School of Social Work Mission

The mission of the UNR School of Social Work is to prepare effective, ethical social work leaders and practitioners who—with a deep and abiding respect for cultural diversity and human strengths—challenge injustice and promote a more humane world through the development and delivery of evidenced-informed practices, policies, and programs.

BSW Program Mission

The mission of the BSW Program is to educate competent generalist social workers who challenge injustice and who are able to effectively and compassionately intervene at all system levels with diverse client groups.

Generalist Practice

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person and environment construct. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice. Generalist practitioners incorporate diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. BSW practice incorporates all of the core competencies.

MSW Program Mission

The mission of the MSW program is to prepare ethical, competent advanced generalist social work leaders who are able to practice reflectively and autonomously in complex environments across system levels with diverse client groups. The Advanced Generalist Practice specialization prepares graduates to address questions, issues and problems across methods, systems, and fields of practice. As defined at the UNR School of Social Work, AGP is characterized by 1) leadership in innovative problem-solving and change; 2) autonomous practice, and 3) use of integrated, evidence-informed knowledge, values, and skills to address ambiguous, complex problems in an increasingly diverse and ever changing practice environment.

Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP)

Our conceptualization of AGP at the UNR School of Social Work incorporates three themes which include: 1) leadership, 2) autonomous practice, and 3) the ability to practice in complex and ambiguous circumstances. This definition of AGP is based on several conceptual frameworks. It draws on leadership theories such as emotional intelligence, Schön’s conceptualization of the reflective practitioner, and Bloom’s taxonomy of knowledge. Emotional intelligence theory suggests that leaders create change by empowering and motivating others through the ability to communicate a vision of what to do. AGP leaders use evidence and careful analysis to frame issues in ways that simultaneously convey their “private” importance and “social justice” significance. AGP leaders have strong interpersonal skills. They behave ethically and foster trust and engagement. A second source of AGP conceptualization, Schön suggests we need an understanding of practice that promotes a high level of adaptability and creativity. Using this perspective, social workers attend not only to the “problem” but to “framing” the problem. In Schön’s terms, reflective practitioners turn “messy” situations into solvable problems. A third source of our AGP definition, Bloom’s taxonomy and addresses the knowledge, values and skills needed for autonomous practice. Bloom describes six levels of knowledge building, including: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. Bloom’s conceptualization contributes insight into the relationship of generalist and advanced generalist practice. Higher levels of knowledge, analysis, and creating are critical because of the expectations for leadership, autonomous practice, and ability to practice in complex circumstances.
2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. They commit themselves to the profession’s advancement.

**F1** Advocate for client access to the services of social work.

**F2** Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development.

**F3** Attend to professional roles and boundaries.

**F4** Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication.

**F5** Engage in career-long learning.

**F6** Use supervision and consultation.

2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision making. They are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

**F7** Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.

**F8** Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable, principles of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in SW, Statement of Principles.

**F9** Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.

**F10** Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

Advanced generalist practitioners (AGPs) identify with the human rights values of the social work profession, the centrality of relationships, and the interconnections between client issues and larger social problems. They take leadership in identifying and responding to needs and issues across system levels.

**C1** Initiate and facilitate socially responsive and just practices across systems.

**C2** Provide social work leadership within practice contexts and as a member of the profession.

**C3** Cultivate and apply leadership qualities of self-awareness and other-awareness.

**C4** Able to critique ethical issues within complex environments to formulate innovative responses and approaches.

**C5** Employ strategies of ethical reasoning in practice settings where policies or values conflict with the delivery of social work services, personal values, or professional ethics.
2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

F11 Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.

F12 Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.

F13 Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

AGPs synthesize multiple sources of information as they seek to understand “what is” and clarify “what’s possible” in addressing issues that arise across system levels. They effectively communicate this information to diverse client, multidisciplinary team and stakeholder groups.

C6 Question, evaluate, synthesize and apply information from multiple sources in framing ill-defined, ever changing, multifaceted practice issues.

C7 Question, evaluate, select and implement appropriate assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies in complex, fluid, multidimensional practice situations.

C8 Produce practice-ready presentations and documents (i.e., case presentations, intervention demonstrations, journal articles, grant applications, legislative briefs).

2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice.
Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors such as age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, and so forth. They appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization and alienation, as well as privilege, power and acclaim.

F14 Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.

F15 Gain sufficient self-awareness to recognize and address the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.

F16 Recognize, value, and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.

F17 View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as experts of their own circumstances/lives.

AGPs understand that human diversity includes and goes beyond conventional categories of ethnicity or culture and recognizes the intersectionality of human differences. Cultural humility characterizes their professional interactions across system levels.

C9 Demonstrate leadership in collaboratively examining underlying assumptions and developing interculturally effective policies, programs, & interventions.

C10 Effectively navigate conflicts between diverse identities within and among individuals, families, groups and organizations.
2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

F18 Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.

F19 Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.

F20 Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. They comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.

F21 Use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry.

F22 Use research evidence to inform practice.

Concentration level practice behaviors

AGPs critically appraise and integrate data from multiple sources to inform practice decisions. They also collect, analyze, interpret, and communicate data for program development, evaluation and ongoing improvement of services.

C13 Question and critically evaluate the strength and application of the evidence in regard to assumptions, context, and culture.

C14 Employ evaluation frameworks in assessing the impact of interventions, programs, and policies.

C15 Collaborate with the research enterprise in identifying and addressing questions emanating from the practice arena.

BSW & Foundation level practice behaviors

C12 Identify, develop, implement and evaluate strategies to address policies, practices, and language that are discriminatory and oppressive.
2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. They apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development.

F23 Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

F24 Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
Social workers understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. They know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the

- F25 Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.
- F26 Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

Concentration level practice behaviors

AGPs integrate multiple theories about human behavior and the social environment to complete comprehensive assessments and develop and implement intervention plans across system levels. They give equal importance to understanding individual uniqueness and the broader social issues that support and deter well-being.

C16 Integrate understandings from a variety of theoretical perspectives in formulating comprehensive, multidimensional assessments and interventions.

C17 Identify and question underlying theoretical and ontological assumptions about human behavior guiding agency practices, programs and policies.

Concentration level practice behaviors

AGPs utilize a range of analytical frameworks to assess the efficacy, costs and consequences of policy choices. In turn, they use these data to develop and advocate for socially and economically just policies that promote the human rights and dignity of all.

C18 Apply analytical frameworks to critically assess the intended & unintended outcomes of existing and proposed policies, especially with respect to vulnerable populations.

C19 Formulate and advocate for policies that promote socially and economically just practices and services at all system levels.
2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice.
Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. They recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.

F27 Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.

F28 Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

2.1.10a Engagement
F29 Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
F30 Use empathy and other interpersonal skills.
F31 Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

2.1.10b Assessment
F32 Collect, organize and interpret client data.
F33 Assess client strengths and limitations.
F34 Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives.
F35 Select appropriate intervention strategies.

2.1.10c Intervention
F36 Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals.
F37 Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities.
F38 Help clients resolve problems.
F39 Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients.
F40 Facilitate transitions and endings.

2.1.10d Evaluation
F41 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.
AGPs are ethical, competent leaders who are able to practice reflectively and autonomously in complex environments across system levels with diverse groups. They integrate systems, person-in-environment, and strengths perspectives with an array of theoretical models and intervention approaches to collaboratively frame and address complex issues, questions, and problems. Thus, advanced practice involves the continuous us, dynamic interplay of engagement, multidimensional assessment, intervention and evaluation processes—across system levels.

2.1.10a Engagement

C23 Attend to the interpersonal dynamics, cultural & contextual factors that support or threaten client-worker relationships.

C24 Establish a relationally based process that encourages clients to be equal participants in the establishment of intervention goals & expected outcomes.

2.1.10b Assessment

C25 Adapt, modify and use multidimensional tools in conducting comprehensive, culturally effective, integrative case assessments.

C26 Identify client system strengths and coping capacities.

C27 Assess client system readiness for change.

C28 Select and modify intervention strategies based on continuous evaluation and assessment.

2.1.10c Intervention

C29 Critically evaluate, select and apply best practices and evidence-informed interventions.

C30 Capable of autonomous practice, in competently applying appropriate intervention techniques for a range of presenting issues, problems, or questions.

C31 Develop and implement collaborative multidisciplinary interventions.

2.1.10d Evaluation

C32 Use process and outcome evaluation findings to inform and shape the ongoing development of social work interventions.

C33 Work collaboratively with evaluators/researchers in identifying questions emanating from practice, as well as assessing intervention efficacy and effectiveness.