

Master of Social Work – Advanced Standing, Student Learning Outcomes

The goals of the Northern Arizona University MSW program are:

1. To prepare competent Advanced Generalist social workers with the knowledge, values, and skills for engaging in individual, family, group, organization, and community planned change processes with diverse rural, vulnerable, disenfranchised, and underserved populations locally, regionally, and globally. (Competencies 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9)
2. To promote identification with the profession, continued professional development, and development of knowledge and skills for Advanced Generalist social work practice. (Competency 1)
3. To provide service to the community and promote human rights, social, economic, and environmental justice. (Competency 3)
4. To advance social work practice through the use and development of research knowledge and skills. (Competency 4)
5. To provide students with the knowledge and skills to develop and implement policy and programs and to practice from a strengths-based perspective. (Competency 5)
6. To prepare students for leadership roles in the development, implementation, and evaluation of services with rural and diverse populations. (Competencies 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9)

Advanced Generalist

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Advanced Generalist social workers apply knowledge of social services, policies, and programs relevant to the specialization, to advocate with and/or on behalf of clients for access to services. Advanced Generalist practitioners develop skills in ethical practice by identifying complex ethical issues that arise at particular phases of social work practice and in particular settings. They develop a plan for continuing professional education and development and collaborate with and articulate the mission of Social Work to others (e.g., interdisciplinary team members, volunteers, the broader community, the news media, and political leaders). Advanced Generalist practitioners evaluate ethical dilemmas related to problems and issues in the specialization and weigh values, principles of ethical decision-making, and the NASW code of ethics in order to address ethical dilemmas related to practice in the specialization area.

- Use critical thinking to apply the NASW code of ethics to analyze ethical issues related to management, leadership, and policy.
- Identify personal values that enhance or hinder one's ability to work effectively within an organization and use supervision to examine these values.
- Utilize clinical theories, practice models, and research findings appropriate to client systems and circumstances.

- Demonstrate knowledge of one's family of origin's cultural, psychodynamic and behavioral patterns and reflect on how that history impacts one's ability to differentially use one's professional self in service for clients.
- Exhibit an anti-oppressive stance incorporating social work values of social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, confidentiality, the value of human relationships and integrity in all discussions of practice case material.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Advanced Generalist social workers demonstrate that understanding with respect to varying populations and issues. Advanced Generalist practitioners have an increased understanding of how diversity shapes human experience and identity. They explain how forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination may marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Advanced Generalist social workers demonstrate an understanding of how culture and values affect diverse conceptualizations and constructions of social problems and solutions in the specialization. They demonstrate knowledge and skills to practice without discrimination and with respect, towards people of diverse backgrounds and they actively engage diverse clients, groups, or organizations to promote solutions based on diverse conceptualizations of social problems in the specialization.

- Demonstrate awareness of one's intersectionality and cultural background and how these factors may impact one's practice.
- Use supervision to address personal and cultural biases and increase self-awareness.
- Acknowledge the impact of client's intersectional factors—race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability status, immigration status, religion, and age—on clients' emotional and physical well-being.
- Uphold and can identify the concepts of cultural competence, affirmative action, equal opportunity employment, and a harassment and discrimination free workplace within the organizational or community setting in which they practice.
- Exercise leadership that embraces the values of diversity and difference in the organizational culture.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Advanced Generalist social workers appraise how mechanisms of oppression and discrimination impact various groups and outcomes relevant to the specialization. Advanced Generalist practitioners establish their professional identity through leadership by applying and developing strategies of advocacy and social change that promote social, economic, and environmental justice, eliminate barriers to services, and advance human rights.

- Contribute to the development and implementation of policies, funding, and/or programs that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice.
- Identify major laws and/or court decisions that are relevant to human rights and/or social justice in the human services domain in which they practice.

- Contextualize all client assessments utilizing lenses of social justice, including aspects of identity and social location that may marginalize clients and/or contribute to their inequitable distribution of social and economic resources.
- Assess the availability of clean and safe shelter, water, food, air, and other environmental resources and help individuals, families, groups and communities to develop mechanisms to advocate for and maintain these environmental resources.

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice Advanced Generalist social workers demonstrate the ability to evaluate practice in the specialization area. Advanced Generalist practitioners engage in critical thinking through the application and evaluation of research-informed practices. They translate practice knowledge in order to contribute to scientific inquiry and critically evaluate and utilize theoretical and empirical research relevant to the problems and/or populations addressed in the specialization.

- Stay abreast of the most current advances in practice theory, systemic approaches, and evidence-informed practice in social work and related helping professions.
- Use one's practice experience and knowledge of the research literature and case theory to critically analyze the strengths and limitations of various direct practice interventions.
- Locate, identify and, if appropriate, adapt evidence informed programs, practices and policies to the organizational, community or policy setting which the practitioner serves.
- Support research and evaluation conducted on current programs, services or policies led or operated by the organization or community in a manner that adheres to best practices of informed consent of subjects, the protection of human subjects, and does not otherwise interfere with the quality and accessibility of other programs or services operated by the organization or community.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Advanced Generalist social workers evaluate, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance outcomes relevant to the specialization. Advanced Generalist Practitioners contribute to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge of social policy at the local, state, and federal level. They demonstrate collaboration with clients, colleagues, and other constituencies for policy action in the specialization.

- Identify and analyze policies, laws, rules, and governmental regulations that affect human services in their domain of practice and how these affect the organization, financing and delivery of such services.
- Identify and/or advocate in collaboration with others in support of policies that positively impact the communities which they serve.
- Identify policies/laws that impact client well-being, analyze their impact on client well-being, and advocate for change in policies/laws that harm clients.

- Attend to the unintended consequences of policies/laws and communicate with stakeholders, legislators, and policymakers about the impact of such policies/laws as they evolve within agencies, communities, and in clients' lives.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Advanced Generalist social workers employ diverse strategies to engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities related to the area of specialization. Advanced Generalist Practitioners communicate with clients and mobilize resources appropriate to unique practice settings to implement relevant services, programs, advocacy, and/or policies.

- Demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/ behavioral difficulties and social problems (poverty, crime, social injustice, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia) and incorporate this understanding into client engagement. Reflect upon the ways these aspects shape the manner in which one engages and works with the client.
- Identify ways to enhance collaboration with clients and promote their empowerment, including seeking their input and feedback regarding the treatment process and fostering their capacity to provide feedback to other members of the treatment team.
- Observe, support, and/or participate with organizational leadership in efforts to establish a dialogue with key members of the relevant communities and constituencies being served, with the ongoing intention of obtaining community and stakeholder input and facilitating community empowerment.
- Promote an organizational culture that values and rewards community engagement and service by its staff.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Advanced Generalist social workers assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to determine a range of potentially effective and appropriate interventions to improve practice outcomes related to the specialization. Advanced Generalist Practitioners assume differential roles appropriate to the practice situations at the micro, mezzo and macro levels.

- Observe and/or contribute to organizational efforts to assess its relationship to its environment, including the emerging internal and external forces affecting the organization (i.e. community needs assessments, resource inventories, environmental scans, et al).
- Are able to engage in self-reflection to identify and counter one's own prejudices and stereotypes in the assessment process.
- Assess how issues of privilege, social injustice, and inequities in access to resources play a role in client difficulties and how they affect the assessment process, including assisting the client in voicing concerns to the entire treatment team.
- Reflect on their own issues of power and privilege and how they impact the therapeutic relationship.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Advanced Generalist social workers demonstrate ability to intervene at different levels (with and/or on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) to achieve the desired practice outcomes related to the specialization. Advanced Generalist Practitioners demonstrate the ability to use inter-professional collaboration to achieve beneficial outcomes for relevant services, programs, advocacy, and/or policies at the micro, mezzo or macro level to achieve client and constituency goals.

- Intervene effectively with individuals, families and groups, while eliciting client feedback and knowing when to modify approaches.
- Exhibit flexibility by shifting perspectives and interventions to suit the needs of clients, while recognizing that the multi-faceted assessment drives the selection of appropriate interventions.
- Observe, identify, lead, and/or support core management functions such as strategic management, human resource management, budget and finance, and information technology in an organizational context.
- Identify and/or apply the concepts, practices and styles of organizational and community leadership, and can assess their own strengths and limitations in these regards.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Advanced Generalist social workers apply research skills to analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions in the specialization. Advanced Generalist Practitioners demonstrate the ability to evaluate processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. They communicate and disseminate evaluation results to a variety of audiences.

- Can identify, critically assess, and employ various methods of program evaluation.
- Apply critical thinking to the interpretation of evaluation data in a manner that contributes to and enhances the quality and efficacy of services.
- Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of intervention outcomes.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, quantitative and qualitative methods, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of client and program outcomes.