



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK

PROGRAM EVALUATION PROJECT Plan B Format for MSW Students

This document describes the Plan B “Program Evaluation Project” option for ***2nd year and Advanced Standing MSW students*** in UW’s graduate social work program. MSW students must select one of two options that engages students in a research project. MSW students must choose either:

- Plan B Program Evaluation project (SOWK 5755, (1-credit, Fall and Spring semester or 2 total credits required), or
- Thesis Research project (SOWK 5960-2 credits per semester or 4 total credits required).

Thesis students are required to follow Division and University guidelines to accomplish their research endeavor. Thesis research requires original research, with full development, implementation, and the preparation of a final thesis manuscript that conforms to UW requirements.

Most students select the Plan B Program Evaluation option. Therefore, this document describes the format for the MSW social work student who individually engages in a Plan B project. The Plan B format accomplishes several aims which include:

- a. A program evaluation and case presentation format that is rigorous for all MSW students,
- b. A practice experience and program evaluation format that offers greater uniformity for students with regard to what is expected to be accomplished for the Plan B project,
- c. A Plan B format that removes the need for IRB approval for a Plan B project, and
- d. A uniform format for assessing the Final/Oral Exam that can be used by each member of the student’s committee.

The first section of this document describes the overall Plan B project and the expected steps to accomplish this work. The second section of this document provides the operationalization of the Plan B project, talking about the role of the Research Chair and the Committee Members. The final section is a recommended Assessment Format that each member of the Committee would use during the Final Oral Examination Presentation, returning the form to the Chair. A summarized time line is presented at the end.

Overall Plan B Project: A Case Presentation (Practicum based) and A Program Evaluation Proposal

Students selecting the Plan B option are required to work on a 2-part professional practice project that conforms to an evidence-based practice model. This Plan B format is designed to be able to assess up to 28 practice behaviors. Each student is expected to prepare a full case analysis/presentation and secondly, to develop a program or case evaluation proposal. These two parts for the Plan B option are described below as follows:

- A. **A full case presentation using the evidence-based practice (EBP) model** (e.g. Rubin & Bellamy, 2012, or other social work research texts that describe this model) on a client or client system that the student is working with in their field practicum setting. In the student's presentation and accompanying paper, s/he would address the following:
- a. A 3-4 paragraph description of the agency or organization that the student is placed in for field practicum.
 - b. A description of a problem that requires the social worker to engage in an intervention.
 - i. Background information can include demographic and personal information such as client age, gender/gender identity, family situation, occupation, marital status, family composition, ethnic and/or cultural background, pertinent family history, or, in larger macro systems, background information can include social, political, and economic demographics, key actors, relevant social policies and organizational context(s).
Note: Background information must be disguised sufficiently to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Change names, even location identification where appropriate and necessary.
 - ii. This description of the problem and explanation about that problem area should include relevant published information (approximately 5-8 articles) about the problem (contextualize the problem). Include available statistical information that describes the social problem area. For example, if the person is experiencing great stress due to loss of a job, then the student would address the prevalence of job losses in that community, possibly examining job losses by industry, gender, etc.
 - iii. Describe initial engagement and assessment work done which can include agency assessment tools, diagnostic instruments, or at macro level, assessment processes used to arrive at clear understanding of problem being worked on. Address the view of the problem by the client, others relating to the client system, and the professional's view of the client problem.
 - iv. Further, in the description of the problem that the client/client system is experiencing, provide information from journal and professional research articles (approximately 8-12 articles) that give insight(s) into typical intervention approaches that are used to address this problem.
 - c. Address the uniqueness(s) of this client system or client that may be important and might include cultural background, culture in the context of the community/region, how difference(s) may shape personal experiences. Conversely, the student should address how the community and its context may influence the client system or client.
 - d. Describe what intervention approach/strategy(s) has been specifically chosen to help remediate this problem, helping the client/client system resume more effective and productive functioning. As an example, a student could address the use of a particular medication that helps a person experiencing a mental health issue and the client might also be engaging in a

- particular type of treatment group. The student would describe both interventions that are being used to help this client. The student must ground their intervention in the professional literature (approximately 8-12 articles). The student should describe these interventions and provide support (evidence-based practice) for these interventions in the professional journals or texts.
- e. Address relevant ethical issues, ethical conflicts, and any other ethical principles that are important in this case analysis.
 - f. Identify any personal and/or professional issues that may be important with regard to your professional practice, self-correction, and ability to communicate effectively with the client system or client.
 - g. Describe your intervention with this client system or client, specifically addressing:
 - i. The initiation of the intervention process
 - ii. The on-going re-assessment process
 - iii. The process of monitoring the client system in the intervention phase
 - iv. Any supervision relevant to the student's engagement with the case
 - v. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention (Part B of this proposal)
 - vi. Address the ending/termination process
 - h. Provide a personal reflection and identify what might be changed in the future, what is valuable about this case and presenting this case as the student's Plan B project.
- B. Design a **proposal for a Program or Case Evaluation Approach** that could be used with this client/client system in the agency where the student is engaged in their practicum. In many cases, the student might design a practice evaluation design for the client/client system chosen in the full case presentation, though that may not always be practical or probable. The Program or Case Evaluation should address the following:
- a. Describe the program or client system to be evaluated.
 - b. Discuss the value and benefit(s) in developing a program or client evaluation in the situation as identified.
 - c. State specifically what program component or case situation will be evaluated.
 - i. Will the evaluation design assess a client's change based on a particular practice approach?
 - ii. Will the evaluation design assess a type of intervention offered to a range of clients?
 - d. Provide a review of relevant professional literature (approximately 8 to 12 articles) that addresses the program or client assessment being designed.
 - e. Locate the tools that would be used in this evaluation process or design the needed instrumentation or tool(s) to carry out the evaluation.
 - i. Describe the tools selected or how the tool was designed.
 - ii. Give important details about how the tools will be used with the client system or clients who would engage in the evaluation.

- iii. Address what the implementation of this program or client evaluation would entail.
- iv. Are there important issues in how and when these tools are completed?
- v. What costs would be incurred?
- vi. What kind of timeline will be needed?
- f. Talk about any ethical issues in the evaluation design and/or in the implementation of the evaluation process.
- g. Discuss the data collection and data analysis process. What tools will help in the data analysis process? What kinds of results are anticipated?
- h. Address the value of this kind of evaluation proposal to the agency and to other social workers. Who would most value learning about the results of this kind of program or case evaluation? How might the results better inform social work professional practice?

Operationalizing the Plan B Project

To inform social work students of the Plan B Project, a description will be provided to students in the MSW Student Manual and will also be presented to students in the second semester MSW practice evaluation application class. For new MSW students entering in the summer semester, these students will be presented this Plan B Project description in the summer research course.

MSW students engaged in the Plan B project will follow the process as follows:

- a. Students are required to enroll in the SOWK 5755-Program Evaluation course in both Fall and Spring semesters in their second year of the MSW program or if they are full-time Advanced Standing: 1 credit hour each semester (2 credits required, and students must enroll for “continuous registration” if the Plan B project is not completed in the two semesters.)
- b. The student selects a social work faculty member to serve as their Chair and Advisor (approval for serving as chair is required from the faculty member). The student’s inside social work faculty member will be the faculty person selected to serve as their Field Liaison. When a Chair is in the Field Liaison position, an inside member can be selected from the social work faculty.
- c. The student works with their Research Chair/Advisor to select their outside committee members. Students submit their completed Committee Assignment form to the Chair and the Division Office Manager for signatures of the Division Director and the Dean. In consultation with the Research Chair/Advisor, the student should develop their Proposal paper for the Proposal Meeting which should be scheduled no later than mid-term (usually mid- to late October) of the Fall semester.
- d. At the Proposal Meeting, the student is required to present a written summary of the case that s/he intends to research and the program evaluation project. It is expected that the student will engage in a case in their field practicum setting. This written proposal paper should include at least 20 bibliographic references that the student anticipates using for this case presentation and evaluation project. Providing some beginning bibliographic reference list illustrates that the student has begun, in earnest to identify a problem focus for the case that will be worked on and possible evaluation approaches that may inform the student’s work with the client or client system.
- e. A draft of the written proposal paper must be reviewed by the Research Chair/Advisor. The Research Chair will work with the student to set up a time and location for the Proposal Meeting. The Chair should provide the student with information about how to present their proposal to the committee and help in the scheduling of the Proposal meeting.

- f. The Proposal Approval form must be signed by all Committee Members at the Proposal meeting and returned to the Division for the student's file.
- g. After approval is received at the Proposal Meeting from the student's Graduate Research Committee, the student should engage in their case work and development of their case or program evaluation proposal. The student should keep their Research Chair informed of their progress as they move through the implementation of their case and the development of the proposed case/program evaluation.
- h. The student should work with their Research Chair so that the student is prepared for the Final Oral Examination that is typically scheduled in early to mid-April, during the Spring semester. The final draft of the student's written paper should be provided to all Committee members at least one week (5 business days) before the date of the Final Oral Examination.
- i. At the Final Oral Examination, the student should present:
 - a. The case presentation, and
 - b. The case or program evaluation proposal.
- j. The Research Committee will use the Division's Assessment instrument (See below) to assess the student's presentation and their paper.
 - a. The committee will meet after the student's presentation and make a determination if the student has "passed" or "not passed" the Plan B project.
 - b. If the student did not pass the Plan B project, the Committee must document on the Final Oral Defense form what needs to be done by the student to move to a passing grade.
 - c. A student may receive an "unsatisfactory" if the work needed is not accomplished by the end of the semester; requiring the student to register for an additional semester in order to complete the work for the Plan B project.
- k. After receiving a "Passing" grade from the Research Committee, the student is required to complete and finalize their written paper (after the Final Oral Examination) and that final paper is generally reviewed by the Research Chair, but the full committee may request to approve a final version. A copy of the student's final paper must be provided to all members of the Research Committee (electronic or hard copy, as the committee requests) and one electronic copy must be submitted to the Division's Office Manager.

Assessing the Final Oral Examination

Members of the student's Plan B committee will use the Final/Oral Defense form to assess the Plan B Case Presentation and the case/program evaluation proposal. This format provides an assessment of the student's ability to demonstrate competence in a pre-selected set of the social work advanced generalist practice behaviors. The student must also provide the Research Chair with the Final/Oral Defense form and the Report of Final Examination Results for this Final Oral Defense presentation. Research Committee members must also complete these forms at the end of the presentation.

General Time Frame for Plan B Research Projects

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| Last week of August <i>Start of Fall semester</i> | Student has selected their Research Chair/Advisor. Complete the <u>Committee Assignment/Change</u> form and submit to Division Office Manager for signatures. |
| Mid/late October <i>Mid-term Fall semester</i> | Student prepares Proposal paper for Research Committee and holds Proposal Defense Meeting with Research Committee. Submit <u>Proposal Approval</u> form to committee. |
| Nov thru March | Student works on case and develop case/program evaluation. Student prepares presentation & final draft paper for Research Committee. |
| Early/Mid April <i>Mid-term Spring semester</i> | Student holds Final Oral Examination (Defense) meeting with Research Committee. Submit <u>Final/Oral Defense</u> form and <u>Report of Final Examination Results</u> form to committee. |
| Late April/Early May <i>End of Spring semester</i> | Final paper sent to Research Committee members and electronic copy sent to Division Office Manager. |