



Office of Field Education FAQ – New Learning Agreement

Why did you change the Learning Agreement?

Our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), updated the competencies. Because we base the Learning Agreement on the competencies, we needed to update it.

When will we start using the new Learning Agreement?

Students beginning field in summer semester 2016, or after, will use the new documents. (Students that began their placement prior to summer 2016, will continue with the previous forms.)

Did the format of the Learning Agreement change?

No. The format of the Learning Agreement has remained the same. There continue to be 4 different templates: BSSW, MSWI, MSWII/ASAP Micro, and MSWII/ASAP Macro. Each template includes a set of Required Activities defined by the college. All but MSWI students will be required to add activities specific to the placement setting. Field and task instructors will then evaluate the students based on each of the activities, the overall competencies, and the semester overall.

What changed?

CSWE consolidated the competencies into 9 areas instead of 13 (1-9, 10A-10D). They have also revised the descriptions of the competencies and the practice areas they contain. In response, we shifted many existing activities to different competency numbers and revised several activities.

What happened to the competencies that were eliminated?

For the most part, concepts and skills were moved into other competencies. Examples:

- What we previously knew as Competency 1 (professional behavior) and Competency 2 (ethics), have been combined in new Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.
- The former Competency 7 was: “Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.” This concept now appears within several other competencies, specifically new competencies 6 (Engage), 7 (Assess), 8 (Intervene) and 9 (Evaluate).

So, is there anything actually new or different?

Yes, there are definitely some new concepts and skill sets. For example, In Competency 1, CSWE includes “Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.” We have a Required Activity relating to social media. However, this CSWE skill is specific to service delivery through technology. Because of this, we added a new Required Activity of “Student will discuss with agency personnel what factors have been discussed to determine if agency will or will not use technology to deliver services and, if available, will observe the use of technology to deliver services.”

Another example is where CSWE has introduced the concept of environmental justice along with social and economic justice in new Competency 3.

Did you make the Learning Agreement shorter?

Yes and no:

- Yes – There are now 9 competency sections rather than 13. Students who are required to add activities might then add fewer activities. Also, instructors will have only 9 narrative sections to write for the semester-end evaluation.
- No – We kept a majority of the existing Required Activities and reorganized them under the new competencies.

What happened to the weekly journal?

The college is still expecting students to document weekly reflections (as seen in the first Required Activity in Competency 1). However, we have re-phrased this “journal” as a weekly reflection or weekly summary to better mirror terms used through the social work program.

My agency has standard activities that we have students add to the Learning Agreement. What do we do now?

You’ll need to review your standard set of activities to see which new competency is the best fit for each activity. This table can help you see where the re-organization is straightforward and which areas might require more thought:

Former Competency	New Competency
Competency 1 – Professionalism	Competency 1 - Demonstrate Ethical & Professional Behavior
Competency 2 – Ethics	
Competency 3 – Critical Thinking	<i>choose new competency based on specific activity</i>
Competency 4 – Diversity & Difference	Competency 2 - Engage Diversity & Difference in Practice
Competency 5 – Human Rights & Justice	Competency 3 - Advance Human Rights & Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice
Competency 6 – Research and Practice	Competency 4 - Engage in Practice-informed Research & Research-informed Practice
Competency 7 – HBSE	<i>based on the specific activity, select</i>
Competency 8 – Policy Practice	Competency 5 - Engage in Policy Practice
Competency 9 – Contexts that Shape Practice	<i>choose new competency based on specific activity</i>
Competency 10A – Engage	Competency 6 – Engage
Competency 10B – Assess	Competency 7 – Assess
Competency 10C – intervene	Competency 8 – intervene
Competency 10D – Evaluate	Competency 9 – Evaluate

Where can I find more information?

- Click here for the CSWE 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (<http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=81660>). The competencies are on pages 6-9 of the PDF.
- Check out the Field Manual, on this page of the college’s website (<http://csw.osu.edu/field-education/field-forms-syllabi-manual/>) for more general information about the Learning Agreement and how it is used through a student’s placement.