

Social Work Curriculum

The goals of the program are met through a progressive curriculum of courses and field experiences that enable students to attain eleven core *professional competencies* that have been identified by the **Council on Social Work Education** as being essential to beginning generalist practice. In addition, the curriculum is grounded in a strong liberal arts background and requires foundational coursework in human biology, psychology, and sociology. With the exception of Social Work Practice I, II, and III, the Senior Integrative Seminar, and the (senior) Supervised Field Experience, all social work courses are open to students with other majors.

Field-based experiential education is regarded as the profession's *signature pedagogy*, and social work students at Wartburg College undertake a minimum of two field experiences: a one-month May Term and a one-semester senior practicum. An additional field experience is available as an option to those who desire exposure to social work practice with diverse settings and populations. Field experiences are managed by social work faculty and supervised by trained, qualified professional field instructors. Students are placed in agencies locally and through Wartburg West in Denver, CO.

Specific information about the social work curriculum, course details, and the program's operational policies are contained in the *Social Work Student Handbook* and the *Field Education Manual*.

Competencies and Practice Behaviors

1. Students will ***identify with the social work profession*** and demonstrate behaviors expected of entry level practitioners.
 - a. Students set meaningful and realistic career goals that give adequate consideration to professional strengths/limitations, participation in professional organizations, and continuing education. (b,e)
 - b. Students are able to identify the unique roles and contributions of social workers in an interdisciplinary setting. (c)
 - c. Students demonstrate consistent adherence to the standards of appearance, comportment, and communication expected of social work professionals. (d)
 - d. Students show an ability to use professional consultation and supervision to enhance the quality of their practice. (f)
 - e. Students understand and practice the unique social work role of advocating for client access to services. (a)

2. Students will act and practice in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of professional social work **ethical principles**.
 - a. Students demonstrate an ability to practice in accordance with the NASW Code of Social Work Ethics and other recognized frameworks. (b)
 - b. Students articulate a thoughtful integration of their personal values/ethics and those of the social work profession. (a)
 - c. Students competently use accepted professional models and tools to analyze and resolve ethical dilemmas in social work practice, demonstrating an appreciation for the fact that there may be more than one ethical approach to the resolution of any given problem. (c,d)
3. Students will demonstrate the competent application of **critical thinking** to the practice of social work and an ability to communicate effectively.
 - a. Students are proficient in accessing, assessing and using professional literature and research findings in their practice. (a)
 - b. Students are able to identify accepted models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation, and their proper use. (b)
 - c. Students demonstrate a proficiency in oral communication with client constituencies and colleagues. (c)
 - d. Students demonstrate a proficiency in written communication with client constituencies and colleagues. (c)
4. Student practice will reflect an appreciation for the value and importance of **human diversity** (gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, disability, spirituality, and age).
 - a. Students give due consideration to human diversity and the effects of historical treatment in their assessment of human behavior and practice interventions. (c)
 - b. Students articulate an understanding of the ways in which cultural structures and values exacerbate social inequalities among diverse groups. (a)
 - c. Students can identify and mitigate the negative influences of their own biases and values in working with diverse groups and individuals. (b)

- d. Students demonstrate an ability to practice social work with a positive regard for the nuances of human diversity and the contributions of diverse groups. (d)
5. Students will demonstrate an appreciation for the social work profession's commitment to **social and economic justice** and an understanding of our ethical obligations to work towards these ends.
- a. Students show that they understand the dynamics and historical roots of oppression, recognizing ways in which economic security and social well-being are related. (a)
 - b. Students are able to identify effective policy strategies for alleviating social and economic oppression and ways they might be implemented. (b)
 - c. Students are able to articulate and advocate for legislative policy changes that reflect a high regard for social/economic justice. (c)
6. Students will demonstrate **research skills** that enable them to critically evaluate practice and outcomes; their practice will reflect the use of relevant research findings.
- a. Students can design interventions that are well-grounded in current, relevant research. (b)
 - b. Students are able to design, implement and present a program assessment that gives due credence to data gathered through professional practice. (a)
7. Student practice will evidence due regard for principles and theories of **human behavior and the social environment**.
- a. Students demonstrate an ability to use basic concepts and theories of human growth and development in their analysis of individual functioning across the lifespan. (a)
 - b. Students effectively analyze and assess the various elements of human behavior using the Ecological and Social Systems Perspectives as integrative frameworks. (b)
8. Students will demonstrate a willingness and ability to incorporate **social policy practice** with their professional work.
- a. Students are able to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of social policies and programs. (a)
 - b. Students know how to initiate policy changes via legislative and administrative channels. (b)

9. Students will demonstrate a capacity for ***embracing the ever-evolving changes*** that affect their practice of social work.
 - a. Students demonstrate a familiarity with current trends and issues in social welfare policy. (a)
 - b. Students utilize valid program assessment strategies to suggest changes designed to enhance the quality of human services and respond to changing social needs. (b)

10. Students will demonstrate beginning social work ***practice skills with individuals and families***.

A. Engagement

1. Students are able to develop a general strategy for engaging clients in planned change. (a)
2. Students demonstrate an ability to develop effective rapport with clients. (b)
3. Students demonstrate an ability to reach agreement with clients regarding boundaries, methods, and desired outcomes in their professional relationships. (c)

B. Assessment

1. Using professional assessment tools and protocols, students can collect and accurately interpret relevant client data. (a)
2. Students are able to identify significant client strengths and limitations. (b)
3. Students are able to develop clear, measurable intervention goals and objectives. (c)
4. Students are able to identify appropriate strategies for intervention. (d)

C. Intervention

1. Students demonstrate effective problem-solving skills in their professional work. (c)
2. Students show that they can effectively negotiate, mediate, and advocate on behalf of clients. (d)

3. Students know how and when to effectively terminate client relationships. (e)

D. Evaluation

1. Students will demonstrate that they are able to accurately assess the impact of their interventions in ways that constructively inform their practice. (a)

11. Students will demonstrate beginning social work *practice skills with groups, organizations, and communities.*

A. Engagement

1. Students are able to develop a general strategy for recruiting and engaging clients in group and community projects. (a)
2. Students demonstrate an ability to develop effective rapport within groups and with community organizations. (b)
3. Students demonstrate an ability to set expectations within groups regarding boundaries, methods, and desired outcomes. (c)

B. Assessment

1. Using professional assessment tools and protocols, students can collect and accurately interpret data relative to community needs. (a)
2. Students are able to identify significant community strengths and limitations. (b)
3. Students are able to develop clear, measurable intervention goals and objectives with community projects. (c)
4. Students are able to identify appropriate strategies for intervention with community groups. (d)

C. Intervention

1. Students understand how to initiate actions to achieve goals within agencies and organizations. (a)
2. Students demonstrate that they can select and implement effective prevention strategies with targeted populations. (b)
3. Students demonstrate effective problem-solving skills in their professional group work. (c)
4. Students show that they can effectively negotiate, mediate, and advocate on behalf of clients. (d)
5. Students know how and when to effectively terminate group/community projects in ways that do not undermine relationships and organizational functioning. (e)

D. Evaluation

1. Students will demonstrate that they are able to accurately assess the impact of their community interventions in ways that constructively inform their practice. (a)