

**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

**SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM PROPOSED CHANGES BASED UPON ASSESSMENT DATA  
Submission for Assessment Cycle Award**

The Ferris State University Social Work Program has a very robust assessment plan due to the fact that the program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Accreditation standards are set by CSWE but social work programs develop their own assessment plans based upon the standards. The Social Work Assessment Plan with outcomes as of May 2009 with an update in December 2009, is attached as a second word document to this document.

Our 12<sup>th</sup> “Outcome: Design and Execute Evaluation Research” is the only outcome in the assessment plan that did not meet the benchmark in all the assessment methods, particularly with the two methods that are SPECIFICALLY determined to assess competence in conducting evaluative research. In fact, the research component of the curriculum has been a concern for the program in ALL the outcome evaluations conducted by the program since 1986. Below is the summary of the assessment from that Outcome.

Outcome	Assessment Method	Benchmark	Outcome May 2009
12. Design and execute evaluation research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research Proposal – SCWK 481</li> <li>2. Field Exercises 6 and 8-D</li> <li>3. Termination Report – SCWK 330 –D</li> <li>4. Research Proposals – SCWK 450</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 95% of students will achieve 2.0 or better on research proposals</li> <li>2. 95% of students will achieve 2.0 or better on Exercises 6 and 8</li> <li>3. 95% of students will achieve a 2.0 or better on Termination Report</li> <li>4. 90% of the students will achieve a 2.0 or better on research proposals in SCWK 450 (outcome added 10/09)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SCWK 481 – 90% of students submitted a successful research proposal in SCWK 481.</li> <li>2. Exercise 6 – aggregated mean was 3.7; Exercise 8 – aggregated mean was 3.5.</li> <li>3. Termination Report SCWK 330 – 97% of students received a 2.0 or better on the termination report (N=27)</li> <li>4. 82% of students achieved a 2.0 on their class research proposals. (Outcome added 12/09)</li> </ol>

			<b>Recommendation:</b> Research proposals are slightly under benchmark. Evaluation research is something the program could improve upon.
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Several things have been attempted by the program in the past. For the past 15 years we have struggled with the fact that one of the two courses in the Research sequence required by the program, SSCI 310, is not a social work course. As such, the social work faculty has no control over the content of that course. The SSCI 310 course is Research Methods. This course is a pre-requisite to SCWK 450, Statistics. The students need a foundation of research methods prior to taking the statistics course, and competence in research methods has not always been evident. This semester (Spring 2010) the social work faculty is teaching the SSCI 310 course. Additionally, there have been extensive discussions with the Sociology program who normally teach the course regarding the needed content for social work students.

Even with these actions, and following an assessment of both the SCWK 450 (Statistics) and SCWK 481 (Senior Seminar) courses in Fall 2009, it was determined that further changes needed to be implemented as the data from these courses indicated the students were not meeting the benchmarks. The following recommendations were addressed in a January 27 social work faculty meeting. The Tier 1 recommendations were approved by the faculty with immediate implementation. This tier was easily implemented as social work faculty through advising has control over these recommendations. The next two tiers will take departmental action, and will proceed as indicated.

**Recommendations for Social Work Curriculum Research Sequence**

**1<sup>ST</sup> TIER:**

- All students must have completed the University’s Math requirements prior to taking SCWK 450.
- Because it includes a statistical component in the course, students should be advised to take Math 117 over Math 115 (Algebra). We should consider making Math 115 or 117 a formal pre-requisite to SCWK 450.
- Students need to take the research courses in sequence, i.e. SSCI prior to SCWK 450. Criteria for exceptions should be analyzed and based on successful completion of prior courses and GPA related to prior course content, with weighting on Math courses for transfer students, and in consultation with the SCWK 450 instructor.
- Apply current thresholds such as BSW candidacy, sequencing and prerequisites.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Tier:**

- Use the Social Science curriculum committee to define the content and outcomes of SSCI 310 if it remains a multidisciplinary course, i.e. development of a research question, hypothesis testing, sampling, basis data analysis, basics of qualitative and quantitative research, etc.
- Use common methods and statistics texts where possible for SSCI 310, SCWK 450, SCWK 481, SCWK 491, SCWK 482, SCWK 492.
- Use Social Work Curriculum Committee to look at vertical integration of Social Work research content from Introduction to Social Work through Senior Seminar
- Recruit tutors despite recruitment difficulties inherent with SCWK 450 as a senior level course with most graduating before the next course is offered.
- Consider changing SCWK 450 into a 3<sup>rd</sup> year course concurrent with SCWK 310.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Tier:**

- Consider returning SSCI 310 to its original SCWK 350 status as primarily a social work course
- When determined to be beneficial, consider formally dovetailing assignments, particularly the research proposal between SCWK 450 and SCWK 481 and 482 students.