Program Assessment System: Transition Point Assessments

The Department of Human Services and Rehabilitation is committed to department level planning, collection, analysis, and discussion of assessment data for purposes of improving candidate performance and program quality.

With the advent of a curriculum revision in 2006, faculty in the Human Services Program designed and implemented an assessment plan that includes collection of entry, continuation, and exit assessment data. Each year, the data is analyzed in the summer and is shared with the faculty at a Fall program meeting. Faculty review the data and prioritize areas for continuous improvement during the coming year. A program advisory committee receives updates on continuous improvements and areas requiring special attention.

The following table lists the key assessment points with the corresponding sources of evidence for the Human Services program.

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<th>Admission</th>
<th>Continuation</th>
<th>Qualification for internship</th>
<th>Program completion</th>
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<tr>
<td>• GPA minimum of 2.75</td>
<td>• Quarterly GPA</td>
<td>• Quarterly GPA</td>
<td>• Cumulative GPA</td>
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<td>• Transferable AA degree or within 5 credits, or WWU GURs completed or within 10 credits</td>
<td>• Course-based assignments and performance tasks</td>
<td>• Course-based assignments and performance tasks</td>
<td>• Capstone portfolio benchmarked to CSHSE standards</td>
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<td>• Admission essay</td>
<td>• Course grades</td>
<td>• Course grades</td>
<td>• Internship final performance Evaluation</td>
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<td>• Technology Self-Assessment</td>
<td>• Portfolio evidence benchmarked to CSHSE standards</td>
<td>• Portfolio evidence benchmarked to CSHSE standards</td>
<td>• Exit survey</td>
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• Signed agreement to comply with Expectations for Academic and Professional Performance  
• Contract for exception admission if GPA less than 2.75 and supported by admissions essay/interview  
• Practicum II field supervisor’s performance evaluation

Use of Data for Improvements of Programs and/or Operations

Admissions GPA  
The Human Services program has a minimum GPA requirement of 2.75. A department exceptions policy allows for admission in exceptional situations when the GPA is between 2.2 and 2.75. Given past issues with admission GPA at the different sites, and given that it is a primary entry key assessment, all admissions decision-making is centralized within the Chair’s office, and facilitated by the Academic Program Director in consult with an Admissions Committee made up of at least 3 HS faculty members. All students entering the program for Academic Year 2012-2013 met the minimum GPA requirement.

Qualification for Internship  
The Human Services program uses a Benchmark assessment at the end of HSP 340 (Practicum I) to assess the students’ readiness for HSP 341 (Practicum II) and HSP 440 (Internship). During 2012-2013, 7 students (5.8%) did not meet the standard on the Benchmark Exam.

Students also need to meet the minimum standard on the HSP 341 Supervisor Evaluation before proceeding to HSP 440. During 2012-2013, all students met the standard on the evaluation, with three students exceeding the standard.

Exit Assessment/Capstone Portfolio  
• Pass rate for Capstone Portfolio Benchmark assessment: In previous years, there were students who failed the capstone portfolio benchmark assessment, but still graduated successfully from the major. During 2009-2010, the Capstone Portfolio course was revised so that the benchmark assessment accounted for 100% of the final course grade. During 2012-2013, all but one student met the standard by achieving a score in the range of 70-100 points.
Student concerns about benchmark assessment: In the past, there were several student concerns regarding the use of portfolios as an exit assessment. Several changes have been made to the Capstone Portfolio course and the benchmark assessment. The program will continue to monitor student performance and student/faculty feedback during this next academic year.

Student Exit Surveys
In addition to performance assessments, student exit surveys continue to be an important source of evidence to inform decision-making regarding priorities for continuous improvement. During the Spring of 2013, all graduating seniors were provided a comprehensive exit survey. Results indicated that the vast majority of exiting students view the program in a positive light, with 82% of students being “satisfied or very satisfied” with the quality of the human services course content; 77% for the quality of faculty instruction, and 79% for their overall experience in the human services major. Eighty percent or more of students completing the major agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about the program: (a) My major helped me develop as a professional, (b) Faculty expected critical thinking in my courses, (c) Faculty encouraged students to actively engage in learning, (d) I acquired skills to evaluate scholarly work, and (e) Internship (HSP 440) was a valuable part of my learning experience.

Some areas where faculty would like to focus attention based on feedback from student exit surveys include: Value of the capstone portfolio benchmark, Consistency of program effectiveness across all sites, and Utility of Practicum I for those students who enter the major with significant professional experience.

Capstone Portfolio: The program will continue to monitor student and faculty feedback regarding the revised content and grading rubric for the Capstone Portfolio. Data from the exit surveys showed that 37% of graduating seniors agreed or strongly agreed that creating a Capstone Portfolio was a valuable part of their learning experience. The exit survey data also showed that 38% of the graduating seniors agreed or strongly agreed that a Capstone Portfolio was a good way to assess a student’s learning over two years in the major. While faculty feel as though the changes to the Capstone course over past several years have been favorable and necessary, student satisfaction is down from previous years (2012 exit data indicated 42% agreement that Capstone was valuable learning and 47% agreeing it was a good way to assess learning).

Consistency of Program Across All Sites: Program faculty have been working to more clearly show that the HS program is ONE program, but with three different ‘sites’ or modes of delivery (on campus/Bellingham, Everett, and Distance Learning). In the past there seemed to be a general perception that the different programs had different expectations and different deliverables. Assuring quality and satisfaction at all sites is important to the program. Yet, the 2013 data shows that there is significant variation in student responses based on location. Work will be done to investigate the possibilities here – including the reality that off-campus sites have
smaller cohort sizes, and thus outlier scores hold greater weight when looked at based on location; the potential need for more engagement by senior faculty at off-campus sites, and potential need for enhancing ‘virtual’, or electronic/web-based supports for instructors and students.

- **Value of Practicum I for More Experienced Students:** This is an area that is currently being addressed by program faculty. This issue has also been raised at HS Advisory Committee meetings to get input from field supervisors. Data from the exit surveys showed that only 60% of graduating seniors agreed or strongly agreed that the Practicum I course was a valuable part of their learning experience. The program will continue to investigate ways of strengthening the field experiences for students – particularly for those who are older and who have more professional experience prior to entering the program.