

MASTER'S AND BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMS IN SOCIAL WORK
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES
WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

The technical standards outlined below are required for admission, retention, and graduation from the Department of Social Work at Western Carolina University. These standards, which are separate from academic standards, describe the physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral requirements of social work students. They are designed to provide reasonable assurance that students can participate fully in all aspects of coursework and the field practicum, with or without accommodation, resulting in successful graduation from the program.

1. Observation: Students must be able to:

- Accurately observe clients to effectively assess their situations.
- Have functional use of the senses and sufficient motor capability to carry out the necessary assessment activities.

2. Communication: Students must be able to:

- Communicate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals, and exemplify a willingness and ability to listen to others.
- Demonstrate effective communication in oral presentations, written assignments, small group settings, and through electronic means.
- Perceive and interpret nonverbal communication.
- Use spoken and written English to understand the content presented in the program.
- Comprehend reading assignments and search and evaluate the literature.
- Demonstrate competency in writing skills.

3. Sensory and Motor Functions: Students must have sufficient sensory and motor abilities to:

- Attend class and complete the required number of hours during their field practicum.
- Maintain consciousness and equilibrium and have the physical strength and stamina to perform satisfactorily in the classroom and in social work agency settings.

4. Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Functions: Students must have the ability to:

- Think critically, analyze and interpret objective and subjective data, and apply effective problem solving skills. These skills allow students to make proper assessments, use sound judgment, appropriately prioritize therapeutic interventions, and measure and report client outcomes.
- Demonstrate skills of recall using long and short term memory, inferential reasoning, application of knowledge, and evaluation of predicted outcomes at appropriate levels in the program.

5. Self Awareness: Students must exhibit:

- Knowledge and openness to learning how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships.
- Willingness to examine and change their behavior when appropriate and work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.

6. Emotional and Mental Stability: Students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.
- Effectively use help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with academic and clinical performance.

Professional Performance Standards

The Department of Social Work recognizes that preparation for professional practice requires more than scholastic achievement. The program expects students to exhibit behaviors that are consistent with professional performance. Such behavior is expected not only in the classroom but throughout the University and the larger community. Some specific examples of professional performance standards are outlined below.

Students must demonstrate:

- A commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics.
- The essential values of social work including the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).
- Behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in classroom, field, and community.
- Responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.
- A commitment to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system..