

# Unit Outline (Higher Education)

<b>Institute / School:</b>	Institute of Education, Arts & Community
<b>Unit Title:</b>	LAW AND ETHICS IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE
<b>Unit ID:</b>	MSWPG7203
<b>Credit Points:</b>	15.00
<b>Prerequisite(s):</b>	Nil
<b>Co-requisite(s):</b>	Nil
<b>Exclusion(s):</b>	(MSWPG7213)
<b>ASCED:</b>	090501

## Description of the Unit:

This unit focuses on the tensions between law, ethics and social work values and how they shape social work practice. Students will be exposed to the philosophical tensions and ambiguities between rights and responsibilities, freedom and control and the individual and society. These will be explored within the context of social work values, justice, human rights and 'duty of care'. The primary focus is to interrogate how tensions between social work values and statutory contexts impact in a range of fields of practice, e.g., for family violence, child protection, young people in the justice system, mental health, migrant/refugees. Students will be exposed to different types of ethical conflicts that span the ethical and legal and/or statutory contexts and learn strategies for how to recognise, analyse and develop solutions. Assessments include issue-based debates and case study analysis which involves developing a practice framework for resolving complex ethical, legal issues to real world scenarios in social work practice.

**Grade Scheme:** Graded (HD, D, C, P, MF, F, XF)

## Work Experience:

Not wholly work experience: Student is not undertaking work experience in industry or student is undertaking work experience in industry where learning and performance is directed by the provider.

**Placement Component:** No

**Supplementary Assessment:** Yes

Where supplementary assessment is available a student must have failed overall in the Unit but gained a final mark of 45 per cent or above, has completed all major assessment tasks (including all sub-components where a task has multiple parts) as specified in the Unit Description and is not eligible for any other form of

supplementary assessment

### Course Level:

Level of Unit in Course	AQF Level of Course					
	5	6	7	8	9	10
Introductory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Learning Outcomes:

#### Knowledge:

- K1.** Critically appraise the principles and frameworks that underpin tensions between rights and responsibilities, freedom and control and individual and society in social work practice.
- K2.** Critically review the legal systems in the context of social work principles, namely, justice, human rights and duty of care;
- K3.** Identify and critically analyse the legal and ethical dimensions of concepts, including end of life choices, capacity and competencies, collective vs individual rights using real life case scenarios from social work practice;
- K4.** Understand the interconnectedness of social work practice, law and social policy and evaluate the implications for social work practice in a range of contexts, including mental health, aged care and with cross-cultural groups;
- K5.** Critically reflect on the ethical and legal responsibilities of social workers in their practice generally, and in a range of common practice contexts;
- K6.** Evaluate and critique the legal, ethical and practice considerations and dilemmas confronting social workers when complying with their statutory obligations to the law and;
- K7.** Propose solutions to complex legal and ethical problems using real world case scenarios from social work practice.

#### Skills:

- S1.** Identify and apply relevant legal frameworks in context and respond using appropriate professional communication skills;
- S2.** Develop a critically reflective approach to the recognition of tensions between ethical and legal considerations into social work practice;
- S3.** Develop skills in developing, proposing and defending solutions to complex legal and ethical problems in oral and written forms, relevant to both academic and practice contexts and;
- S4.** Deepen understanding of ethical decision-making models and how to apply them in complex cases that cross the legal, ethical and social policy domains.

#### Application of knowledge and skills:

- A1.** Develop in-depth knowledge of the legal and ethical domains of social work practice and apply them to complex cases in social work practice;
- A2.** Develop and apply principles and frameworks to communicate oral and written arguments effectively and;
- A3.** Develop capacity to critically reflect on social work principles, ethics and values in resolving complex cases that traverse many domains.

### Unit Content:

Topics may include:

### Principles and frameworks: Introducing Law and Ethics in social work

- Introducing tensions between rights and responsibilities, freedom and control, the individual and society
- Legal frameworks and complexities and tensions with social work principles, including justice, human rights and 'duty of care'
- ethical theories/ and approaches and ethico-legal decision-making processes.

### Social Worker in a legal context

- Conceptualising a Social Work Practitioner not a lawyer!
- Introducing Australian Legal System and Social Work roles/responsibilities
- Working collaboratively with service users, service providers and the legal system

### Practice Contexts

Case Studies will be used to explore the following ethical dilemmas:

- End of life choices
- Choices, capacities and competence
- Culture and Difference: Individual vs Collective Rights
- Care vs Control: Children's Rights vs Parental Rights

### FEDTASKS

Federation University Federation recognises that students require key transferable employability skills to prepare them for their future workplace and society. FEDTASKS (**T**ransferable **A**tttributes **S**kills and **K**nowledge) provide a targeted focus on five key transferable Attributes, Skills, and Knowledge that are be embedded within curriculum, developed gradually towards successful measures and interlinked with cross-discipline and Co-operative Learning opportunities. *One or more FEDTASK, transferable Attributes, Skills or Knowledge must be evident in the specified learning outcomes and assessment for each FedUni Unit, and all must be directly assessed in each Course.*

FEDTASK attribute and descriptor	Development and acquisition of FEDTASKS in the Unit	
	Learning Outcomes (KSA)	Assessment task (AT#)

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		Learning Outcomes (KSA)	Assessment task (AT#)
FEDTASK 1 Interpersonal	Students at this level will demonstrate an advanced ability in a range of contexts to effectively communicate, interact and work with others both individually and in groups. Students will be required to display high level skills in-person and/or online in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using and demonstrating a high level of verbal and non-verbal communication</li> <li>Demonstrating a mastery of listening for meaning and influencing via active listening</li> <li>Demonstrating and showing empathy for others</li> <li>High order skills in negotiating and conflict resolution skills</li> <li>Demonstrating mastery of working respectfully in cross-cultural and diverse teams.</li> </ul>	K5, K6, K7, S2, S4	AT2, AT3
FEDTASK 2 Leadership	Students at this level will demonstrate a mastery in professional skills and behaviours in leading others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating and sustaining a collegial environment</li> <li>Demonstrating a high level of self-awareness and the ability to self-reflect and justify decisions</li> <li>Inspiring and initiating opportunities to lead others</li> <li>Making informed professional decisions</li> <li>Demonstrating initiative in new professional situations.</li> </ul>	K7, S4, A2	AT3
FEDTASK 3 Critical Thinking and Creativity	Students at this level will demonstrate high level skills in working in complexity and ambiguity using the imagination to create new ideas. Students will be required to display skills in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflecting critically to generate and consider complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level</li> <li>Analysing complex and abstract ideas, concepts and information</li> <li>Communicate alternative perspectives to justify complex ideas</li> <li>Demonstrate a mastery of challenging conventional thinking to clarify complex concepts</li> <li>Forming creative solutions in problem solving to new situations for further learning.</li> </ul>	K1, K3, K5, K6, K7, S1, S4, A2	AT1, AT2, AT3
FEDTASK 4 Digital Literacy	Students at this level will demonstrate the ability to work competently across a wide range of tools, platforms and applications to achieve a range of tasks. Students will be required to display skills in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mastering, exploring, evaluating, managing, curating, organising and sharing digital information professionally</li> <li>Collating, managing complex data, accessing and using digital data securely</li> <li>Receiving and responding professionally to messages in a range of professional digital media</li> <li>Contributing competently and professionally to digital teams and working groups</li> <li>Participating at a high level in digital learning opportunities.</li> </ul>	A1	AT1, AT2
FEDTASK 5 sustainable and Ethical Mindset	Students at this level will demonstrate a mastery of considering and assessing the consequences and impact of ideas and actions in enacting professional ethical and sustainable decisions. Students will be required to display skills in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate informed judgment making that considers the impact of devising complex solutions in ambiguous global economic environmental and societal contexts</li> <li>Professionally committing to the promulgation of social responsibility</li> <li>Demonstrate the ability to evaluate ethical, socially responsible and/or sustainable challenges and generating and articulating responses</li> <li>Communicating lifelong, life-wide and life-deep learning to be open to the diverse professional others</li> <li>Generating, leading and implementing required actions to foster sustainability in their professional and personal life</li> </ul>	K3, K5, K6, K7, S3, S4, A3	AT2, AT3

**Learning Task and Assessment:**

Learning Outcomes Assessed	Assessment Tasks	Assessment Type	Weighting
K1, K2, S1, S3, A2	Critical learning exercises will explore key concepts covered in the course using a range of written and/or oral activities.	Learning Portfolio	20-35%
K1, K2, K4, K5, S1, S2, S3, S4, A1, A3	Working in a team, you will debate a position with regard to an assigned legal and ethical issue related to social work practice. Using debate protocol, each "team" will have the opportunity for rebuttal, and final comments. Drawing on their experience of the debate, each student will construct an individual critical reflection analysing their role as a social work practitioner with an ethico-legal context. Write a critical appraisal of the ethical and legal/statutory tensions inherent in a case study. Explore the implications of these tensions for the clients, and propose a solution that is coherently argued using peer reviewed literature.	Group debate and individual reflection piece.	25-40%
K3, K4, K6, K7, S2, S3, S4, S5, A1, A2, A3	Write a critical appraisal of the ethical and legal/statutory tensions inherent in a case study. Explore the implications of these tensions for the clients, and propose a solution that is coherently argued using peer reviewed literature	Case Study Analysis	35-50%

**Adopted Reference Style:**

APA

Refer to the [library website](#) for more information

Fed Cite - [referencing tool](#)