



Articulation Agreements in Social Work (2008)

Articulation Agreements are used by some baccalaureate social work (BSW) programs in establishing a relationship with two-year human services programs. The agreements specify the requirements programs and students will need to fulfill in order to successfully transfer to the BSW program. Social work programs have a long history of recruiting students from human services programs, but little research has been conducted on the subject since the 1970s. In 2006, CSWE, in conjunction with the John A. Hartford Foundation, conducted a thorough review of the literature on the human services/social work relationship, and in 2007 began a collaboration with several baccalaureate faculty members to conduct a study on articulation agreements.

Methodology

A survey was conducted in March - April of 2008 on articulation agreements in social work. The purpose of the survey was to determine how many accredited baccalaureate programs were currently using agreements, how many were considering agreements, and the major issues programs felt were important to consider in the development of agreements. The survey also was intended to gauge the interest in having CSWE provide formal guidance for agreements.

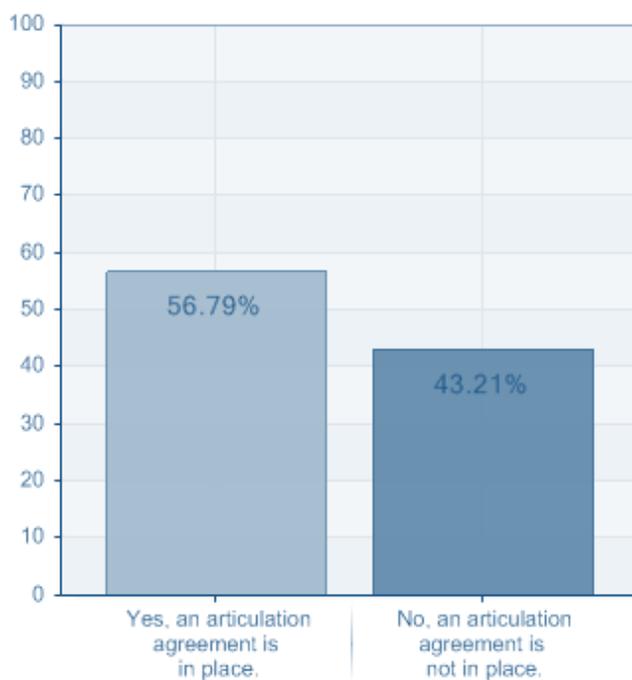
The survey instrument consisted of seven questions. The questions addressed issues in developing articulation agreements, whether a program has an agreement, reasons for developing/not developing an agreement, and whether CSWE should develop guidelines for agreements. The survey was developed by the research team* and administered by CSWE staff through Zarca Interactive, a web-based survey platform. Two reminders were sent by email. The preliminary results were presented in a session at the 2008 annual meeting of the Association of Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD).

- Invitations were sent to all BSW program directors of CSWE accredited programs (N=464, as of the February, 2008 COA meeting).
- The final **response rate was 63.12%** (291 with 3 unreachable).
- The majority of states had over 50% of BSW programs responding. The lowest response rates were from Guam (0% of 1 program), Delaware (0% of 1 program), and Puerto Rico (17% of 6 programs).

Findings

More than half (159 or 56.79%) of respondents reported having an articulation agreement currently in place (See Chart A). Of those respondents that reported their program did not have an agreement in place (124), they were asked whether an agreement had been considered.** The majority of those (67, 54.03%) had not considered an agreement, 30.65% (38) were

Chart A: Do you have an articulation agreement with a two year human services (community college) degree program (s)?



currently considering an agreement, and 12.9% (16) had considered an agreement, but abandoned the idea.

Issues to consider in development

Respondents were also asked about the degree of importance for addressing various elements when developing an articulation agreement. The elements included were related to course equivalency as well as structural and programmatic issues. Those elements related to the course equivalency (general education, liberal arts, and human services/social work course equivalency) were the most frequently rated as “Very Important”. The elements most frequently rated as “Not Important” were the accreditation status of the human services program (30.7%), and use of instructors and syllabi across programs (21.6%) (See Table A, next page).

*See next page for information on research team.

** “(If no) Have you considered developing an articulation agreement with two-year human services degree programs?”

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A number of respondents (55) mentioned “other” issues, including (1) whether the human services faculty have a social work degree, (2) the field experience of the transfer students, (3) making sure that students are accurately advised about the transfer, and (4) state or university policies governing the development of agreements.

Reasons for not having an agreement

Those respondents that reported not having an agreement (124) were further asked to identify whether a series of issues were related to the reason for not developing an agreement.*** Twelve items were included, but few of the items had affirmative ratings exceeding 20%. The most commonly rated reasons for not having an agreement were:

- Lack of time to develop an articulation agreement (44.3%, 47)
- Absence of local two year human services programs (27.3%, 30)

Table A: How important or not important is it to address the following issues when developing an articulation agreement with a two year human services (community college) program?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
(a) Content Repetition	3.2% (9)	36.0% (100)	60.8% (169)
(b) General Education Course Equivalency	1.1% (3)	17.6% (49)	81.3% (226)
(c) Liberal Arts Course Equivalency	0% (0)	15.5% (43)	84.5% (234)
(d) Human Services/Social Work Course Equivalency	11.2% (31)	18.3% (51)	70.5% (196)
(e) Coverage of NASW Code of Ethics in HS program	16.1% (45)	38.4% (107)	45.5% (127)
(f) Use of Instructors and Syllabi across programs	23.1% (62)	39.2% (105)	37.7% (101)
(g) Time required for BSW Degree completion	11.6% (32)	38.4% (106)	50.0% (138)
(h) Accreditation status of HS program	32.2% (88)	37.0% (101)	30.8% (84)
(i) Four year institution’s administrative expectations	9.9% (27)	39.0% (106)	51.1% (139)

- No interest in an articulation agreement on the part of the BSW program (20.9%, 23)
- Other (58.7%, 27)

The “other” issues included the following: (1) state/university has an agreement, so a program agreement is unnecessary, (2) formal agreement seems unnecessary, (3) thought CSWE forbid such agreements, (4) human services courses are not equivalent to social work courses, and (5) unaware of any human services programs in the area.

Guidelines for developing agreements

When asked whether CSWE should develop guidelines for articulation agreements, the majority of respondents (58.66%, 166) said “yes”. In the open-ended response section it was clear that some respondents who said “no” interpreted “guidelines” as policy or prescription and felt that suggestions would be preferable or that CSWE should not be involved at all.

A crosstabulation analysis of having an agreement in place by whether CSWE should develop guidelines found significantly more respondents who reported not having an agreement that said “yes” CSWE should develop guidelines (66.9%, 81, $p < .05$). There was no significant difference on the basis of whether the program had not considered an agreement, was currently considering an agreement, or had considered, but abandoned an agreement.

Chart B: Should CSWE develop articulation agreement guidelines for BSW and two-year human services degree programs?



***Are any of the following issues related to the reason you do not have an articulation agreement with a human services program?

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