss your interests and then listen to your field instructor describe the opportunities available at the agency
* Read the how-to guide to complete the AMFE
* Begin to create your Learning Activities in the first week- it takes time and should take time!