



Form 3: Essential Functions

**Essential Functions for Students in the
Human Services Program**

Department of Health & Community Studies

Western Washington University

Essential Functions

Essential functions are the basic activities that a student must be able to perform to complete the curriculum. Faculty, staff, and field supervisors have a shared responsibility for the welfare of individuals who are served by students enrolled in the program. The program is responsible to its partner agencies and to the people they serve to assure that graduates are fully competent generalist professionals who work toward the well-being of individuals and are capable of delivering quality services in an effective and timely manner. Thus, it is important that persons admitted, retained, and graduated possess the skills, emotional capacity, integrity, and compassion necessary to practice as a professional.

Essential functions, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those abilities that are necessary for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum by all students, and the development of professional attributes that meet professional standards, in both electronic and in-person environments. The Essential Functions required by the curriculum are in four areas: 1) communication, 2) behavioral/emotional, 3) professional, and 4) ethical.

Accommodations

The Department of Health and Community Studies, as part of Woodring College of Education at Western Washington University, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. When requested, the University will provide accommodation to students with disabilities. Prior to entering the program, it is the responsibility of individual students to contact the [Disability Access Center](#) office and request accommodations that the student feels are reasonable and necessary to execute the essential functions described below



Communication

The student must be able to accurately, effectively, and sensitively communicate information in a variety of settings and with a variety of communicative partners including but not limited to students, faculty, field supervisors, clients, families, and others in a comprehensive manner and under conditions where time may be limited.

Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:

- Makes relevant comments and appropriately participates in class
 - Uses professional conventions in written and verbal communications
 - Addresses concerns regarding classes, assignments, instructors, practicum/internship placements, etc., in a professional manner with the appropriate individual
 - Uses active and reflective listening to ensure effective collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making
 - Respects others' privacy and personal boundaries
 - Listens in a confidential, responsive, and empathic manner to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences
 - Displays social skills necessary for establishing professional rapport in settings on campus and in the professional settings.
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Behavioral/Emotional

The student must possess the emotional health required for full use of intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and appropriate professional behavior.

Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:

- Acknowledges differing perspectives of individuals including people from diverse cultures and experiential backgrounds with empathy and understanding of differences and opinions
 - Assumes personal responsibility for actions and decisions
 - Maintains mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with clients, coworkers, supervisors, classmates, faculty, staff, and other professionals under all conditions including highly stressful circumstances
 - Functions effectively under stress and adapts to environments and systems that may change unpredictably without warning
 - Takes appropriate initiative to solve problems in a timely manner, such as talking with an instructor
 - Demonstrates self-control in all classes, meetings, and interactions with peers and instructors
 - Plans and prepares in advance of class, appointments with instructors, and practicum, internship, and practice activities
 - Attends class and is punctual in attending class and in the practicum, internship, and practice setting
 - Contacts site supervisor in the event of absence or tardiness and makes up any missed time according to practicum, internship, and practice expectations
 - Adjusts behavior(s) based on feedback given by instructor(s) or practicum, internship, and practice supervisor(s)
 - Follows up with instructor or site supervisor after feedback has been given in order to check one's own progress or status
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Professional

The student must possess the ability to reason judiciously and act professionally as a student-professional.

Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:

- Learns and follows professional standards of practice appropriate to the organization
- Uses respectful language and manner regarding peers, instructors, site supervisors, clients, and community members
- Behaves honestly in all interactions with peers, instructors, site supervisors, clients, and community members
- Collaborates and draws upon professional colleagues to generate ideas for growth as a professional
- Meets expectations of scheduled commitments
- Demonstrates professional responsibility, conduct, productivity, and effort
- Adheres to established professional and/or agency standards for dress and grooming in both class and in the field

Ethical

The student must conduct themselves in an ethical manner with peers, instructors, practicum, internship, and practice site supervisors, clients, and community members.

Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:

- Understands the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities and policies at field studies placement sites
- Refrains from any form of behavior that is meant to threaten or intimidate an individual based on their group identity or membership
- Complies with the [WWU Student Rights and Responsibilities Code](#), which includes the policy on illegal possession and/or use of alcohol and drugs
- Keeps all client information confidential in all settings including the university, community, and online environments

I have read the essential functions and understand I must meet them to participate in the Human Services internship program. If at any time I am not meeting these expectations, I will contact my university instructor and/or academic advisor to discuss my challenges. I understand if I do not meet one or more of these essential functions, I may not be permitted to participate in this internship program, either temporarily or permanently.

Student Name

W#

Email

Student Signature

Date