



# Course Outline (Higher Education)

<b>School:</b>	School of Arts
<b>Course Title:</b>	LAW AND ETHICS IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE
<b>Course 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 Course:

This course 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)

**Placement Component:** No

**Supplementary Assessment:** Yes

Where supplementary assessment is available a student must have failed overall in the course but gained a final mark of 45 per cent or above and submitted all major assessment tasks.

## Program Level:

Level of course in Program	AQF Level of Program					
	5	6	7	8	9	10
Introductory	■	■	■	■	■	■

Level of course in Program	AQF Level of Program					
	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intermediate	■	■	■	■	■	■
Advanced	■	■	■	■	✓	■

### 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.

#### Course 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

### Values:

- V1.** Appreciate the tensions between social work values and the law and work to propose solutions that enhance and uphold principles of justice, duty of care and human rights;
- V2.** Explore and respond to personal and professional ethical issues within processes of human rights, law and social work practice.

### Graduate Attributes

The Federation University FedUni graduate attributes (GA) are entrenched in the [Higher Education Graduate Attributes Policy](#) (LT1228). FedUni graduates develop these graduate attributes through their engagement in explicit learning and teaching and assessment tasks that are embedded in all FedUni programs. Graduate attribute attainment typically follows an incremental development process mapped through program progression. **One or more graduate attributes must be evident in the specified learning outcomes and assessment for each FedUni course, and all attributes must be directly assessed in each program**

Graduate attribute and descriptor		Development and acquisition of GAs in the course	
		Learning Outcomes (KSA)	Assessment task (AT#)
GA 1 Thinkers	Our graduates are curious, reflective and critical. Able to analyse the world in a way that generates valued insights, they are change makers seeking and creating new solutions.	K1, K3, K5, K6, S1, S4, S5	AT1, AT2, AT3

Graduate attribute and descriptor		Development and acquisition of GAs in the course	
		Learning Outcomes (KSA)	Assessment task (AT#)
GA 2 Innovators	Our graduates have ideas and are able to realise their dreams. They think and act creatively to achieve and inspire positive change.	K6, K7, S4, A2	AT3
GA 3 Citizens	Our graduates engage in socially and culturally appropriate ways to advance individual, community and global well-being. They are socially and environmentally aware, acting ethically, equitably and compassionately.	K3, K5, K6, K7, S3-S5, A3	AT2, AT3
GA 4 Communicators	Our graduates create, exchange, impart and convey information, ideas, and concepts effectively. They are respectful, inclusive and empathetic towards their audience, and express thoughts, feelings and information in ways that help others to understand.	K5, K6, K7, S2, S4, S5,	AT2, AT3
GA 5 Leaders	Our graduates display and promote positive behaviours, and aspire to make a difference. They act with integrity, are receptive to alternatives and foster sustainable and resilient practices.	K7, S4, A2	AT3

### Learning Task and Assessment:

Learning Outcomes Assessed	Learning 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](#)