

## **Social Work and Human Services Professional Expectations**

This degree includes an academic component and field practicum experience. Recognizing that both academic and interpersonal skills are needed to be successful in this program and the human services profession, the information below provides details about the different qualities and standards of behavior that are expected of students in this program. These expectations are Ethical Standards put forth by the Council for Standards in Human Services Education (National Organization for Human Services). In addition to student instruction, faculty and staff in this program have an ethical obligation to safeguard the wellbeing clients served by students both now and in the future.

You will be required to meet the standards and expectations that are determined necessary to effectively work in human services. These Professional Expectations should be considered conditions for continuation in the Social Work and Human Services Program, as they reflect the characteristics necessary for success as a student and to become a human services professional who works with vulnerable, oppressed, and marginalized populations. Throughout your participation in this program each of the following areas will remain a focus for learning, growth, and evaluation:

1. **Academic Performance**
2. **Acquisition of Knowledge**
3. **Demonstration of Skills**
4. **Acceptance of Others/Cultural Humility**
5. **Wellness/Impairment**
6. **Interpersonal Communication and Interaction**
7. **Personal and Professional Integrity**
8. **Responsibility**
9. **Self-awareness and Maturity**

Since the above qualities and behaviors have been identified as essential to effectively working with others, you will have many opportunities to demonstrate the behaviors, skills and knowledge with your peers, faculty members, in and out of the classroom, as well as with clients and co-workers at your field practicum/practicum/agency sites. Please be aware that should there be concerns about your performance or behavior, the program will communicate with you. *If faculty or agency staff become concerned that there could be harm to clients or if there are concerns about your clinical work, or behaviors in the classroom or field, you may be denied program admission into or dismissed from the program.* Students that are dismissed from the field will not be reassigned to another site that term and the student may need to withdrawal from corresponding courses. Students that are dismissed from the field receive a failing grade for practicum. Please be aware that should you receive a failing grade or be dismissed from practicum, you may be dismissed from the program.

Students who have a history of past criminal activity and/or incarceration are not automatically excluded from working in the field of human services, however some restrictions will apply depending on the specifics of the crime, the agencies' policies and Medicaid provider eligibility. Students must be off of probation/parole for a minimum

of one year. A minimum of 3 years (post disposition) from non-violent offense(s) and 8 years (post disposition) from violent and/or sexually oriented offenses is required. Additionally, students with violent and/or sexually oriented offenses will be required to attend a meeting with the program review committee to assess the student's appropriateness for this program (regardless of the date of the offense(s)). This program cannot guarantee field practicum experiences for students with prior criminal convictions. Please be aware that there could be instances where Columbus State cannot secure an adequate field practicum for students with a past criminal history, therefore, continuation in this program, graduation or post degree licensure cannot be guaranteed. Students who receive any criminal charge after admission to the program may be removed from the program. Students are required to report all new criminal charges to the Social Work and Human Services faculty Program Practicum Coordinator.

In addition to the above, there are other issues that could restrict or prevent students from participating in practicum include but is not limited to availability in hours, transportation restrictions, medication assisted treatment and utilization of medical marijuana. All such issues must be discussed with the practicum coordinator prior to submitting the practicum application each semester.

### *Essential Qualities of a Human Service Professional*

The following *essential* qualities have been identified and reflect the Ethical Standards put forth by the Council of Standards in Human Services (NOHS). The descriptions and lists provided serve as examples of these qualities, or lack thereof, and are not all-inclusive. Failure to abide by and demonstrate the below expectations may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited, to a warning, Student Code of Conduct disciplinary action, engagement with the Behavioral Intervention Team, which could result in a student not being allowed to continue with the program admission process in the Social Work and Human Services program, and/or being dismissed from the program. Students are also expected to abide by the Social Work and Human Services Student Code of Conduct, which includes Academic and Classroom Conduct standards.

#### 1. **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (NOHS, Standard 39)**

Students must earn a minimum of a "C" in all prerequisite and Social Work and Human Services courses. **Earning a "D" or "E" is not acceptable.** Students must have a 2.25 GPA for program admission.

Should a student earn a "D" or "E", they must repeat the course and earn at least a "C" in order to proceed in the program sequence and/or graduate from the program. Students who do not earn a "C" or better in two or more Social Work and Human Services courses may either not be admitted to or be dismissed from the program.

Since active participation is a requirement in the preparation for this field, students are able to be present and engaged in all classes in the SAHS program. Should an absence occur, the student seeks information from a peer for the information missed due to the absence.

An incident of plagiarism is reported to the Office of Student Conduct and may result in a zero “0” for the assignment and additional disciplinary action may occur. (see Personal and Professional Integrity)

2. **ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE (NOHS, Standards 26, 27 & 31)**

The body of knowledge that has been identified as important and essential for persons working in the various areas of human services is included in the content of each of the technical courses. In addition, each field practice site also offers important information that is essential for working effectively in the agency. A student must be able to demonstrate the ability to apply the knowledge learned in the classroom to the field practicum setting.

The inability to translate knowledge to classroom assignments, exams and field practicum evaluations may earn the student a failing grade.

3. **DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS (NOHS Standards 1, 4, 5, 14, 26 & 31)**

Students are required throughout this program to learn in the classroom and translate that knowledge into skills. Students practice these skills through classroom activities and their field practice experiences. It is important to note that skills taught early in the program will be built upon in the advanced courses and field practice experiences. Students are asked to identify, give examples and demonstrate the use of a variety of skills when working with clients. The inability to demonstrate effective skills in assignments or at the field practicum site may earn the student a failing grade.

4. **ACCEPTANCE OF OTHERS/CULTURAL HUMILITY (NOHS Standards 1, 10-16, 26 & 34)**

Students need to be able to work with diverse people. Students who recognize and value differences in people demonstrate acceptance of others. Students explore own values and attitudes and demonstrate cultural sensitivity, competence and cultural humility. Students demonstrate and implement strategies for equitable professional practice.

A lack of acceptance of others may be demonstrated by:

- making comments that are viewed as judgmental and offensive by others
- making stereotypical statements about others
- inability to see beyond one’s own experiences when considering others’ concerns
- being unwilling to explore how one’s own values could be detrimental to others
- blaming clients for their current life situations
- using hostile or offensive language when sharing opinions that are different from others
- refusing to work with specific client populations
- using humor that is insensitive (racist, sexist, homophobic, classist, etc.)

5. **WELLNESS/IMPAIRMENT (NOHS Standard 35)**

Students are able to demonstrate appropriate personal/interpersonal wellness enabling them to participate in the classroom and practicum experiences. Students display appropriate expression of emotion. Students who are experiencing difficult life circumstances and personal issues are able to remain

active and professional in their participation in coursework and engagement with clients and staff. Students engage with reflection and self-care to ensure appropriate client engagement. Students accept feedback from others in reference to own potential impairment. Students are able to manage their own psychosocial distress allowing them to participate in classroom discussions, coursework, and practicum even when it triggers difficult emotions. Students who recognize when significant personal issues could impact the ability to participate in classes and/or work with clients and staff, seek appropriate professional help and follow recommendations that could include, but are not limited to withdrawing from classes or practicum experiences.

Impairment may be demonstrated by:

- Personal problems, psychosocial distress, problematic substance use, or mental health issues negatively preventing a student from participating in course attendance, participation in classroom small group discussions and client engagement
  - inappropriately discussing their own personal problems/difficulties in the classroom, on discussion board postings, or at the field practicum site
  - failing to seek professional help when problems are impeding performance
  - failing to follow clinical recommendations from professionals (i.e., counseling, medication, etc.)
- excessive expression of emotions in the classroom or at the field practicum site that impact client care
- presenting to the college or practicum site under the influence of a psychoactive substance that impedes performance

## **6. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION (NOHS Standards 20, 21, 25 & 29)**

Students are able to clearly communicate their thoughts and ideas with instructors, peers, field practicum agency staff and clients. Asking questions and seeking clarification are important aspects of communication. Students receive what is being communicated to them and respond in a respectful manner. When verbal or written communication issues emerge, students will seek ways to improve or resolve these issues.

A lack of appropriate interpersonal communication and interaction may be demonstrated by:

- failing to ask questions or seek clarification to adequately perform a task
- blaming others or failure to take personal responsibility
- failure to successfully complete the interview process at the field practicum site
- refusing to consider or responding defensively to feedback
- bullying or other behavior that is hostile, intimidating or threatening
- failure to recognize or explore how one's behavior is impacting others after receiving feedback
- inappropriate or excessive self-disclosure in the classroom or field practicum setting
- failure to modify behaviors (such as side conversations, self-disclosure, tardiness) after being given feedback
- participation in gossip/slander in verbal, written and/or electronic communication
- not seeking assistance when communication deficits are pointed out
- failing to participate in meetings as requested by faculty or field supervisor
- inappropriate recording (documentation) in a client's record

- removal of client information and record from the field practicum site
- unprofessional use of email, Blackboard, social media

7. **PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY (NOHS Standards 33 & 44)**  
 Students are aware of and abide by the professional codes of conduct and ethics which have been established for the Human Services professions. Students behavior inside and outside of the academic setting adhere to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

A lack of personal and professional integrity may be demonstrated by:

- Making false statements and/or misrepresentation of self
- any form of academic dishonesty including intentional or unintentional plagiarism or cheating
- not working within one's own area of competence and scope of practice
- demonstrating behaviors and/or making comments that are seen as potentially causing harm to clients
- involvement with illegal activities at any time
- participating in class or field practicum when impaired
- failing to report concerns of client abuse or neglect
- a breach of confidentiality in seminar or in the field
- theft or misuse of college or field practicum agency resources
- inappropriate and/or unprofessional electronic correspondence with instructors, agencies and peers

8. **RESPONSIBILITY (NOHS Standard 23)**

Responsibility is demonstrated by students' adherence to the College's Student Code of Conduct and the Social Work and Human Services Program Student Code of Conduct, this includes attending classes on time and for the scheduled duration of class. It is also demonstrated by participating in the field practicum sites as scheduled. Responsibility is also demonstrated by completing assignments on time and meeting practicum objectives in a timely manner.

Irresponsibility may be demonstrated when:

- students do not adhere to the college or Social Work and Human Services Student Code of Conduct and Professional Expectations
- students engage in behaviors that are disrespectful to peers, instructors, and agency staff and/or clients at field practicum site
- students are repeatedly tardy to class or field practicum
- students repeatedly leave class early or do not return from a break in a timely manner
- students do not meet deadlines specified in written program communication
- students do not call an agency when they are late or absent
- students do not take responsibility to make up missed practicum days
- students do not take responsibility to get course content or notes from peers when absent from class
- students do not complete classroom assignments or practicum expectations as assigned

9. **SELF-AWARENESS AND MATURITY (NOHS Standards 34-36)**

Students need to be aware of their own behavior, values and attitudes and how they may impact others. Seeking and responding to feedback demonstrates maturity. Being aware of one's limitations and strengths also demonstrates maturity. Recognizing and functioning within one's role as a student and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries are important behaviors.

A lack of self-awareness may be demonstrated in:

- a student's inability to accept or explore critical feedback without defensiveness
  - a student's inability or unwillingness to modify behaviors that have been identified as detrimental to the profession
  - inappropriate self-disclosure in the classroom and/or at field practicum with clients, co-workers or field instructor
  - inappropriate attire in the classroom or agency
  - using humor that is degrading, offensive or sexual in nature
  - inability to recognize need for enhanced knowledge and skills thus working outside one's scope of practice
- breaching personal and/or professional boundaries with clients and workers

**Please be aware of the following:**

**Admission:** Students may be denied admission into the program for failure to meet the professional expectations and/or classroom code of conduct. Students who are denied admission to the program may appeal this decision by contacting the program chairperson.

**Re-admission:** Students who are dismissed from practicum or the SAHS program, due to violation of the code of conduct or the professional expectations, may be considered for readmission. Prior to return, student would work with faculty, the Practicum Coordinator, and the Office of Student Conduct to develop a student success plan. This plan may require students to participate in a professional assessment which may include, but is not limited to a mental health assessment, substance use assessment, medical and /or a neurological assessment confirming readiness to return and fitness to practice.

Students who are dismissed due to academics may need to develop a student success plan and demonstrate improved academic performance for a minimum of one semester.

If you have a Letter of Accommodation through Disability Services, it is your responsibility to share this with your classroom instructors. If you are in a practicum, you should share your letter with the Practicum Coordinator, your agency field instructor, and your liaison.

The program faculty may require a drug screening at the student's expense if there is a documented suspicion that the student is using drugs or alcohol. A suspicion may include, but is not limited to, self-disclosure of drug or alcohol use, a past history of failed drug screening for a practicum site, and/or appearing to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If a student tests positive on a drug screening, the student will be removed from practicum, may not be given another practicum opportunity that semester and will lose the option of an addiction's practicum in our program.

## References

National Organization for Human Services. (2015). *Ethical Standards for Human Service Professionals*. Melbourne, Fla. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/ethical-standards-for-hs-professionals>

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student's Printed Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student's CID)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date Signed)

My signature below indicates my understanding and agreement to abide by the expectations of the Social and Human Services Program.

Revised 6/22/21;  
12/5/2022