



# Council for Standards in Human Service Education

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

### ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN HUMAN SERVICES

<https://cshse.org>

Revised July 2025

## I. GENERAL PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

### A. Institutional Requirements and Primary Program Objective

*Context:* There is a strong national commitment to the view that human services programs should develop professionals who provide direct or indirect services. These programs prepare human services professionals for a variety of functions related to the care and treatment of individuals, families, groups, and communities.

**Standard 1: The primary program objective shall be to prepare human services professionals to serve individuals, families, groups, communities and/or other supported human services organization functions.**

a.	Provide evidence that the program is part of a degree granting college or university that is regionally accredited.
b.	Provide evidence that the development of competent human services professionals is the primary objective of the program and the basis for the degree program title, design, goals and curriculum, teaching methodology, and program administration (e.g. through documents such as catalog, brochures, course syllabi, website, and marketing materials).
c.	Articulate how students are informed of the curricular and program expectations and requirements prior to admission.
d.	Provide a brief history of the program.
e.	Describe the student population including the number, gender, race, ethnicity and age of students, as well as the numbers of full time, part time, and students graduating each year.
f.	Provide a complete program description, courses required, time to completion, and other program details (refer to catalogs and other appendices).

## B. Philosophical Base of Programs

*Context:* A benchmark of human services education and services delivery is the interdisciplinary approach to learning and professionalism. Curriculum development integrates specific theories, knowledge and skills that are tied to a conceptual framework and underlying philosophy. This must be congruent with the CSHSE National Standards and reflect the major theoretical emphasis and uniqueness of the program and curriculum.

<b><u>Standard 2:</u> The program shall have a clearly defined knowledge base.</b>	
--	--

a.	Include a mission statement for the program.
b.	Demonstrate alignment with the mission of the units in which the program is housed (e.g., department, college, university, etc.)
c.	Provide a brief description of the major knowledge base and theories from which the curriculum draws to support the conceptual framework (e.g. counseling theories, biopsychosocial, systems theory, change theory, etc.).
d.	Describe the multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or transdisciplinary approach to knowledge, theories, and skills included in the curriculum.
e.	<p>Provide a matrix mapping the curriculum Standards (11-20) and Specifications to required courses. The information provided on the matrix must clearly reflect congruence with the information provided in the Self-Study narrative and the syllabi.</p> <p><i>NOTE: The Matrix must include required courses for all students that contribute to compliance with the Curriculum Standards and their Specifications. If a program has specific concentrations, identify the specific core courses in the concentration that comply with a Standard and its Specifications.</i></p>

## C. Community Assessment

*Context:* Human services programs continually interact with and affect human services delivery within the local community through field placements and alumnae/i. Programs should be designed to interface with the needs of major employers in terms of job needs and career ladders so there is an orderly and continuous supply of competent professionals.

<b>Standard 3: The program shall include periodic mechanisms for assessment of and response to changing policies, needs, and trends of the profession and community.</b>	
a.	If the program is less than five years old, provide documentation that supported the initial development of the human services program (such as a community needs assessment).
b.	<p>An Advisory Committee shall be established to provide feedback regarding local, state, and national trends and needs, policy changes, and to act as an advocate for the program. The committee should include individuals representing the human services field, such as field experience agencies, employing agencies, citizen advocacy groups, alums, current students, adjunct faculty, and other persons related to the field of human services. Provide the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A detailed description of the membership of the Advisory Committee (e.g. names, agencies, roles, relationship to program, etc.),</li> </ol>
	1. Minutes of advisory committee meetings from the last two years
	2. A narrative or table of how the committee interfaces with the program in relationship to specific issues.
c.	Describe other mechanisms, if any, used to respond to changing needs in the human services field.

#### **D. Program Evaluation**

*Context:* To ensure the program is effective in producing competent professionals, the program must be evaluated on a regular basis. In addition, the program must assess how well the needs of students and graduates are being met. These evaluations/assessments are the bases for modifying and improving the program.

<b>Standard 4: The program shall conduct, and report to the public, consistent formal evaluations, which determine its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the students, community, and the human services field.</b>	
a.	<p>The program has clear, measurable student learning outcomes that align with the standards and an assessment plan that has been implemented. Provide the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measurable student learning outcomes</li> </ol>

	2. Assessment plan (include timelines)
	3. Examples of assessment tools )e.g. rubrics, exams, portfolios, surveys, capstone evaluations, etc.).
	4. A description of how the evaluation may or may not have resulted in any change.
b.	The program shall conduct a formal program evaluation at least every five years. The formal evaluation shall include student surveys, agency surveys, graduate follow-up surveys, active participation of the advisory committee, involvement of agencies where students are in field placements, course and faculty evaluations, and evaluative data mandated or conducted by the institution. Provide the following:
	1. A history of program evaluations
	2. A description of the methodology
	3. A summative analysis of the most recent evaluation
c.	4. A description of how and in what way the evaluation resulted in any change.
	The program must provide reliable information on its performance, including student achievement, to the public for the last two years. <b>[NOTE: This Specification relates to accreditation standards or policies that require institutions or programs to provide timely, readily accessible, accurate, and consistent aggregate information to the public about institutional or programmatic performance and student achievement, as the institution or program determines such information. (Paragraph 12 (B)(1), 2019 CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures)]</b> Provide the following:
	1. An active link to student achievement indicators on the Program's website.
	2. Aggregate data as evidence of student achievement. Include as many of the following as available: enrollment trends, retention, student learning outcomes, graduation rates, grade point average, student satisfaction, agency feedback, graduate transfer rates, graduate school or employment data, and alum surveys.

## E. Policies and Procedures for Admitting, Retaining, and Dismissing Students

*Context:* Students have a right to know, prior to enrollment, the standards of the human services program and the procedures for admitting, retaining, and dismissing students. Both academic and behavioral issues need to be considered.

**Standard 5: The program shall have written standards and procedures for admitting, retaining, and dismissing students.**

a.	Provide documentation of policies regarding the selection and admission of students.
b.	Provide documentation of policies and procedures for referring students for personal and academic assistance. These policies must be consistent with the institution's policies.
c.	Provide documentation of written policies and procedures describing the due process for probation, remediation, dismissal, appeal, and grievance procedures affecting students.
d.	Provide documentation of program policies and procedures for assessing and managing student attributes, characteristics, and behaviors ("fitness for the profession") that are important for the success of human service professionals.

## F. Credentials of Human Services Faculty

*Context:* Human services programs have relied primarily on professionals from fields such as human services, psychology, sociology, social work, counseling, political science, adult education, and nursing to provide teaching faculty. Since both field and classroom orientations are important characteristics of teaching staff, consideration should be given to faculty trained in human services and/or interdisciplinary methods and approaches.

**Standard 6: The combined competencies and disciplines of the faculty for each program shall include both a strong and diverse knowledge base and clinical/practical experience in the delivery of human services to clients.**

a.	Include curriculum vitae of full-time and part-time faculty who teach human services courses. The vitae must demonstrate that:  1. Faculty have education in various disciplines and experience in human services or related fields
----	---

- |  |
|--|
| 2. Teaching faculty have no less than one degree above the level of certificate or degree in which they teach. It is recommended that faculty have no less than a master's degree. |
|--|

## G. Personnel Roles, Responsibilities, and Evaluation

*Context:* To balance the academic and experiential characteristics of human services programs, adequate faculty and staff should be available to fill essential program roles.

<b><u>Standard 7:</u> The program shall adequately manage and evaluate the essential program roles and provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.</b>
--

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| a. | Document that faculty have the ultimate responsibility for setting policies and determining the content, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.  |
| b. | <p>Essential program roles include administration, curriculum development and review, instruction, field supervision, program planning, program evaluation, student advising, and student evaluation. Provide the following:</p> <p>A brief description of how these essential roles are fulfilled in the program</p> <p>A table matching faculty and staff positions and names with these roles.</p> |
| c. | Describe the process for faculty and staff evaluation. Documentation may come from a variety of sources and may include, among others, student evaluations, administrative review, comments from field placement agencies, and peer review.   |
| d. | Document how the evaluative process is used to identify strengths and limitations and how it is incorporated in specific procedures for improvement.  |
| e. | Describe how faculty and staff are provided opportunities for relevant professional development.  |

## H. Cultural Competence

*Context:* To ensure the program is effective in producing culturally competent professionals who possess a high level of self-awareness, knowledge, and skills in the complexities of multiculturalism,

intercultural fluency, and accessibility. This encompasses the individual, family, and group levels as well as agency/organizational, community, and global levels.

<b>Standard 8: The program shall foster the development of culturally competent professionals through program characteristics, curriculum, and fieldwork.</b>	
a.	<p>Demonstrate how the program</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Includes intercultural fluency, and accessibility principles in program policies, procedures, and practices.</li> <li>2. Includes intercultural fluency, and accessibility training for faculty and staff</li> </ol>
b.	<p>Demonstrate how the curriculum integrates culturally inclusive appropriate standards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Includes but is not limited to student self-awareness of own culture, biases, prejudice, and belief systems and stereotyping.</li> <li>2. Includes the development of awareness, knowledge, and skills of intercultural fluency, accessibility, and culture.</li> </ol>

## **I. Program Support**

**Context:** To address student needs, human service programs require adequate faculty, staff, and program resources.

<b><u>Standard 9:</u> The program shall have adequate faculty, staff, and program resources.</b>	
a.	Include budgetary information that demonstrates sufficient funding, faculty, and staff to provide an ongoing and stable program.
b.	Describe how program and field experience coordination is considered in calculating the teaching loads of faculty. It is recommended that consideration be given to distance between sites, expectations of observation, documentation requirements, number of students enrolled in the field experience, and the characteristics of the student population.
c.	Describe how the program has adequate professional support staff to meet the needs of students, faculty, and administration.

d.	Describe how there is adequate resource support (e.g., technology, library, computer labs, etc.) to meet the needs of students, faculty, and administration.
e.	Describe office, classroom, meeting, and informal gathering spaces and how they meet the needs of students, faculty, and administration.

## **J. Evaluation of Transfer Credits and Prior Learning**

**Context:** In order to promote and facilitate the transfer of credits, each program shall have policies and procedures for the evaluation of transfer credits and prior learning.

**Standard 10: Each program shall articulate the policies and procedures for the transfer of credits and the evaluation of prior learning.**

a.	Describe formal policies and procedures, and informal practices for the transfer of credits and evaluation of prior learning.
b.	Describe how students receive this information.



## II. CURRICULUM: ASSOCIATE DEGREE

### A. Knowledge, Theory, Skills, and Values

#### 1. History

**Context:** The history of human services provides the context in which the profession evolved, a foundation for assessment of present conditions in the field, and a framework for projecting and shaping trends and outcomes. Thus, human services professionals must have knowledge of how different human services emerged and the various forces that influenced their development.

**Standard 11:** The curriculum shall include the historical development of human services. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:

a.	The historical roots of human services as a discipline and profession.
b.	Historical and current legislation affecting human service delivery.
c.	How public and private attitudes influence legislation and the interpretation of policies related to human services.
d.	The broader sociopolitical issues that affect human service systems

#### 2. Human Systems

**Context:** The human services professional must demonstrate an understanding of the structure and dynamics of organizations, communities, and society as well as the nature of individuals and groups. This understanding is prerequisite to the determination of appropriate responses to human needs.

**Standard 12:** The curriculum shall include knowledge and theory of the interaction of human systems including: individual, interpersonal, group, family, organizational, community, and societal. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:

a.	Theories of human development.
b.	Small groups: 1. Overview of how small groups are used in human services settings.

	2. Theories of group dynamics
	3. Group facilitation skills.
c.	Changing family structures and roles.
d.	An introduction to the organizational structures of communities.
e.	An understanding of the capacities, limitations, and resiliency of human systems.
f.	Emphasis on context and the role of intercultural fluency, including cultural group membership and individual identities in determining and meeting human needs.

### 3. Human Service Delivery Systems

**Context:** The demand for services and the funding of educational programs has been closely related to identifiable human conditions including, among others: aging, delinquency, crime, poverty, mental illness, physical illness, chemical dependency, and disabilities. The needs that arise in these conditions provide the focus for the human services profession.

<b>Standard 13: The curriculum shall address the scope of conditions that promote or inhibit human functioning. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:</b>	
a.	The range and characteristics of human services delivery systems and organizations.
b.	The range of populations served, and needs addressed by human services.
c.	The major models used to conceptualize and integrate prevention, maintenance, intervention, rehabilitation, and healthy functioning.

### 4. Discipline Inquiry and Information Literacy

**Context:** The delivery of human services depends on the appropriate integration of various forms of information.

<b>Standard 14: The curriculum shall provide knowledge and skills in information literacy. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:</b>	
a.	Obtain, synthesize, and clearly report information from various sources.
b.	Assess the quality of information from various sources, including but not limited to print, audio, video, web, and social media, and understand its application.
c.	Upholding confidentiality and using appropriate means to share information.
d.	Using technology, including artificial intelligence, to locate, evaluate, and disseminate information.

### 5. Program Planning and Evaluation

**Context:** A major component of the human services profession involves the assessment of the needs of clients and client groups and the planning of programs and interventions that will assist clients and client groups in promoting optimal functioning, growth, and goal attainment. At regular intervals, the outcomes must be evaluated, and necessary adjustments made to the plan, both at an individual client and program level.

<b>Standard 15: The curriculum shall provide knowledge and skill development in systematic analysis of service needs; planning appropriate strategies, services, and implementation; and evaluation of outcomes. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:</b>	
a.	Knowledge and skills to analyze and assess the needs of clients or client groups.
b.	Skills to develop goals, and design and implement a plan of action.
c.	Skills to evaluate the outcomes of the plan and the impact on the client or client group.

### 6. Client Interventions and Strategies

**Context:** Human service professionals function as change agents and must therefore attain and develop a core of knowledge, theory, and skills to provide direct services and interventions to clients and client groups.

<b>Standard 16: The curriculum shall provide knowledge and skills regarding appropriate interventions in service delivery. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:</b>
---

a.	Theory and knowledge bases of prevention, intervention, and maintenance strategies.
b.	Assess and analyze the needs of clients or client groups through observation, interviewing, active listening, consultation, and research.
c.	Knowledge and skill development in <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Case Management:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Intake interviewing</li> <li>b. Helping skills</li> <li>c. Identification and use of appropriate resources and referrals</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Group facilitation</li> <li>3. Use of consultation.</li> </ol>

## 7. Interpersonal Communication

**Context:** The ability to create genuine and empathic relationships with others is central to the human services profession. These skills apply to all levels of education, and a greater proficiency is expected at each progressively higher level.

<b><u>Standard 17:</u> Learning experiences shall be provided for the student to develop his or her interpersonal skills.</b>	
a.	Clarifying expectations.
b.	Dealing effectively with conflict.
c.	Establishing rapport with clients.
d.	Developing and sustaining behaviors that are congruent with the values and ethical standards outlined by the National Organization for Human Services/Council for Standards in Human Service Education (available at <a href="https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/ethical-standards-for-hsprofessionals">https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/ethical-standards-for-hsprofessionals</a> ).

## 8. Client-Related Values and Attitudes

**Context:** There are values and ethics intrinsic to the human services profession that have been agreed to as governing principles of professional practice.

**Standard 18:** The curriculum shall incorporate human services values and attitudes and promote understanding of human services ethics and their application in practice. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:

a.	The least intrusive intervention in the least restrictive environment.
b.	Client self-determination.
c.	Confidentiality of information.
d.	The worth and uniqueness of individuals based on intercultural fluency, including how they identify and the cultural groups to which they belong.
e.	Belief that individuals, service systems, and society can change.
f.	Interdisciplinary team approaches to problem solving.
g.	Appropriate professional boundaries.
h.	Integration of the ethical standards outlined by the National Organization for Human Services (NOHS) and the Council for Standards in Human Service Education (available at <a href="https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/ethical-standards-for-hs-professionals">https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/ethical-standards-for-hs-professionals</a> )

## 9. Self-Development

**Context:** Human services professionals use their experience and knowledge for understanding and helping clients. This requires awareness of one's own values, cultural bias, philosophies, personality, and style in the effective use of the professional self. It also requires an understanding of how these personal characteristics affect clients.

**Standard 19:** The program shall provide experiences and supports to enable students to develop awareness of their values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles, and limitations. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:

a.	Conscious use of self.
b.	Clarification of personal and professional values.
c.	Awareness of intercultural fluency.
d.	Strategies for self-care.
e.	Reflection on professional self (e.g., journaling, development of a portfolio, or project demonstrating competency).

## **B. Field Experience**

**Context:** Field experiences such as practicums or internships occur in human service settings. Fieldwork provides an environment and context to integrate the knowledge, theory, skills, and professional behaviors that are concurrently being taught in the classroom. It must be an integral part of the education process.

<b><u>Standard 20:</u> The program shall provide field experience that is integrated with the curriculum. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:</b>	
a.	Provide a brief description of the overall process and structure of the fieldwork learning experience.
b.	Provide evidence that one academic credit is awarded for no less than three hours of field experience per week.
c.	Demonstrate that students are exposed to human services agencies and clients (assigned visitation, observation, assisting staff, etc.) early in the program.
d.	Provide a copy of the current manual and guidelines that are given to students advising them of field placement requirements and policies.
e.	Provide documentation of written learning agreements with field agencies that specify the student's role, activities, anticipated learning outcomes, supervision, and field instruction. The agreement must be signed by the appropriate agency representative or fieldwork supervisor, seminar instructor, and student.
f.	Provide syllabi for required seminars. Seminars must meet no less than every two weeks. Seminar hours must not be included in field experience hours.

g.	Provide evidence that the required field experience is no less than 250 clock hours.
h.	<p>Demonstrate how the field experience provides students with an opportunity to progress from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Observation to</li> <li>2. Directly supervised client contacts to</li> <li>3. Indirectly supervised client contact.</li> </ol>
i.	Demonstrate that field supervisors have no less than the same degree the program awards. It is strongly recommended that field supervisors have no less than one level of degree above the level of degree in Human Services or a related field.
j.	Demonstrate that the program continually monitors the progress of each student and performs no less than one site visit to each field placement site per quarter or semester. The visit can be held as a direct site visit or with appropriate technology. The technology that is used should ensure that the field placement supervisor and student can be identified.