



**Council for Standards in Human Service Education**  
**National Standards**

**MASTER'S DEGREE IN HUMAN SERVICES**

<http://www.cshse.org>

October 2009

**I. General Program Characteristics**

**A. Institutional Requirements and Primary Program Objective**

**Standard 1: The primary program objective shall be to prepare human services professionals to serve individuals, families, groups, communities, and/or provide other functions required to support human services organizations.**

**Specifications for Standard 1**

- a. The program is part of a degree granting college or university that is regionally accredited.
- b. Provide evidence that the development of competent human services professionals is the primary objective of the program and the basis for the degree program title, design, goals and curriculum, teaching methodology, and program administration (e.g. through documents such as catalog, brochures, course syllabi, website, and marketing materials).
- c. Articulate how students are informed of the curricular and program expectations and requirements prior to admission.
- d. Provide a brief history of the program.
- e. Describe the student population including the demographics and the numbers of full time, part time, and students graduating each year.
- f. Provide a complete program description, courses required, time to completion, and other program details (refer to catalogs and other appendices).

**B. Philosophical Base of Programs**

**Standard 2: The program shall have an explicit philosophical statement and clearly defined knowledge base.**

**Specifications for Standard 2**

- a. Provide a succinct philosophical statement that becomes the conceptual framework for the curriculum.
- b. Include a mission statement for the program.
- c. Demonstrate alignment with the mission of the units in which the program is housed (e.g., department, college, university, etc.)
- d. Provide a brief description of the major knowledge base and theories from which the curriculum draws to support the conceptual framework (e.g. counseling theories, biopsychosocial model, systems theory, change theory, etc.).
- e. Describe the multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or transdisciplinary approach to knowledge, theories, and skills included in the curriculum.

### C. Academic Advisory Committee

**Standard Number 3: The program shall include periodic mechanisms for assessment of and response to changing policies, needs, and trends of the profession.**

#### **Specification for Standard 3**

- a. An Academic Advisory Committee shall be established to provide information and direction regarding local, state, and national trends and needs, legislative and policy changes, and current research. The committee should include faculty and students from the program, academics from other disciplines, researchers, legislators, and practitioners. Provide the following:
  - (1) A detailed description of the membership of the Advisory Committee (e.g. names, agencies, roles, relationship to program, etc.),
  - (2) Minutes of advisory committee meetings from the last two years,
  - (3) Narrative describing how the committee interfaces with the program in relationship to specific issues.

### D. Program Evaluation

**Standard 4: The program shall conduct organized, systematic, and sustained evaluative processes to determine its effectiveness and to modify and improve the program.**

#### **Specifications for Standard 4**

- a. Provide evidence that an ongoing review process occurs, including such instruments as student surveys, agency surveys, graduate follow-up surveys (directed to both graduates and their employers), active participation of an advisory committee, involvement of agencies where students are in field placements, course and faculty evaluations, and evaluative data mandated or conducted by the institution.
- b. Provide:
  - (1) A history of program evaluation,
  - (2) A summative analysis of the most recent evaluation,
  - (3) A description of the methodology,
  - (4) A description of how and in what way the evaluation resulted in any necessary change.

### E. Standards and Procedures for Admitting, Retaining, and Dismissing Students

**Standard 5: The program shall have written standards and procedures for admitting, retaining, and dismissing students that are clear, consistent with its mission and purposes, and available to all students and prospective students through appropriate publications.**

#### **Specifications for Standard 5**

- a. Provide documentation of policies regarding the selection and admission of students.
- b. Provide documentation of policies and procedures for enrolling, advising, counseling, and assisting students with special needs in order to assure entrance of qualified individuals of diverse background and conditions. These policies must be consistent with the institution's policies.
- c. Provide documentation of written policies and procedures describing the due process for probation, dismissal, appeal, and grievance procedures affecting students.
- d. Provide documentation of policies and procedures regarding students with behavior or legal problems that may interfere with their development as human services professionals.

## **F. Credentials of Program Faculty**

**Standard 6: The competencies of the faculty shall include a strong and diverse knowledge base, scholarly contribution to the advancement of the profession, and clinical or practical experience in the field.**

### **Specifications for Standard 6**

- a. Provide evidence that all faculty have a doctoral degree.
- b. Provide curriculum vitae of all full-time and part-time faculty.
- c. Provide evidence that the faculty as a group represent various disciplines and experience appropriate to the degree offering.

## **G. Faculty and Staff Roles and Evaluation**

**Standard 7: Faculty are adequate in number to fulfill essential roles of curriculum development and review, instruction, and assessment of learning, program planning and evaluation, and student advising.**

### **Specifications for Standard 7**

- a. Document that faculty have the ultimate responsibility for setting policies and determining the content, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.
- b. Provide a table matching faculty positions and names with essential roles and a brief description of how the roles are fulfilled in the program.
- c. Provide rationale for faculty workloads including the use of part-time faculty in fulfilling these roles.
- d. Describe the process for faculty evaluation. Documentation shall come from a variety of sources and may include, among others, student evaluations and administrative and peer reviews.
- e. Document how an evaluative process is used to identify strengths and limitations and how it is incorporated in specific procedures for improvement.

## **H. Program Support Personnel and Resources**

**Standard 8: The program shall have adequate faculty, staff, and program resources to provide a complete program.**

### **Specifications for Standard 8**

- a. Include narrative and budgetary information demonstrating sufficient funding, faculty, and staff to provide an ongoing and stable program.
- b. Describe how program and field experience coordination is considered in calculating the teaching loads of faculty.
- c. Describe how the program has adequate professional support staff to meet the needs of students, faculty, and administration.
- d. Describe how there is adequate resource support (e.g., technology, library, computer labs, etc.) to meet the needs of students, faculty, and administration.
- e. Describe office, classroom, meeting, and informal gathering spaces and how they meet the needs of students, faculty, and administration.
- f. Describe how faculty and staff are provided opportunities for appropriate professional development.

## II. CURRICULUM

A master's degree program in human services requires scholarly and professional activities designed to advance the student substantially beyond the educational requirements of a baccalaureate degree program. The degree is structured to prepare students for professional practice through the creative application of knowledge, theory, and skills. The curriculum provides opportunity for a broad conceptual mastery of the field through an understanding of subject matter, bibliographic resources, theory, practice, and scholarly research. The intent of the curriculum is to develop within students the capacity to interpret, analyze, synthesize, and communicate knowledge, and to develop those skills needed to effectively practice and advance the profession.

### A. Knowledge, Theory, Skills, and Values

#### 1. History

**Standard 9:** The curriculum shall include the historical development of human services.

##### Specifications for Standard 9

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. The historical roots of human services,
- b. The creation of the human services profession,
- c. Historical and current legislation affecting services delivery,
- d. How public and private attitudes influence legislation and the interpretation of policies related to human services,
- e. Differences between systems of governance and economics,
- f. Exposure to a spectrum of political ideologies,
- g. Skills to analyze and interpret historical data for application in advocacy and social change.

#### 2. Human Systems

**Standard 10:** The curriculum shall include knowledge and theory of the interaction of human systems including: individual, interpersonal, group, family, organizational, community, and societal.

##### Specifications for Standard 10

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. Theories of human development,
- b. Small groups:
  1. Overview of how small groups are used in human services settings,
  2. Theories of group dynamics, and
  3. Group facilitation skills.
- c. Changing family structures and roles,
- d. An introduction to the organizational structures of communities,
- e. An understanding of the capacities, limitations, and resiliency of human systems,
- f. Emphasis on context and the role of diversity (including, but not limited to ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, learning styles, ability, and socio-economic status) in determining and meeting human needs,
- g. Processes to effect social change through advocacy work at all levels of society including community development, community and grassroots organizing, and local and global activism.

### **3. Human Services Delivery Systems**

**Standard 11: The curriculum shall address the scope of conditions that promote or inhibit human functioning.**

#### **Specifications for Standard 11**

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. The range and characteristics of human services delivery systems and organizations,
- b. The range of populations served and needs addressed by human services,
- c. The major models used to conceptualize and integrate prevention, maintenance, intervention, rehabilitation, and healthy functioning,
- d. Economic and social class systems including systemic causes of poverty,
- e. Political and ideological aspects of human services,
- f. International and global influences on services delivery,
- g. Skills to effect and influence social policy.

### **4. Information Management**

**Standard 12: The curriculum shall provide knowledge and skills in information management.**

#### **Specifications for Standard 12**

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. Knowledge and skills to obtain information through observation and research,
- b. Respect for client confidentiality and appropriate use of professionally relevant client data,
- c. Knowledge and skills to assess the significance, relevance, timeliness, adequacy, accuracy, and validity of information provided by others,
- d. Knowledge and skills to compile, synthesize, and categorize information and present it orally or in writing to clients, colleagues, or other members of related services systems and to utilize the information for community education and public relations,
- e. Information literacy, including skills to effectively locate, evaluate, and utilize information through library databases, world wide web, and other electronic resources,
- f. Familiarity with methods, statistics, quantitative and qualitative research and the application of technology,
- g. Completion of a research project or scholarly paper.

### **5. Program Planning and Evaluation**

**Standard 13: The curriculum shall provide knowledge, theory and skills in systematic analysis of service needs; selection of appropriate strategies, services, or interventions; and evaluation of outcomes.**

#### **Specifications for Standard 13**

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. Program planning and design,
- b. Program implementation,

- c. Program evaluation,
- d. Knowledge, theory, and skills to perform a community-needs assessment.

## **6. Interventions and Direct Services**

**Standard 14: The curriculum shall provide knowledge and skills in direct service delivery and appropriate interventions.**

### **Specifications for Standard 14**

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. Skills to provide direct services to individuals or groups,
- b. Theory, knowledge and intervention skills to interact with clients using appropriate prevention, intervention, and maintenance strategies and techniques to achieve maximum autonomy and functioning,
- c. Application of skills to analyze the needs of clients, develop goals, and design and implement a plan of action,
- d. Skills to evaluate the outcomes of the action plan,
- e. Knowledge, theory, and skills in the following areas:
  - (1) case management,
  - (2) intake interviewing,
  - (3) individual counseling,
  - (4) group facilitation and counseling,
  - (5) location and use of appropriate resources and referrals, and
  - (6) use of consultation.

## **7. Interpersonal Communication**

**Standard 15: Learning experiences shall be provided for the student to develop his or her interpersonal skills.**

### **Specifications for Standard 15**

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. Clarifying expectations,
- b. Dealing effectively with conflict on varying levels of societal systems,
- c. Establishing rapport with clients, colleagues, and constituents,
- d. Maintaining behavior that is congruent with the ethics of the profession,
- e. Critical thinking for analysis, problem solving, synthesis, decision making, and predicting outcomes.

## **8. Administrative**

**Standard 16: The curriculum shall provide knowledge, theory, and skills in the administrative aspects of the services delivery system.**

### **Specifications for Standard 16**

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. Organization management,
- b. Supervision,
- c. Operational and strategic planning including assessment practices,
- d. Developing budgets and monitoring expenditures,
- e. Grant and contract negotiation,
- f. Legal/regulatory issues and risk management,
- g. Managing professional development of staff,

- h. Recruiting and managing volunteers,
- i. Constituency building and other advocacy techniques such as lobbying, grassroots movements, and community development and organizing.

## 9. Client-Related Values and Attitudes

**Standard 17: The curriculum shall incorporate human services values and attitudes and promote understanding of human services ethics and their application in practice.**

### **Specifications for Standard 17**

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. Choosing the least intrusive intervention in the least restrictive environment,
- b. Respect for client self-determination,
- c. Respect for confidentiality of information,
- d. Recognition of the worth and uniqueness of the individual including ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, learning styles, ability, and socio-economic status,
- e. Recognition that individuals, services systems, and society change,
- f. Interdisciplinary team approaches to problem solving,
- g. Respect for appropriate professional boundaries,
- h. Integration of the ethical standards outlined by the National Organization for Human Services/Council for Standards in Human Service Education (available on NOHS website).

## 10. Self-Development

**Standard 18: The program shall provide experiences and support to enable students to develop awareness of their own values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles, and limitations.**

### **Specifications for Standard 18.**

Demonstrate broad conceptual mastery of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession through:

- a. Conscious use of professional self,
- b. Reflection on professional self (e.g., journaling, development of a portfolio, or project demonstrating competency),
- c. Clarification of values,
- d. Awareness of diversity,
- e. Strategies for self-care.

## **B. Field Experience**

### **1. Minimum Requirements**

Field experience is a learning experience in a human services delivery organization. It is a process of experiential learning that integrates the knowledge, theory, skills, and professional behaviors that are concurrently taught in the classroom. It should be an integral part of the total education process.

**Standard 19: The program shall provide field experience that is integrated with the curriculum and demonstrates conceptual mastery of the field of professional practice.**

#### **Specifications for Standard 19**

- a. Demonstrate that students are exposed to human services agencies and clients (assigned visitation, observation, assisting staff, etc.).
- b. Provide a copy of the current manual and guidelines that are given to students advising them of field placement requirements.
- c. Provide documentation of written agreements with field agencies that specify the student's role, activities, outcomes, supervision, and field instruction.
- d. Provide syllabi for required seminars. Seminar hours are not included in field experience hours.
- e. Provide evidence that a minimum of one academic credit is awarded for each three hours of weekly field experience.
- f. Demonstrate that the field experience is structured with clear learning outcomes and methods of evaluation.
- g. Demonstrate the field supervisors have a minimum of a master's degree.
- h. Demonstrate the program continually monitors the progress of each student and performs no less than one site visit to each field placement site per quarter or semester.
- i. Demonstrate there is a written plan of learning objectives, activities, and outcomes for each student that was jointly developed and agreed to by the student, the program, and the agency supervisor.
- j. The program shall provide a minimum of 350 clock hours of field experience that may include internship hours done in a human services setting as a requirement of a prior degree programs. Field experience hours done in CSHSE accredited human services programs may be included in clock hours.
- k. Field work may be waived if student has extensive experience provided specific criteria, policies, and procedures are followed and documented.

**Standard 20: The program shall provide a capstone experience that demonstrates conceptual mastery of the field of professional practice; for example, a portfolio, project, or thesis.**

#### **Specifications for Standard 20**

- a. Provide rationale for each option offered.
- b. Document specific criteria for all options offered.
- c. Document specific criteria for assessment.
- d. Document policies and procedures for appealing decisions.