



Council for Standards in Human Service Education
NATIONAL STANDARDS
MASTER'S DEGREE IN HUMAN SERVICES

<https://cshse.org>

Revised July 2025

I. GENERAL PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

A. Institutional Requirements and Primary Program Objective

<u>Standard 1:</u> The primary program objective must be to prepare human service professionals to provide administrative, leadership, and research functions required to support human service organizations.	
a	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 numbers of full-time, part-time, and students graduating each year.
f.	Provide a complete program description, courses required, suggested time for 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.

Standard 2: The program must have an explicit philosophical statement and clearly defined knowledge base.

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 model, systems theory, change theory, etc.).
d.	Describe the multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or transdisciplinary approach to knowledge, theories, and skills included in the curriculum.
e.	Provide a matrix mapping the curriculum Standards (11-18) and Specifications to required courses. The information provided on the matrix must clearly align with the information presented in the self-study narrative and the syllabi. <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>

C. Community Assessment

Context: Human services programs continually interact with and impact human services delivery within the local community through field placements and alumni. Programs should be designed to interface with the needs of major employers in terms of job requirements and career ladders, ensuring an orderly and continuous supply of competent professionals.

Standard 3: The program shall include mechanisms for periodic assessment of and response to community needs, changing policies, and trends of the profession.
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.	An Advisory Committee shall be established to provide feedback on local, state, and national trends and needs, as well as 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, alumni, current students, adjunct faculty, and other people related to the field of human services.
c.	<p>Provide the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A detailed description of the membership of the Advisory Committee (e.g., names, agencies, roles, relationship to program, etc.), <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Minutes of advisory committee meetings from the last two years <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A narrative or table of how the committee interfaces with the program in relation to specific issues.
d.	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 regularly. Additionally, the program must determine how effectively the needs of students and graduates are being met. These evaluations/assessments are the basis for modifying and improving the program.

Standard 4: The program must 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 profession.	
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"> 1. Measurable student learning outcomes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Assessment plan (including timelines) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Examples of assessment tools (e.g., rubrics, exams, portfolios, surveys, capstone evaluations, etc.).

	<p>b. The program must conduct a formal program evaluation at least every five years. The formal evaluation shall include student surveys, agency surveys, graduate follow-up surveys (directed to both graduates and their employers), 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.</p> <p>Provide the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A history of program evaluations 2. A description of the methodology 3. A summative analysis of the most recent evaluation 4. A description of how and in what way the evaluation resulted in any change.
	<p>c. The program must provide reliable information on its performance (including student achievement data) to the public from the last two years. [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)] Provide the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 policies and procedures for admitting, retaining, and dismissing students. Both academic and behavioral issues need to be considered.

<p>Standard 5: The program shall have written policies and procedures for admitting, retaining, and dismissing students.</p>	
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 remediation, probation, 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 Service Faculty

Context: Human service 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 essential 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 must encompass both a strong and diverse knowledge base, experience in delivering human services, and organizational and leadership expertise.

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| a. | <p>Include the curriculum vitae of full-time and part-time faculty who teach human services courses. The vitae must demonstrate that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faculty have education in various disciplines and experience in human services or related fields. 2. If students choose a field placement as one of their graduation requirements, the involvement of field placement staff should meet the same educational requirements as teaching faculty. 3. Teaching faculty should have no less than the actual certificate or degree in which they teach. It is recommended that faculty have a doctoral degree. |
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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.

Standard 7: The program must adequately manage and evaluate the essential program roles and provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.
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| a. | Document that the program has ultimate responsibility for setting policies and determining the content, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum. |
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b.	<p>Essential program roles include administration, curriculum development and review, instruction, field supervision, program planning, program evaluation, student advising, and student evaluation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a brief description of how these essential roles are fulfilled in the program. 2. Provide a table matching faculty and staff positions and names with these roles.
c.	<p>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.</p>
d.	<p>Describe how faculty and staff are provided opportunities for relevant professional development.</p>

H. Cultural Competence

Context: To ensure the program is effective in producing culturally competent professionals who possess high levels 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.

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

I. Program Support

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

Standard 9: The program must have adequate faculty, staff, and program resources.	
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 responsibilities are considered in calculating the teaching loads of faculty.
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.

J. Evaluation of Transfer Credits

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

Standard 10: Each program must articulate the policies and procedures for the transfer of credits	
a.	Describe formal policies and procedures, and informal practices for the transfer of credits
b.	Describe how students receive this information.

Curriculum Standards - Master's Degree

A master's degree program in Human Services requires scholarly and professional activities designed to advance the student substantially beyond the educational requirements of a baccalaureate degree program. The degree is structured to prepare students for professional practice through the creative application of knowledge, theory, and skills. The curriculum provides opportunity for a broad conceptual mastery of the field through an understanding of subject matter, bibliographical resources, theory, practice, and scholarly research. The curriculum aims to develop in students the capacity to interpret, analyze, synthesize, and communicate knowledge, as well as the skills necessary to practice and advance the profession effectively.

The master's degree in human services differs from a counseling degree in that graduates are prepared to contribute to positive change through a wide range of service and administrative roles within organizations, rather than delivering therapeutic services.

A. Knowledge, Theory, Skills, and Values

1. Historical Perspectives and Emerging Trends.

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 must include the historical perspectives and emerging trends in human service delivery. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:

a.	Historical and current legislation affecting human services delivery.
b.	How public and private attitudes influence legislation, and the interpretation of policies related to human services.
c.	Exposure to a spectrum of socio-political ideologies and how they influence human service delivery.
d.	Skills to analyze and interpret historical data for application in advocacy and social change.

2. Human Systems

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

Standard 12: The curriculum must 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.	Overview of how administrators may work with groups such as boards of directors, community groups, public officials, or client/consumer advisory groups.
b.	An introduction to the organizational structures of communities.
c.	An understanding of the capacities, limitations, and resiliency of human systems.
d.	Emphasis on context and the role of intercultural fluency, including cultural group membership and individual identities in determining and meeting human needs.
e.	Processes to effect social change through advocacy work at all levels of society including community development, community and grassroots organizing, and local and global activism.

3. Human Services Delivery Systems

Context: The demands for services, funding of educational programs, social justice, and advocacy have been closely related but not limited to aging, delinquency, crime, poverty, mental illness, physical illness, chemical dependency, and disabilities. The needs that arise provide the focus for the human services profession.

Standard 13 The curriculum must address the scope of conditions that promote or inhibit human functioning. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:

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.

d.	Economic and social class systems, including systemic causes of poverty.
e.	Political and ideological aspects of human services.
f.	Local and Global Influences on Human Service Delivery.
g.	Skills to effect and influence social policy.
h.	Dealing effectively with conflict on varying levels of human service delivery systems

4. Disciplined Inquiry and Information Literacy

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

<u>Standard 14: The curriculum must provide knowledge and skills in disciplined inquiry and information literacy. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:</u>	
a.	Knowledge and skills to obtain information through observation and research.
b.	Respect for confidentiality and the appropriate and ethical use of professionally relevant data.
c.	Knowledge and skills to assess the significance, relevance, timeliness, adequacy, accuracy, and validity of information provided by others, including social media sources and artificial intelligence technology.
d.	Knowledge and skills to compile, synthesize, and categorize information and present it orally and/or in writing to clients, colleagues, or other members of related services systems and to utilize the information for community education and public relations.
e.	Information literacy encompasses the skills necessary to effectively locate, evaluate, and utilize information from library databases, the World Wide Web, and other electronic resources.
f.	Familiarity with methods, statistics, quantitative and qualitative research, and the application of technology.
g.	Critical thinking for analysis, problem solving, synthesis, decision making, and predicting outcomes.

h.	Inclusion of a culminating capstone experience, e.g. research project, scholarly paper, or action research project.
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5. Program Planning and Evaluation

Context: A major component of the human services profession involves assessing the needs of clients and client groups, and planning programs and interventions to assist them 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.

Standard 15: The curriculum must provide knowledge, theory and skills in systematic analysis of service needs; selection of appropriate strategies, services, or interventions; and evaluation of outcomes. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:

a.	Program planning and design.
b.	Program implementation.
c.	Program evaluation.
d.	Knowledge, theory, and skills to perform a community-needs assessment.

6. Administrative Leadership

Context: A holistic approach to human services recognizes direct and indirect services as components of the same system. Administrative support (indirect service) is essential to the effective delivery of direct services to clients or client groups

Standard 16: The curriculum must provide knowledge, theory, and skills in the administrative aspects of service delivery systems. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:

a.	Organizational management.
b.	Employment and supervision of staff.
c.	Operational and strategic planning, including assessment practices.
d.	Developing budgets and monitoring expenditures.
e.	Fund development and fundraising (grants, special events, major gifts, etc.) and contract negotiation
f.	Legal/regulatory issues and risk management, including issues related to nonprofit status.

g	Supporting the professional development of staff.
h.	Recruiting and managing volunteers.
i.	Constituency building and other advocacy techniques such as lobbying, grassroots movements, and community development and organizing.
j.	Understanding the mission, vision, and ethical responsibilities of organizations and society as outlined by the Ethical Standards of the National Organization for Human Services (available at https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/ethical-standards-for-hs-professionals).

7. Legal and Ethical Practices

Context: An understanding of laws, legal issues, and professional ethics as they relate to human services is necessary for informed practices and the protection of the rights of others.

Standard 17: The curriculum must incorporate human services values and attitudes, promoting an understanding of human services ethics and their application in practice. Describe and provide evidence that the following are adequately addressed in the curriculum:	
a.	Respect for and maintaining the confidentiality of information.
b	Recognition that individuals, service systems, and society change.
c	Interprofessional approaches to problem solving.
d	Respect for appropriate professional boundaries.
e.	Maintaining behavior that is congruent with the values and ethics of the profession as outlined by the Ethical Standards of the National Organization for Human Services (available at https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/ethical-standards-for-hs-professionals).
f.	Clarification of values.
g.	Differentiation between ethical and legal standards.

8. Culminating Experiences

Context: Culminating experiences are learning experiences in a human services delivery organization. It is a process of experiential learning that integrates the knowledge, theory, skills, and professional behaviors that are concurrently taught in the classroom. CSHSE requires

master's degree students to complete a learning experience that demonstrates competency in translating theory into practice, such as fieldwork experiences, a thesis, or an action research project. All options require a self-reflection process.

Standard 18: The program must provide either field experiences or capstone projects that are integrated within the curriculum and demonstrate conceptual mastery of professional practices in the field of human services.

a.	Demonstrate that students are adequately exposed to human services agencies and clients (assigned visitation, observation, assisting staff, etc.)
b.	Demonstrate criteria, policies, and procedures for determining when a student is required to complete a fieldwork experience. Fieldwork may be waived if the student has extensive experience, provided specific criteria, policies, and procedures are followed and documented. For those who qualify to have fieldwork waived, they must complete a capstone project, thesis, or an action research project.
c.	If a fieldwork experience is required, <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide a copy of the current manual and guidelines that are given to students, advising them of field placement requirements.2. Provide documentation of written agreements with field agencies that specify the student's role, activities, outcomes, supervision, and field instruction.3. Provide syllabi for required seminars. Seminar hours are not included in field experience hours.4. Provide evidence that a minimum of one academic credit is awarded for each three hours of weekly field experience.5. Demonstrate that field experience is structured with clear learning outcomes and methods of evaluation.
d.	If a fieldwork experience is required, <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Demonstrate that the field supervisors have a minimum of a master's degree or comparable years of professional experience. It is strongly recommended that field supervisors have no less than 10 years of professional experience if they do not hold a master's degree.2. 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 used should ensure that both the field placement supervisor and the student can be identified.3. Demonstrate that there is a written plan of learning objectives, activities, and outcomes for each student that was conjointly developed and agreed to by the student, the program, and the agency supervisor.4. the program shall provide a minimum of 100 clock hours of field experience in a human service setting.

	<p>5. The program shall provide a capstone experience, either a thesis, action research, or a program development/evaluation proposal, that demonstrates conceptual mastery of the professional practice. Demonstrate the rationale for the selected capstone experience option.</p>
e.	If fieldwork experience is waived, the program shall provide a capstone experience, either a thesis or action research, that demonstrates conceptual mastery of the professional practice. Provide the specific criteria and expectations for completing the selected capstone experience.
f.	Demonstrate that a reflection on professional self (e.g., journaling, development of a portfolio, or project demonstrating competency) is included for the selected capstone experience: fieldwork, thesis, or action research.