Goals and Objectives of the Rutgers MSW Program

The mission of the Rutgers University and more specifically the School of Social Work is reflected in the MSW Program’s goals and objectives. The goals and objectives of the MSW program demonstrate how the mission is carried out through the creating and dissemination of advanced, in-depth and specialized knowledge needed for effective social justice promotion and enhancing the well-being and resiliency of individuals, families, and communities. Overall, the commitment in our mission to individual well-being and social and economic justice is exemplified in goals and objectives of both the MSW and the BASW programs which highlight the importance of professional identity, understanding diversity, critical thinking, concern with social justice, research informed practice, human development and behavior in the social environment, policy practice, changing environmental contexts, professional values and ethics, and engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice.

Goals and objectives of the MSW Program are to prepare social workers who:

1) Identify and conduct themselves as professional social workers in the areas of clinical social work practice with individuals, families, and groups, or leadership in public and nonprofit agencies. Graduates of the MSW program will:

   a. Conduct themselves professionally in behavior, appearance, and communication as role models and leaders, engaging in lifelong learning and effectively and appropriately using supervision, consultation, personal reflection, and self-correction.

   b. Collaborate, partner, and build coalitions for the public good with other communities, organizations, sectors, and disciplines.

   c. Advocate to community leaders, elected officials, and governance body members for access, adequacy, and efficacy of social work and other critical health and human services.

2) Use knowledge of diversity and difference to strengthen individuals, families and communities in New Jersey, nationally and globally in their areas of concentration and specialization. Graduates of the MSW program will:

   a. Demonstrate a commitment to self-awareness of personal biases, both positive and negative, in working with diverse groups and commit to lifelong learning about diverse and oppressed groups and awareness of self in a cultural context.
b. Demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties and the intersection of social problems such as poverty, crime, social injustice, institutional racism, sexism, able-ism, classism, and homophobia and incorporate this understanding into their assessments and interventions.

c. Design and implement interventions, policies, programs, and services that are accessible and acceptable to people who may be different or diverse from the majority of the population served.

3) Apply a broad range of critical thinking skills of analysis and problem-solving to strengthen individuals, families and communities using interventions relevant to their areas of concentration and specialization. Graduates of the MSW program will:

a. Stay abreast of the most current advances in theory, policy, and evidence-based practice in not only social work but other helping professions.

b. Draw upon multiple sources of knowledge to make judgments and decisions to improve or enhance the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and organizations and those they serve.

c. Engage in reasoned discernment to evaluate, select, and implement appropriate tools to assess and intervene with individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

d. Apply and disseminate solutions derived from critical thinking.

4) Use skills relevant to their areas of concentration and specialization who advocate for human rights and social and economic justice, locally and internationally, in order to empower individuals, families and communities. Graduates of the MSW program will:

a. Understand how issues of privilege, social injustice, and inequities in access to resources play a role in client difficulties and how they affect helping relationships.

b. Utilize an integrative, anti-oppressive perspective to promote equitable access to services for vulnerable groups.

c. Identify and remediate institutional practices, policies, and procedures that are discriminatory and design and implement programs and services that empower clients to be effective advocates to achieve their own social justice and human rights.

5) Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research and, to engage in program evaluation related to their areas of concentration and specialty to find solutions
to social problems and to strengthen individuals, families and communities. Graduates of the MSW program will:

a. Stay abreast of qualitative and quantitative research findings and evidence-based practices that inform their work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.

b. Evaluate clinical practice and agency-based programs using methods that are empirically valid and reliable.

c. Draw on practice experience to identify areas of inquiry to assess extant research and enhance practice.

6) Demonstrate advanced knowledge about human development and behavior in the social environment, and who draw upon this knowledge to assess the biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors that affect individuals, families, and communities. Graduates of the MSW program will:

a. Relate clients’ emotional, behavioral, and personal difficulties to theories, models, and research of human behavior in the social environment.

b. Critically evaluate and apply knowledge of human behavior in the social environment in serving clients and designing and managing programs.

7) Promote social and economic well-being by engaging in leadership and policy practice which addresses social problems. This practice includes analyzing, formulating, and advocating for policy and programs that advance social well-being and also collaborating with clients and colleagues for effective policy action that finds solutions to social problems and strengthens individuals, families and communities. Graduates of the MSW program will:

a. Develop and assess policy proposals and ascertain their impact on individuals, families, communities, and organizations.

b. Demonstrate knowledge as to how to use the policy process to advance social and economic justice and well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

c. Collaborate and partner with other sectors, interests, and communities and professions to help create and implement social welfare policy.

8) Stay informed and dynamically respond to demographic, economic, and sociopolitical contexts relevant to their areas of concentration and specialization as well as technological economic, scientific changes affecting individuals, families and communities in New Jersey, nationally, and globally. Graduates of the MSW program will:
a. Plan, develop, and modify program services and interventions in response to new treatment technologies and new research that validates their effectiveness.

b. Stay abreast of immigration trends, economic contexts, changing demographic trends, the geopolitical environment and their impacts on individuals, families, organizations, and communities and consistently update and incorporate this knowledge in their work.

9) Use social work values and ethics to guide their professional practice relevant to their areas of concentration and specialization. Graduates of the MSW program will:

a. Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Work, Statement of Principles

b. Demonstrate knowledge about common ethical dilemmas and apply ethical decision-making skills and frameworks to issues specific to practice with individuals, families, groups, agencies and communities.

c. Role model ethical behavior for members of the organizations and communities in which they practice

10) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate practice in their chosen areas of concentration and specialization at the advanced level utilizing research findings and evidence-based practice. Graduates of the MSW program will:

a. Evaluate and intervene effectively with individuals, families, groups, agencies and communities, knowing when to modify approaches as needed.

b. Apply research skills to evaluate interventions.

c. Communicate and disseminate evaluation results appropriate to the intended audience.