

Competences of a professional social worker

The Board of Deans of Schools of Social Work and Director of Departments of Social Work of Spanish universities and the General Council of professional associations of Social Work have elaborate and approved a joint paper on Criteria for the design of curricula of the bachelor's degree in Social Work in 2007. Part of this document is relate about how on successfully completing the degree, newly qualified social workers must demonstrate relevant professional competences.

Practice as a professional social worker requires:

I. Competence to work and assess together with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities, their needs and circumstances.

This competence includes:

1. Establish professional relationships in order to identify the most appropriate form of intervention.
2. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities to help them make informed choices about their needs, circumstances, risks, preferred options and resources.
3. Assess needs and options to guide an intervention strategy

II. Competence to plan, implement, review and evaluate social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities.

This competence includes:

4. Assess the urgency of requests and requirements for action. Plan, implement and record action taken to meet needs and requirements.
5. Interact with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities to achieve change, realise potential and improve life opportunities. Apply and justify social work methods to achieve change and monitoring the intervention.
6. Develop, produce, implement and evaluate intervention plans with clients and professionals to address the provision of services to be implemented. Regularly monitor, record, review and evaluate changes in circumstances and adapt plans to take account of these changes
7. Explore and evaluate support networks that can be accessed and developed. Work in partnership

to develop and maintain support networks.

8. Identify opportunities to support existing groups and to help new groups to develop. Use group programmes, processes and dynamics to improve individual growth, the skills of group members and to promote well-being, choice and independence.

9. Take prompt action to deal with behaviour or situations that present a risk to people. Identify and evaluate situations and circumstances that may increase risks; plan intervention designed to change the identified risk behaviour.

10. Analyse, monitor and evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of their programmes of work to review and improve strategies that professionals must respond to emerging social situations.

11. Using mediation as an intervention strategy for the alternative dispute resolution.

12. Designing, implementing and evaluating social intervention projects

III. Competence to support people to be able to express the needs, viewpoints and circumstances.

This competence includes:

13. Representing in partnership with, and on behalf of, individuals, families, groups and communities to help them achieve and maintain greater independence.

14. Work with individuals, families, groups and communities to select the best forms of representation and involvement in decision-making.

IV. Competence to act in addressing risks situations to individuals as well to self and colleagues

This competence includes:

15. Identify, assess and record the nature of risk, its seriousness and the harm that it may cause

16. Work within the risk assessment and management procedures of their own. Plan, monitor, review and record outcomes and actions taken to minimise risk, stress and harm

V. Competence to manage and be accountable, with supervision and support, for their own social work practice within their organisation

This competence includes:

17. Manage and be responsible for prioritising their work, fulfilling professional obligations and assess the effectiveness of their own work program.

18. Contribute to the management of resources and services by working with the procedures involved in obtaining them, monitoring their effectiveness and ensuring their quality.

19. Maintain accurate, complete, accessible and up-to-date records and reports. Provide clear evidence for judgements, decisions and professional values.

20. Work effectively with others in delivering integrated and multi-disciplinary services. Contribute to identifying and agreeing the goals, objectives, working procedures and duration of them, dealing constructively with disagreements and conflict within work relationships.

21. Participate in the management and direction of social welfare institutions.

VI. Competence to demonstrate professional competence in social work practice

This competence includes:

22. Locate, understand and evaluate research findings and literature that is relevant to social work practice, updating their own knowledge.

23. Working within agreed standards of social work practice. Use appropriate assertiveness in justifying professional decisions and upholding social work practice values, using supervision as a means of responding to the needs of professional development.

24. Identify, understand and critically evaluate ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts affecting their practice. Devise effective strategies to deal with ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts

25. Contribute to policy and practice review and development to the promotion of best practices of social work