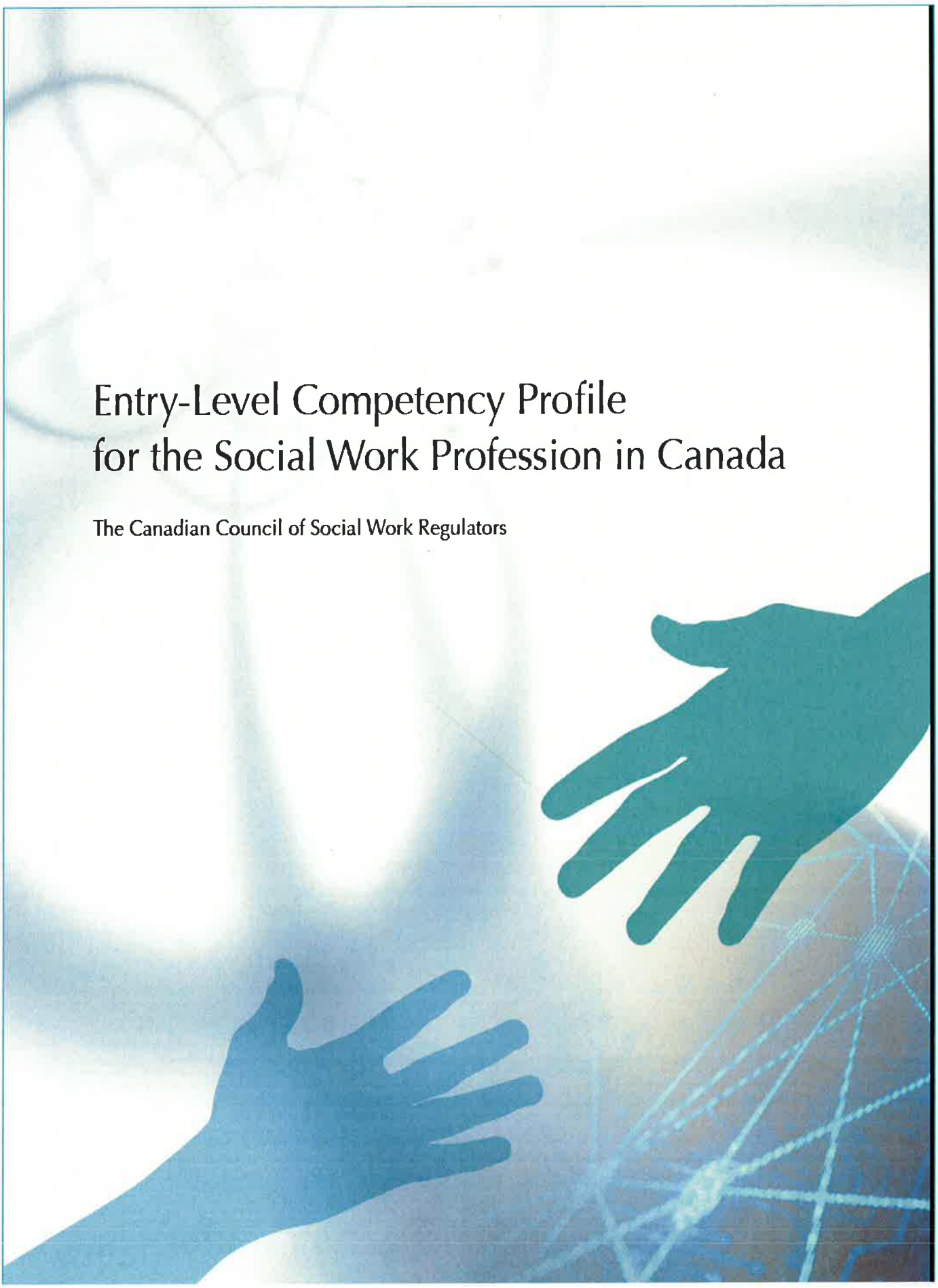
Entry-Level Competency Profile for the Social Work Profession in Canada

The Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators



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October 2012

[1] Alberta College of Social Workers; British Columbia College of Social Workers; Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers; New Brunswick Association of Social Workers; Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers; Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers; Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers; Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec; Prince Edward Island Social Work Registration Board; Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers

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Introduction

In many jurisdictions throughout the world, governments regulate professional practice to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. In Canada, social work is a profession regulated by each province and territory. As a consequence, the provincial requirements for registered social workers, the definition of key practice competencies, and the standards by which competence is judged differ from province to province.

In Canada, Europe and elsewhere agreements have been made among jurisdictions to harmonize professional standards in the interest of promoting labour mobility. In Canada, provincial differences in registration requirements are seen as barriers-to-entry for professionals seeking to practice in jurisdictions different from the one in which they received their initial registration. In 1994, the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories signed the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). By doing so the parties agreed to work toward implementing the goals outlined in Chapter 7 of the agreement that address labour mobility by removing barriers that prevented professionals from practising beyond the jurisdictions in which they were originally registered.

An important step in meeting the AIT is to align the registration requirements amongst the provinces and territories. While there is considerable overlap with respect to educational and/or degree requirements of the social work profession, some differences remain. For instance, while most provincial regulatory bodies require a minimum of a bachelor degree from a social work program accredited by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education, some regulatory bodies register applicants who have a combination of a diploma or certificate programs in social work and extensive practicum or supervised practice experience. In another province practitioners can apply for registration after three years of university studies. In addition to the differences in the minimum requirements to enter the profession, there also exist differences in scope of practice and the definition and understanding of the profession of social work.

Articulation of a common set of standards is a central feature through which social work regulators can reconcile differences in credentials and registration requirements while keeping first and foremost their public interest mandate. The identification and validation of standard competencies enables regulatory bodies to develop initiatives to enhance fair registration processes on the basis of credential and competency assessment. Competencies may also be used to identify the need for additional training, experience, or supervised practice to meet the requirements for full registration. Competencies, which entail knowledge, skills and abilities, may assist those with the authority to accredit educational programs, delineate reference

points for admission to the profession, and as a basis for other competency and/or supervised practice evaluation tools.

The Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators (CCSWR) engaged the assistance of *Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group* (*Directions*) to develop a common, Canada-wide profile of entry-level competencies for the social work profession. The development of the competency framework is intended to facilitate the mobility of registered professionals from one jurisdiction to another without diminishing the standards that they must meet, thereby assuring the Canadian public that a registered professional has the competencies required to engage in safe and effective practice. The competency framework is intended to specify the minimum requirements for entry to the profession and, thus, is not an exhaustive compendium of all the knowledge practitioners require.

During the first stages of this project, *Directions'* research team reviewed over 60 standards of practice, codes of ethics and other relevant documents produced by provincial, pan-Canadian, and international organizations and compiled a draft list of competencies. *Directions* then invited practicing social workers, educators and registrars/associations to review the draft competencies and provide feedback. Redundancies were eliminated and additional 60 competencies were developed to better represent various dimensions of social work practice. Upon completion of the revisions the resulting list of competencies was posted online in the form of a survey. All registered social workers across Canada were invited to identify the substantive and procedural knowledge social workers must possess when they begin practice.

The purpose of this report is to describe the methodology used in the development of the proposed entry-level Competency Profile for the profession of social work. The report (a) describes the project background and the conceptual framework used to develop the competency profile; (b) provides a brief summary of the document review and online panel stages of the project (each described in detail in separate reports); (c) presents the methodology employed for the online survey and the survey results; and (d) provides recommendations regarding the profile's further development, promotion, and assessment.

Project Context

Defining Social Work

The Canadian Association of Social Workers described social work as a profession "concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being" (CAWS, 2009, p. 2). Social workers provide social services to a broad range of clients specifically focusing on "their social development and the improvement or

restoration of their social functioning, in particular by psychosocial evaluations and social intervention, by means of an approach focused in the interactions with the environment" (Ordre professionnel des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec, 2005, p. 8). According to the International Federation of Social Workers (2010), the primary focus of the profession is on "social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being".

Social work is a "helping" profession that assists families, communities, or individuals to improve their social functioning capacity. Most of the definitions of the social work profession emphasize the importance of the relationship-centered, ecological focus. Social workers examine "the relationships between individuals, their natural support resources, the formal structures in their communities, and the societal norms and expectations that shape these relationships" (CASW, 2008, p. 1). Using a broad range of strategies and activities, social workers assist individuals, families, groups, and communities with developing their skills and their ability to use various resources in order to resolve individual, personal problems as well as address broader social issues such as social injustice, discrimination, poverty, unemployment, and domestic violence (CASW, 2009).

Social workers practice in a variety of fields, including child protection, mental health, counselling, private clinical practice, corrections, health care, palliative, geriatric and senior care, and in immigrant service centres, community groups, schools, Aboriginal communities, and the private sector. They are often responsible for managing all aspects of individual and family service and counselling cases, for direct service delivery, and are involved in community organizing, advocacy, social justice, social action, management, program development and implementation, policy development, research, and education. The diversity of social work practice requires that social workers possess a broad range of competencies.

Professional responsibilities of social workers are diverse, and are often influenced by organizational, geographical, and societal factors. For example, a social worker in a remote rural and/or northern community might be responsible for a wider range of tasks and activities compared to a professional working in a large urban centre. Whereas professionals working in rural areas might have "greater flexibility, independent decision-making and inclusion in community culture and activities," they also face a number of challenges: geographical isolation, lack of local resources, absence of direct supervision, fewer opportunities for professional development, and difficulty in maintaining client confidentiality, to name a few (MASW, 2004).

The profession also has a set of core values and principles that underlie social work practice.

These include respect for dignity of clients, cultural sensitivity, pursuit of social justice, integrity and ethical conduct. These values are described in provincial, national and international codes of ethics.

Importance of the Regulation of the Profession

Professional regulation arises from the authority of the state to enact laws that are necessary to protect citizens from persons who are unqualified, incompetent or unfit to practice. In Canada, provincial and territorial governments have introduced legislation to ensure that those who practice possess sufficient knowledge, skill and ability and can provide services in an ethical manner. In fact, in most Canadian Jurisdictions practitioners cannot refer to themselves as "social workers" without being a member of a regulatory body; and in some provinces, practitioners are not allowed to practice without obtaining a registration.

The Canadian Association of Social Workers (2009) identifies further benefits of regulation, suggesting that this approach:

- Establishes accepted standards of practice and ethics ;
- Increases accountability of the profession;
- Improves quality preparation of social work practitioners;
- Provides assurance to employers seeking to hire competent professionals;
- Describes the elements of practice that consumers should expect from a regulated social workers; and
- Guides educational and training programs and professional development.

Project Objectives

In response to the requirements of the Agreement on Internal Trade to eliminate barriers to inter-jurisdictional mobility of labour, the Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators engaged the assistance of *Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group* to develop a common profile of entry-level competencies for the social work profession across Canada.

The objective was to develop a clear and relevant competency framework that could be applied nationally across all fields of social work practice. In addition to facilitating full labour mobility, such a framework was expected to assist regulators in clarifying and harmonizing standards of social work practice across the country.

The resulting Social Work Entry-Level Competency Profile (hereinafter referred to as the *Profile*) describes the core professional competencies that beginning social workers across Canada require regardless of the context in which they are employed. The Profile identifies minimum requirements for entry to the profession. It is not an exhaustive compendium of social work knowledge and practice. Provincial competency profiles, which reflect the specific legislative and regulatory framework of the practice of the profession and provincial entry-level competencies, take precedence over this document.

The Profile can be used by various stakeholder groups:

- The Profile provides **regulators** with a clear definition of key practice competencies that can be used to evaluate practitioners' readiness for safe practice and a set of clear criteria that they can use to evaluate the competence of social work practitioners.
- The Profile assures the **public** that registered social work practitioners are able to provide safe, competent and ethical services.
- The Profile assists **employers** by providing baseline criteria for role or position statements and assessing the utilization of social work professionals.
- The Profile can be used by **social work professionals** interested in working in Canada to evaluate credential and practice competencies to determine if they meet the registration requirements.
- The Profile can be used by social work **educators** by providing information about the minimum competencies that beginning social workers are required to possess.

The Profile is not intended to describe all possible competencies required by social workers nor should it be viewed as a "final" list of competencies. The Profile should be revised on a regular basis to reflect changes in social work.

Assumptions

The development of the entry-level competencies for the social work profession was based a number of assumptions about the purpose of the project, social work practice and the process of competency development. These assumptions are presented below.

Assumptions about the purpose of the project:

- The development of the competency profile arises from the necessity that all professions in Canada comply with the requirements of the Agreement on Internal Trade that will facilitate mobility of professionals from one jurisdiction to another without diminishing the standards for registration.

- The public needs assurance that a registered social work practitioner is qualified to practice.
- The public's confidence that practitioners possess the knowledge they need to practice safely may be affected by the perception that inconsistent standards exist within the profession.
- A competency profile for the purpose of regulation is intended to specify the minimum requirements for public protection and, thus, is not an exhaustive compendium of all the knowledge which entry-level practitioners will be required to demonstrate.
- These entry-level competencies will change over time in response to changes in social work practice.
- While in some provinces some social work practitioners are not registered with the provincial social work regulatory bodies, it was the decision of the CCSWR that such individuals not be included in the project because identifying and recruiting such practitioners would be difficult and costly and their practice would be adequately addressed by those registered with regulatory bodies.

Assumptions about the scope of social work profession:

- Social work practice is diverse. The challenges that social workers face typically differ from sector to sector and from organization to organization. Competencies that social workers will require for successful practice are based on the context and situation of the work of these practitioners. For example, social workers employed in rural and urban areas might be required to perform tasks of different complexity with or without supervision. Some competencies will not be applicable to all contexts and situations. This project identifies core professional competencies that beginning social workers require regardless of the context in which they are employed.
- Social workers work with a variety of clients including individual, families, groups, organizations, and communities. In this document, the term client is used to refer to all these groups.

Assumptions about the competency profile:

- Professionals necessarily rely on a subset of knowledge, skill and ability. We view competencies as a pyramid with **personal competencies** (empathy, integrity, willingness to learn, respect for persons, etc.,) as the base upon which one builds **general competencies** (literacy, numeracy, facility with computers, critical thinking and problem solving). **Entry-level, profession -specific competencies** (the ones that are the focus of our work) build upon the personal and general competencies.

- These competencies provide the foundation for the identification and development of **advanced, profession -specific competencies** that one acquires as one engages in the profession and advanced study.
- The primary focus of the profile developed here is on the measureable entry-level, profession-specific competencies that a person should be able to demonstrate in order to receive registration.

Working Definitions

Entry-level social worker is defined as a person who is just entering the profession.

Entry-level profession-specific competencies are defined as the competencies that are essential for safe and ethical practice. These competencies determine the minimum knowledge, skill and abilities that a social worker must possess on the first day of professional practice regardless of their prior educational or professional preparation.

Clients are defined broadly in this competency profile. Social workers work with a variety of clients including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. In this document, the term client is used to refer to all these groups. We agree with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW, 2008, p. 39) which defines a client as "any person or body that is the recipient of, or has contracted to receive, social work or social service work services from the member, including an individual, couple, group, family, organization, government agency or community that receives (or contracts to receive) direct or indirect social work or social service work services".

Development of the Competency Profile: Approach and Results

Directions undertook several research activities to develop this entry-level competency profile for social work profession in Canada:

(1) a document review;
(2) online panels; and
(3) an online survey.

The section that follows describes the overall conceptual framework used to develop the competency profile as well as methodology and the results of each stage of the project. Please note that, in this report, we only include a brief summary for the first two stages of the project as these were described in separate, more detailed reports.

Competency Profile: Conceptual Framework

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA, 2008, p. 3) describes a competency as "any measurable or observable knowledge, skill, ability or behavioural characteristic that contributes to successful job performance." The CRA Competency Catalogue further differentiates between ***behavioural*** competencies that include key interpersonal and personal attributes required to perform specific jobs; and ***technical*** competencies that refer to necessary technical knowledge, skills and abilities.

Similarly, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (2007) defines competencies as measurable specific knowledge and skills required to effectively perform a particular job function or role. It differentiates between ***technical*** competencies that are learned through an educational environment or on the job and ***behavioural*** competencies that include attitudes, abilities and values that complement technical competencies and are learned through life experiences.

Occupational analysis studies tend to describe occupations in terms of ***blocks*** (the largest division within the analysis that reflects a major function or responsibility in the profession); ***tasks*** (specific measurable unit of work which, when completed, results in a product, service or decision); ***occupation context*** (parameters of the task); ***performance context*** (conditions required to perform the task correctly); ***subtask*** (all the duties that constitute a task); ***supporting technical knowledge, skills and abilities*** (skills, knowledge and abilities that an individual need to perform the task successfully); and ***essential skills*** (generic skills required for all types of work in various fields) (Construction Sector Council, 2008; Lamoureux & Leeper, 1996; Nolan, 1990; Norton, 1997) .

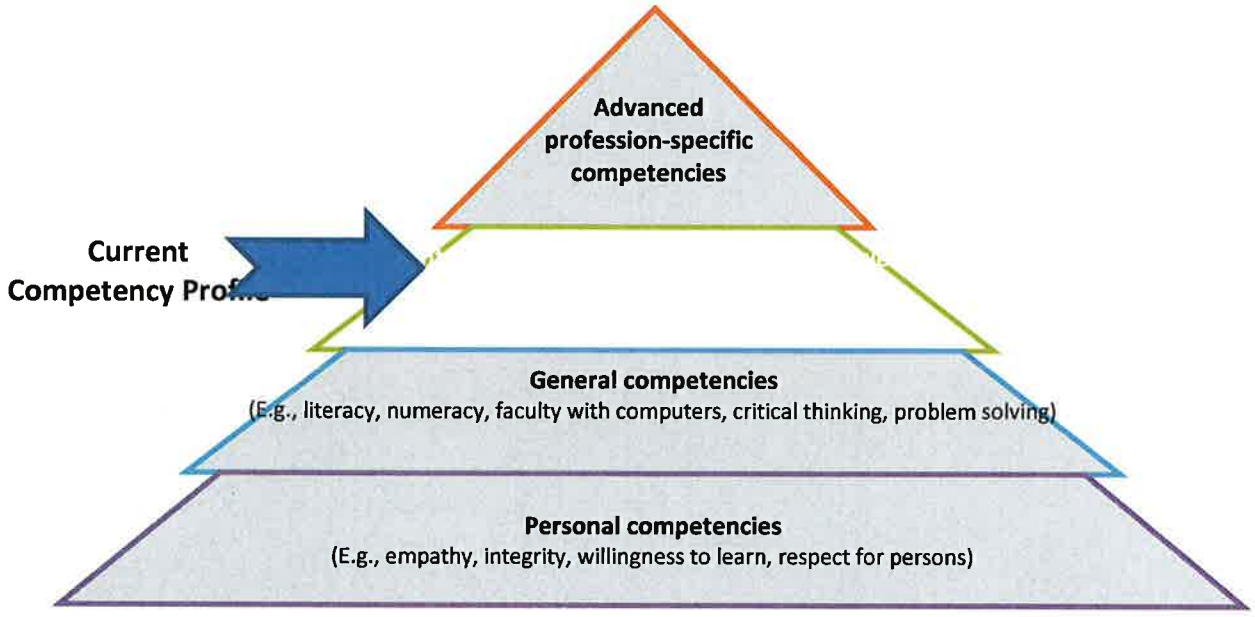
Before individuals become proficient in their area of practice, they need to develop declarative and procedural knowledge of the field as well as demonstrate appropriate attitudes. It is important to note, however, that competencies are more than individual skills, knowledge or attitudes. They are intended to represent relevant *combinations* of knowledge, skills and attitudes in the form of broad statements that, when considered together, describe competent professional behaviour. The knowledge, skills and attitudes identified in competency frameworks or profiles are not exhaustive and may be further developed by the professionals at a later date. Nonetheless, competencies constitute performance standards for practitioners.

To facilitate the development of the Social Worker Competency Profile, we adapted the definitions described above and reflected them in the following "pyramid of competency" (see Figure 1):

- ***Personal competencies:*** personal values and attitudes such as empathy, integrity, and respect for persons required for all types of work across fields of practice.
- ***General competencies:*** generic skills required for all types of work across fields of practice.
- ***Entry-level profession-specific competencies:*** minimal essential profession-specific competences that professionals must possess upon entering on the first day of professional practice regardless of their prior educational or professional preparation; and
- ***Advanced profession-specific competencies:*** competencies that professionals acquire as they engage in the profession and advanced study.

Some documents describe professional competencies as either technical or behavioural. We have not used those terms because their use in other documents is neither conceptually clear nor consistent. In our view, all competencies included in a competency profile should manifest "professionally" or "occupationally" specific behaviours.

Figure 1: Levels of competencies in social work



As has been previously stated, in this Profile we specifically focus on entry-level, profession-specific competencies. Specifically, we describe the minimum requirements for entry to the profession and, thus, not an exhaustive compendium of all the knowledge practitioners require.

These core competencies provide the foundation upon which professionals build as they gain more experience and develop more advanced professional competencies that are required for higher level positions.

Document Review

Methodology

During the first stage of the project, *Directions* undertook a document review of existing competency frameworks in Canada that reflect the requirements of entry-level practice. *Directions* examined documents identified by the Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators (CCSWR) and supplemented these through a review of relevant online and printed Canadian documents, reports, websites, and other publications produced in English and French since 1995. A limited number of US-based publications that were identified during the search and deemed particularly relevant to this project were also included in the analysis.

To identify relevant documents and reports, we reviewed the websites of the ten provincial social work regulatory authorities in Canada: British Columbia College of Social Workers; Alberta College of Social Workers; Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers; Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers; New Brunswick Association of Social Workers; Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers; Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers; Ordre professionnel des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec; Prince Edward Island Social Work Registration Board; and Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers. For each province, documents that described or implied social work competencies, regulations and standards of practice, codes of ethics and ethical principles, and provincial statutes governing registration were reviewed. Table 1 below present the documents reviewed by jurisdiction of origin.

Table 1: Documents included in the review

Jurisdiction of Origin	Document Titles and Source Organization
Alberta	• Social Workers Competencies and Program Approval Standards, Alberta College of Social Workers. Standards of Practice, Alberta College of Social Workers, 2007. • Code of Ethics, Alberta College of Social Workers, 2005 • The Future for Social Work and Mental Health in Rural and Northern Canada by Ralph Bodor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary.
British Columbia	• Guidelines: Values and Competencies for Social Service Worker Programs in British Columbia, 2003. • Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, British Columbia College of Social Workers, 2009. • Child Custody and Access Assessments Standards of Practice, BC College of Social

Jurisdiction of Origin	Document Titles and Source Organization
	Workers, 2010. • Adoption. Standards of Practice, British Columbia College of Social Workers, 2010. • Social Work Code of Ethics of British Columbia, BC Association of Social Workers
Manitoba	• Standards of Practice, Manitoba Association of Social Workers, Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers, 2004. • The Social Work Profession Act and the College of Social Workers, Key Issues and Decisions Overview.
Saskatchewan	• Child Protection Standards, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, 2001. • Standards in Custody/Access for Registered Social Workers in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, 2001. • Standards in Health Care for Registered Social Workers, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers. • Standards for Registered Social Workers in Schools, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, 1999. • Standards of Ethical Practice for Professional Social Workers in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, 2001. • Standards for Private Practice of Social Work in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers. • The Social Workers Act. • Code of Ethics, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers.
Ontario	• Position Paper on Scopes of Practice, Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, 2008. • Custody Access Assessments, Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, 2009. • Amendments to Standards of Practice effective October 1, 2010, Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, 2010. • Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, 2008. • Consent and Confidentiality with Children and Youth, Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, 2009. • Medication Practices, Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, 2009. • Blake, Practice Notes: Clients and Client Systems, Perspectives, 2008.
Quebec	• Core Competencies of Social Workers, Ordre professionnel des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec, 2006.
Nova Scotia	• Minority Report, Dalhousie University-Faculty of Maritime School of Social Work, 2003. • Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics as Amended for Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers, NSASW, 2008. • Standards of Practice, Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers, 2008.
Prince Edward Island	• Continuing Education Policy, Prince Edward Island Social Work Registration Board, 2009. • Standards for the Private Practice of Social Work, Prince Edward Island Social Work Registration Board, 2009. • Social Work Act, Prince Edward Island Social Work Registration Board. • Code of Ethics, Prince Edward Island Social Work Registration Board, 2010.
Newfoundland and Labrador	• Continuing Professional Education Policy, Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Social Workers, 2010. • Standards for Clinical Supervision for Social Workers, Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Social Workers, 2003.

Jurisdiction of Origin	Document Titles and Source Organization
	• Standards for Child Custody and Access Assessments, Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Social Workers, 2007. • Standards for Social Work Recording, Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Social Workers, 2005. • Private Practice Policy, Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Social Workers.
New Brunswick	• Social Work Practice in Canada's Officially Bilingual Province: Challenges and Opportunities, by Linda Turner, Canadian Social Work Review, 2005. • Codes of Ethics, New Brunswick Association of Social Workers, 2007. • NBASW Scope of Practice, New Brunswick Association of Social Workers. • Guidelines Regarding Age of Consent, Social Work with Children, New Brunswick Association of Social Workers, 2003. • Guidelines Regarding Conflict of Interest, New Brunswick Association of Social Workers, 2005. • Guidelines Regarding Release of Information and Consent Form, New Brunswick Association of Social Workers, 2001. • Standards for the Use of Technology in Social Work Practice, New Brunswick Association of Social Workers, 2010.
Northern Canada (Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon)	• Results of Yukon ASWNC Survey, July 2008, Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada.
National	• Code of Ethics, Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005. • The Development of Social Work Competencies, Draft report, 2000, prepared by NCA Associates. • Social Work Scope of Practice, Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2008. • Guidelines for the Development of Professional Practice Legislation, Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2009. • Cultural Competency and Social Work Practice in Canada, David Este, Canadian Social Work Review, 2007. • Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2007 • Canadian Social Work Competencies for Hospice Palliative Care: A Framework to Guide Education and Practice at the Generalist and Specialist Levels, by Bosma, H, Johnston, M, Cadell S, Wainwright, W,Abernathy N, Feron, A, Kelley ML, Nelson, F., 2008
International	• Social Work Practitioner, North Carolina Social Work Certification Board, 2008. • A Broader Vision for the Social Work Profession, Elizabeth Clark, National Association of Social Workers. • Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession, by Vishanthie Sewpaul & David Jones, general assemblies of IASSW & IFSW. • A Framework for the Use of Competencies in Rural Social Work Field Practice Placements, by O'Sullivan, Ross, & Young, Australian Social Work, 2010. • The Investigation of Competencies Within Professional Domains, Klink & Boon, Human Resource Development International, 2009. • Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work Education and Training, International Federation of Social Workers, 2003. • Definition of Social Work, International Federation of Social Workers. • Core Competencies for Social Workers in Addressing the Needs of Children of Alcohol and Drug Dependent Parents: A Project of NACoA's Social Work Initiative, National Association for Children of Alcoholics. • Professional Development and Practice Competencies in Clinical Social Work: A

Jurisdiction of Origin	Document Titles and Source Organization
	Position Statement of the American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work, published March, 2002. • Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, Social Work Practice, Education, and Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, Council on Social Work Education. • Developing Competence for Nurses and Social Workers: Evidence-based approaches to education, by Damron-Rodriguez, J.. ANJ, 108(9) Supplement, p. 40-46, 2008. • DACUM Research Chart for Social Services Associate, Southern WV Community and Technical College, 2006. • Standards of Practice: Social Work Competencies in Rheumatology, American College of Rheumatology. • NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice, National Association of Social Workers. • NASW Code of Ethics, National Association of Social Workers. • Advanced Gero Social Work Practice, Council of Social Work Education 2008 • Competency Areas, National Network for Social Work Managers. • Analysis of the Practice of Social Work (Master List of Tasks), Association of Social Work Boards, 2004.

CCSWR highlighted two documents for specific attention: *Master List of Tasks* framework developed by the Association of Social Work Boards (hereafter referred to the ASWB framework) and 2006 *Core Competencies of Social Workers* developed by the *Comité de la formation* (Committee on Training) *de l'Ordre professional des travailleurs sociaux du Québec (OPTSQ).*[2]

Results

Based upon its review of the documents, the *Directions* team developed a preliminary structure for the Social Worker Competency Profile; and identified competencies that should be included in the Profile. *Directions* identified nine primary competency blocks that were most commonly included in the competency frameworks developed for social work and related professions: assessment, planning, direct service delivery, indirect service delivery, evaluation, supervision, management and administration, communication, and ethics and values. In addition to the nine primary competencies, *Directions* also identified three additional competency blocks that were included in the OPTSQ's *Core Competencies of Social Workers* and a number of other frameworks we reviewed. These were: community building, professional development and contribution to the field. While these were presented as stand-alone blocks in the OPTSQ's *Core Competencies of Social Workers* framework, it was our assessment that some of the

[2] The 2006 *Core Competencies of Social Workers are currently being reviewed by the OPTSQ.*

competencies included in these blocks are related to communication, supervision, management, and other primary blocks.

Upon the review of the documents and standards and following consultation with the Council, the decision was made to organize competencies into ten primary competency blocks:

- **Assessment of Client Needs**: Competencies required to determine the needs of the clients and assess their situations and eligibility for services.
- **Intervention planning**: Competencies required to identify clients' goals and plan appropriate treatment and services.
- **Direct service delivery**: Competencies required to provide services to address clients' needs.
- **Indirect service delivery**: Competencies required to advocate for the improvement of policies and services to better meet the needs of the clients, as well as maintain documentation that supports the direct delivery of the services.
- **Evaluation**: Competencies required to design and implement evaluations to assess the effectiveness of services and provide recommendations for their improvement.
- **Supervision**: Competencies required to effectively manage and supervise staff and volunteers and to work effectively as a team member.
- **Management and administration**: Competencies required to perform administrative and management tasks related to strategic planning, personnel practices, and project management.
- **Ethics and values**: Competencies required for ethical and responsible service delivery.
- **Community building**: Competencies required for effective communication and collaboration with community stakeholders and professionals in social work and other professional areas to address issues related to social work interventions and protect the best interests of the clients.
- **Professional development and contribution to the field:** Competencies required to monitor and manage one's own professional development, attitudes and behaviour to promote and advance the social work practice locally, nationally, and/or internationally.

In addition to the abovementioned competency blocks, *Directions* also identified a number of topics that recurred in various provincial, national and international documents:

- Diversity and cultural responsiveness/Indigenous ways of knowing/Cultural sensitivity/Cross-cultural communication;
- Human rights and economic justice; and
- Research-based practice.

While some frameworks list these as separate principles and blocks of competencies, *Directions* recommended that, whenever possible, they be included in the competency blocks described above.

201 competencies were compiled and organized into the ten competency blocks presented above. The ASWB's Master List of Tasks was used as the basis for this Social Worker Competency Profile, as the ASWB's framework is by far the most exhaustive and inclusive document. The competencies included in the ASWB's list are also the most easily measurable and demonstrable. For each block, the ASWB's competencies were aligned with the competencies from OPTSQ's *Core Competencies of Social Workers.* Additional competency elements not represented in the ASWB's list were identified and proposed for inclusion.

The results of the document review were considered by the CCSWR Steering Committee which provided feedback with regard to the organization of the Profile as well as the wording of individual items.

Online Panels

Methodology

To obtain feedback on the draft list of social work competencies, *Directions* organized two panels of experts from the field of social work. This approach was based on the assumption that experts working in a given field are best positioned to describe tasks and competencies required to perform their jobs effectively. Nominations for the expert panels were compiled by the CCSWR.

The first panel consisted of registered social work practitioners. An attempt was made to identify between two and four expert practitioners in each province with a range of experiences, including area of expertise (e.g., addiction services, child welfare or child protective services, corrections services, employee assistance services, medical, hospital, or health services, mental health services, elder services, etc.), cultural contexts (e.g., Aboriginal or immigrant groups, etc.), linguistic contexts (French, English, or other language), and years of experience. The list included 34 nominations.

The second panel included all deans and directors of social work programs at Canadian universities. The list included 41 nominations.

Directions contacted all potential participants via email letter on behalf of the CCSWR to introduce the project and solicit participation. Respondents who agreed to participate were then sent the following documents that described the project and procedures in more detail:

- Project backgrounder;
- Consent form; and
- Expert panel validation instrument and instructions.

Panel participants were asked to review the proposed competencies by responding yes or no to two questions: (1) Is this competency applicable to social work practice? And (2) Is this an entry-level competency? Space was provided next to each competency for commentary.

Each competency block was followed by two general questions: (1) Are there any competencies related to the competency block that have not been included in the list? And (2) Do you have any additional comments of a general nature? A final question asked whether there were other competencies or competency blocks that should have been included in this list but had been omitted.

Data were analysed by calculating the proportion of 'yes' and 'no' responses to each competency. Competencies earning the approval of more than 75% of the participants were regarded as entry-level social work competencies. Written comments were analysed by identifying major themes.

Participants

Seventeen social work practitioners and three deans or directors from schools of social work responded to the invitation to provide feedback about the competencies. Six additional deans or directors sent in emails and/or letters but did not complete the panel instrument. Practitioner responders were from all provinces except Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Deans and directors represented schools of social work in BC, Ontario, Manitoba, Quebec, Alberta, and New Brunswick.

All participants were very experienced, having practiced in the field of social work at least 11-15 years. The majority of participants (57.9%) held a Master's in Social Work degree, 26.3% held a Bachelor's, and 15.8% held a Doctorate. Participants indicated having experience in a range of social work areas. The most frequently cited were mental health services (17 respondents), family and children's services (14 respondents), and child welfare and protective services (14 respondents). The least frequent were school social services (3 respondents), managed care (2 respondents), and business and industry (1 respondent). Fifteen respondents worked in English-language contexts, 4 respondents worked in French-language contexts, and two

participants worked in both English and French contexts. Eleven respondents reported working with First Nations people and 9 respondents reported working with immigrant groups.

Results

Competencies related to assessment, intervention planning, direct service delivery, indirect service delivery, ethics and values, and community building were regarded as applicable to entry-level social work practice. The majority of items in the evaluation, supervision and management blocks and some items in the professional development block were not considered to be entry-level. Based on the suggestions of the panels and upon the review by CCSWR, 42 items were removed from the Competency Profile. In addition, the majority of items from the supervision and management blocks have been removed from the Profile because they were not considered by the participants as entry level competencies. The remaining items related to administrative activities were grouped into Administrative Support Block.

Panel respondents also identified several areas that could be expanded in the Profile. These included topics of

- power, oppression, discrimination and conflict;
- self-care and reflection;
- client engagement
- social justice and advocacy;
- community practice;
- social policy change;
- understanding of various contexts of practice; and
- cultural diversity.

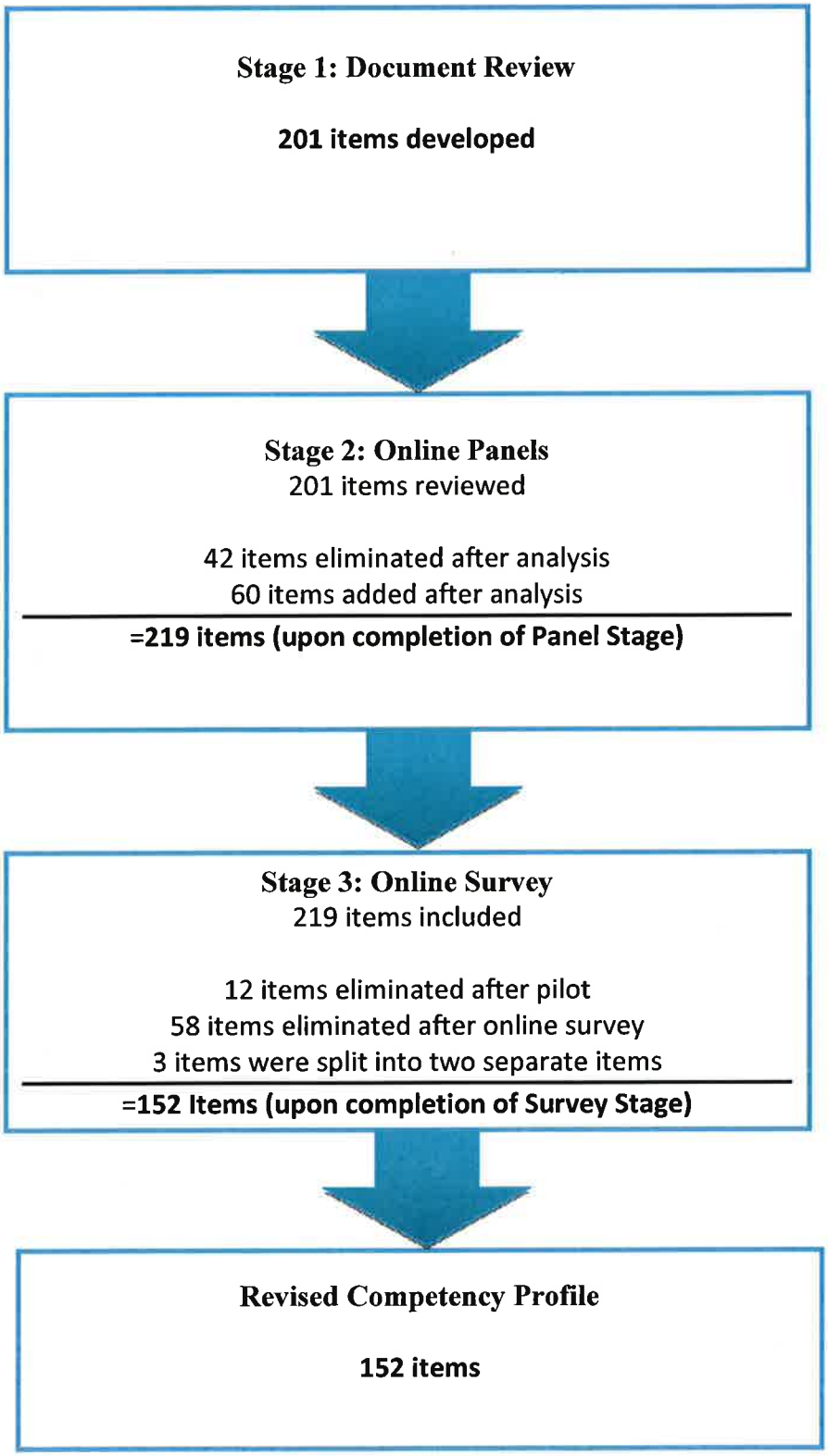
To address these concerns an additional 60 items were developed to better represent these dimensions of social work practice.

The final list of items consisted of 219 items grouped into nine competency blocks:

- Assessment of Client Needs;
- Intervention Planning;
- Direct Service Delivery;
- Indirect Service Delivery;
- Evaluation;
- Administrative Support;
- Ethics and Values ;
- Community Building; and
- Professional Development and Contribution to the Field.

Figure 2 below illustrates the number of items included in the Competency Profile at each stage. It also records the adjustments to the number of items made during each stage of the project. In the sections that follow we will refer to this figure as we discuss the changes made to the Profile.

Figure 2: Number of items included in the Competency Profile by Stage



Online Survey

Methodology

Survey Development and Administration

Instrument development. A total of 219 items were generated by the consultation team based on the analysis of the documents and online panel recommendations. The draft list of the items was presented to the full Council in February of 2011, which provided additional feedback.

An online survey was developed to confirm these items with a wider community of social work professionals. The survey consisted of demographic questions, the competency questions, and an open-ended question inviting respondents to comment on the survey. Participants were invited to review the proposed competencies and rate each competency on three scales: *performance expectation*, *importance*, and *frequency*.

- The *performance expectation* scale asked participants to indicate whether the competency was entry-level.
- The *importance scale* asked participants to indicate how important the competency was for an entry-level professional.
- The *frequency* scale asked respondents to indicate how often that competency is used by an entry-level social work professional.

Pilot Testing. Pilot testing was conducted to obtain feedback about the survey instrument. Draft surveys (English and French versions) were posted online, and links were sent to the CCSWR for distribution among selected pilot test participants. Overall, 25 English and 8 French social workers reviewed English and French versions of the survey.

Upon completion of the pilot testing, the results were analyzed and a conference call between *Directions* and the CCSWR took place to review the findings. Minor revisions to the survey were made at this point. Twelve items were deleted from the list because they were regarded as redundant and several items were reworded to improve clarity. 207 items were included in the final draft of the survey.

Participant recruitment. Recruitment of the participants for the final survey was the responsibility of the CCSWR and the registrars in each province. CCSWR sought to provide all

registered practitioners with the opportunity to learn about the project and, if they wished, to have the opportunity to contribute to its development.

Directions developed an invitation letter that introduced the project and solicited practitioners' participation. Registrars in each province were provided with a copy of the letter and a link to the survey and asked to send them to all social workers registered in their province for whom they had email addresses. One province distributed the invitation letters via Canada Post. Information about the survey was also included in the monthly newsletters distributed by the provincial Colleges of Social Work and/or Associations of Social Work, and, where possible, was posted on the Colleges/Associations' websites. All potential participants were informed that upon completion of the survey they would be given an option to participate in a draw to win a $50 gift card.

Participants were given two weeks to complete the surveys. At the end of the two weeks a reminder was sent to each registered practitioner, thanking those who have already completed the survey and encouraging the non-respondents to participate.

Due to labour conflict at Canada Post, the distribution of the newsletters and mailed communication was affected in some provinces. To address this issue, the deadline for the survey was extended for another four weeks, and another reminder was issued in all the provinces.

Survey administration. FluidSurveys, a Canadian web-based survey platform for administering online surveys was used to collect survey data. The provider of this survey platform uses Canada-based secure servers (thus meeting privacy and confidentiality requirements) and provides online security certification equivalent to that used for online banking. FluidSurveys enables the creation of online surveys accessible to any person with internet access, either anonymously or through a user account. The survey platform lends itself well to administering both open- and closed-ended survey items.

Because the survey was lengthy, after consultation with the Council a decision was made to divide the one survey into two. The purpose was to shorten the number of survey items on each form to reduce respondent burden. 45 "common" items (5 items from each of the nine competency categories chosen randomly) were included in both of the survey forms. The remaining items were divided between the two forms. Appendices D and E present Forms A and B of the Survey (in English and French).

Table 2: Survey Items by Competency Block and Form

Competency Block	Number of Items		
	Total	Form A	Form B
Assessment of Client Needs	41 (36 + 5)	23 (18 + 5)	23 (18 + 5)
Intervention Planning	15 (10 +5)	10 (5 + 5)	10 (5 + 5)
Direct Service Delivery	74 (69 + 5)	39 (34 + 5)	40 (35 + 5)
Indirect Service Delivery	24 (19 + 5)	15 (10 + 5)	14 (9 + 5)
Evaluation	5 (0 + 5)	5 (0 + 5)	5 (0 + 5)
Administrative Support	14 (9 + 5)	9 (4 + 5)	10 (5 + 5)
Ethics and Values	10 (5 + 5)	8 (3 + 5)	7 (2 + 5)
Community Building	13 (8 + 5)	9 (4 + 5)	9 (4 + 5)
Professional Development and Contribution to the Field	11 (6 + 5)	8 (3 + 5)	8 (3 + 5)
Total	**207**	**126 (81+45)**	**126 (81+45)**

When each respondent completed the survey, s/he was given an option to participate in a draw to win a $50 gift card. A total of 50 gift cards were made available. Participants interested in participating in the draw were required to click on the link at the end of the survey (after hitting the "Submit" button) and were asked to provide their contact information. Their personal information was stored in a separate file and could not be linked to the responses on the survey.

Data Analysis Strategies

Combination of English and French Versions of the Survey. After the completion of the survey data collection phase, the data of the four versions (English Form A, English Form B, French Form A, and French Form B) were exported from FluidSurvey to Excel for data cleaning. The data from the four forms were combined.

Comparability of Survey Forms. We started our analysis with examination of the common items of the survey forms A and B, and English and French versions of the survey to determine the likelihood of similarity of response between the groups responding to these forms. As we are conducting multiple significant tests, Bonferroni adjustments on the alpha levels were made to control for familywise error (Abdi, 2007).

Missing Data. The issue of missing data is common in many areas of research in general and in surveys in particular. For example, it is common for respondents to only respond to 50% of the items on a survey of employee engagement. There are many ways to address missing data (e.g., listwise deletion, mean replacement, etc.). Multiple imputation is one of the best procedures for making statistical estimates of the imputed values because it preserves the relationships among the values in the data set (Allison, 2003; Collins, Schafer, & Kam, 2001; Schafer & Graham, 2002). Multiple imputation is a valid statistical procedure to use when addressing missing data points and has several advantages over other procedures such as listwise deletion or single imputation. Multiple imputation is a statistically efficient procedure which uses the entire dataset in the analysis. To avoid biased analysis and incorrect/inaccurate inferences, in this study we addressed missing data using multiple imputation procedures.

Factor Analysis. After the data imputation procedure was completed, the data were subjected to factor analysis. We used factor analysis because it would permit the CCSWR to make empirically stronger decisions about the structure and content of the competency profile. Factor analysis was used to group competencies into categories based upon the statistical properties of the items. In other words, the technique shows how variables form coherent subsets that are relatively independent of one another (Stevens, 1996). Factor analysis reveals the underlying structure of the data. It is a statistical technique that has been used to evaluate competencies in other professions (Locker, Violato, & Fidler, 2006; Violato, Locker, & Fidler, 2003; Violato, Locker, & Fidler, 2006; Violato, Locker, & Fidler, 2008; Violato, Worsfold, & Polgar, 2009).

We also applied Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) to investigate the coherency of the items belonging to each of the nine competency blocks. Cronbach's alpha is a widely used statistics to show the degree to which a set of items measures "the same thing."

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The survey included one open-ended question that invited respondents to provide their feedback about the survey and/or the project. All responses were extracted from Fluidsurveys and analyzed using NVivo 8 software. Two coders read and coded the responses using an open coding approach (Flick, 2009). In this approach the material is read to identify the units of meaning (single words, sentences, paragraphs) in order to assign codes to them. These codes are first formulated as closely to the actual response as possible. Following the initial coding stage, redundant codes were eliminated and overlapping codes were combined into a single code. The resulting codes were then reviewed and grouped into a network of more general concepts and categories.

Results

Analysis of Quantitative Data

Demographic Information. While the term "survey" is employed in this report to refer to the online instrument, the term is somewhat misleading in this context. People often think about issues of sample size and generalizability from a sample to the entire population when conducting a survey. However, the attempt of this project was to engage *all* registered social workers (rather than recruiting a sample of social workers) in the quantitative data collection phase even though it was not necessary to do so.

The purposes of this stage of the work were to examine the consistency of the items developed and to identify additional competencies that might be considered for inclusion. In order to achieve the purposes for which the instrument was used, a large number of respondents was not required. The statistical techniques employed to determine the coherency of the competencies do not require large number of respondents. Data saturation – the point at which one has sufficient data to conduct the necessary analyses, such as factor analysis – is typically reached when approximately 300 individuals have responded (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).[3]

In considering the responses to the survey, *Directions* was concerned to ensure that the characteristics of those who responded approximated the entire population of social workers. The review of the demographic data shows that the key characteristics of practitioners who completed the survey are very similar to the characteristics of the overall population of Canadian social workers. A total of 4,902 social works across the country participated in the survey. Close to 30 percent of the respondents were from Ontario (28.89%), and about 20% were from Alberta (20.3%). With respect to gender, 84.4% of the respondents were females, 15.3% were males, and the remaining 0.1% were transgendered. The number of years of experience working in the social work profession was diverse, ranging from 0.5% reporting not having practiced in social work to 31.5% practicing in the profession for more than 20 years. In terms of their role, the majority of the respondents (86%) reported providing service delivery in their practice. More than 40 percent of the respondents reported possessing a Bachelor's degree (42.5%). Similarly, more than 40% reported holding a master's degree (45.4%). With respect to the primary area of practice, our respondents represented a wide variety, ranging from business and industry (0.14%) to mental health services (24.58%). Tables **Table 3:**

[3] It is important to keep in mind that, while the perspectives of practitioners are useful in identifying additional potentially relevant topics, the final decision about what competencies should be considered entry-level remains with the Registrars. Thus, even if the competency is not considered as entry-level or important by practitioners but is crucial for safe social work practice, such a competency would still be included in the Profile by the Registrars.

Distribution of respondents by gender Table **3** -Table **7**Table **8** summarize the demographics results.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	% of respondents
Female	84.50%
Male	15.30%
Transgender	0.10%

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by year of experience

Years of Experience	% of respondents
Have not practiced social work	0.50%
Less than 2 years	5.30%
2 to 5	16.70%
6 to 10	17.20%
11 to 15	15%
16 to 20	13.50%
More than 20 years	31.50%

Table 5: Distribution of participants by roles in their organizations

Role in organization (check all that apply)	% of respondents
Policy	12.40%
Education	22.30%
Management	19.30%
Practice/Service Delivery	86%

Table 6: Distribution of participants by educational degree

Education	% of respondents
Certificate	0.30%
Diploma	3.60%
Bachelor's	42.50%
Master's	45.40%
Doctorate	1.50%
No social work degree	1.90%
Other	4.80%

Table 7: Distribution of participants by area of practice

Primary Area	% of respondents
Aboriginal services	1.08%
Addiction services	5.22%
Adult protective services	0.57%
Business and industry	0.14%
Child welfare or child protective services	12.38%
Correction services	2.00%
Developmental disability services	2.86%
Employee assistance services	1.88%
Family and children's services	10.75%
Family court services	0.78%
Higher/post-secondary education	1.22%
Long-term care	2.90%
Medical, hospital, or health services	14.42%
Mental health services	24.58%
Military Social Work	0.24%
Rehabilitation services	2.28%
School social services	3.24%
Services to immigrants and refugees	1.31%
Services to the elderly	4.96%
Other (specify)	7.18%

Table 8: Distribution of participants by province

Province	% of respondents
BC	11.73%
Alberta	20.30%
Manitoba	4.20%
Saskatchewan	3.71%
Ontario	28.89%
Nova Scotia	6.53%
Quebec	13.95%
New Brunswick	2.65%
PEI	1.77%
NL	5.96%
Yukon	0.22%
Nunavut	0.02%
Northwest Territories	0.06%

Comparability of Survey Forms (Item Analysis). Preliminary assumption checks such as homogeneity of variance were conducted. Items that failed to satisfy the homogeneity assumption were analyzed using the Welch adjustment of the ANOVA *F* test. The results showed that most of the items were statistically non-significant, suggesting no difference in the responses between the four forms. The items that were statistically significant were likely the result of a large sample size (in this project, we have a sample size of close to 5,000). We calculated the eta-squared effect size on the items that showed statistical significant difference and found that effect sizes ranged from 0.5% to 2.7%, suggesting that the percentage of variance accounted for by the different forms were very small (Cohen, 1988). The overall results of the item analysis suggest that the responses between the four forms are comparable.

Internal Consistency. Table 10 presents the results of the Cronbach's alpha indicating the degree of consistency among items making up each of the nine competencies. Cronbach's Alpha ranges from .00 (indicating no consistency among items to 1.0 (indicating perfect consistency). All the alphas were at least .70, indicating a high level of consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 9: Cronbach's alpha by competency block

Competency Block	Cronbach's alpha
Assessment of Client Needs	.93
Intervention Planning	.81
Direct Service Delivery	.95
Indirect Service Delivery	.86
Evaluation	.74
Administrative Support	.71
Ethics and Values	.83
Community Building	.73
Professional Development and Contribution to the Field	.75

Factor Analysis. Factor analysis provides a number of tools for determining the number of classes (factors) of items. One of the tools employed for this data set was Varimax rotation, the most commonly used rotation procedure in factor analysis. Varimax rotation helps to make classes (factors) more obvious by maximizing the high and low "factor loadings."
We examined the eigenvalues, scree plots, and ratios of first to second eigenvalues to determine the number of meaningful factors (Stevens, 1996; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The procedures employed enabled us to identify two classes (factors). One class (factor) accounts for 29.6% of the variance and the second class (factor) accounts for 8.7% of the variance. Together, the two-factor model accounts for 38.4% of the variance.

Item Reduction and Reorganization. We reduced the number of competencies by removing items that were redundant, not applicable to entry level social works, and/or poorly worded. More specifically, items were removed from the profile if they were identified as redundant by the respondents or the researcher team AND if the removal of the item did not affect the integrity of the framework. We also moved items that we believed had not been assigned to the competency block with which they were best aligned (based on respondents' recommendations and the researchers' analysis) as long as such transfer did not affect the internal coherency of the competency families. The revised Competency Profile is presented in the section that follows.

After the selected items were removed, the remaining items were factor analyzed. The revised factor analysis also showed a two-factor structure, similar to the first analysis (See Appendix H).

As can be seen from the Table in Appendix H, the two factor structure can be grouped into two coherent factors:

- Factor 1: Competencies common across various areas of social work practice
- Factor 2: Competencies that are less common across the social work practice.

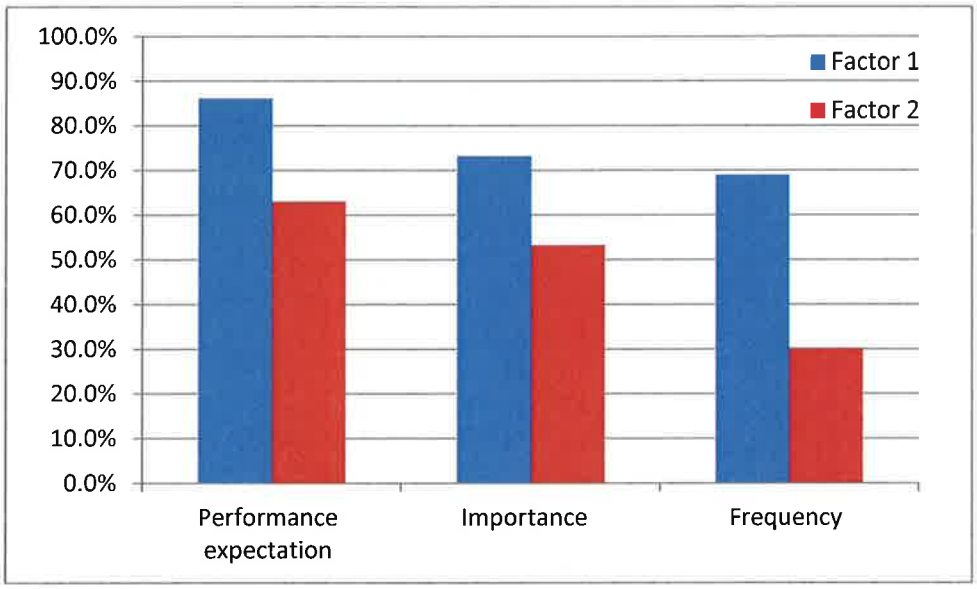
Further review identified a number of differences in how respondents rated Factor 1 and Factor 2 items on performance expectation, importance, and frequency scales. Most of the items in Factor 1 were rated as entry-level by at least 75% of respondents (86% average). The average percentage of respondents who believed these competencies were important or very important was 74% for Factor 1. For Factor 2, the average percentage of respondents who rated Factor 2 items as important or very important for entry level practitioners was lower (53%). Also, respondents were less likely to view these items as entry-level (63% average). Furthermore, according to the respondents, the tasks described by Factor 2 are performed less frequently by the entry-level practitioners than tasks included in Factor 1.

An inspection of the Factor 2 items also suggests that these items might be applicable to some of the areas of social work only (e.g., child protection), represent general competencies (e.g., meeting facilitation) and/or not viewed by the professionals as entry-level.

Directions recommends that the CCSWR review the competencies in Factor 2 to identify items

that can be deleted from the Profile. Moreover, if an item is considered by the CCSWR as entry-level but is not seen as such by the practitioners, Directions recommends that the CCSWR implements explicit communication and education strategies to enhance practitioners' understanding of the importance of these tasks for entry-level social workers.

Figure 3: Performance expectation, importance and frequency ratings by class (average)



Analysis of Qualitative Data

848 respondents provided open-ended comments (52 open-ended responses were provided in French and 796 in English).

The comments were grouped into three large categories:

- Comments about the overall value of the project for the social work profession;
- Comments about the scope of the social work profession;
- Comments about the survey instrument and/ or individual items.

The analysis of the written responses indicates that respondents tended to see the current project as beneficial for the profession of social work. Some respondents found the survey thought provoking as it encourage them to ***reflect on their practice***.

- *Thank-you for this survey. It allows me to think more about my practice and in particular my engagement with clients, colleagues and the general public. Also, I realize that I have not moved on some of the volunteer work I have identified.*

- *I liked the items on this survey/ they are a good reminder of why we do what we do. It is critical that social workers in Canada make a more concerted and unified effort to become competency-based. Too many other professions are not only encroaching on social work, but taking our work away from us. What they do is identify what we do, name it as competencies and expectations and then own it. we have been unfortunately and dangerously lax in this.*
- *I found this very interesting as I had not literally thought about all the skills that an entry level social work would need for some time. Thank you for asking for my input. I really appreciate being able to be part of this feedback.*
- *I found this survey an important reminder of where my strengths and weaknesses lie in my practice and thus where I would be wise to re-shift my energies.*
- *Thank you very much - completing this survey helped me to realized how much you do as a child protection case manager - despite the fact you are constantly told you are not doing "real" social work. It helps to validate the work I do each day - keep it up with the recent focus on child protection from OCSWSSW!*

Respondents also saw the development of the Competency Profile as a positive step towards ***higher recognition of the complexity and importance of the social work profession***.

- *In case anyone is wondering, I think social work in Canada is in a very big mess. We have lost and continue to lose credibility. I am starting to feel embarrassed to be a social worker. We keep watering down what is left of the profession and the rest of it we are giving away to other professions.*
- *Glad you are doing this survey. I hope it helps SW practice to be more recognized for the high level of skill it requires. Many questions seem tailored to assess First Nations understanding - which is good. Some of the questions seem elementary. Please use this for a good cause. Thank you!*
- *It truly is disappointing to see job roles that have specific characteristics of social work requiring other professional backgrounds (i.e. Nursing, OT, PT, etc.). I am glad to see that we are taking a tally of our competencies so that Social Work will be better respected, and jobs will be properly filled by the appropriately trained professionals.*

Respondents also reflected on how the proposed Competency Profile might be used to ***improve preparation of the social work professionals*** some of whom were averred to not have the required competencies upon entry to the profession.

- *Glad that you are doing this. Hopefully the schools will take a good look at this as we seem to interview quite a few new graduates who do not have many of these skills levels upon entry. I strongly feel that counselling and psychotherapy should only be done by those with master's degrees.*

- *I think our profession would greatly benefit from having established competencies that students of social work are evaluated upon prior to graduating.*
- *I believe that the profession of social work has significant challenges to meet entry level practice based on the diversity of social work practice. I hope social work starts moving (and perhaps they have) from the radical philosophy of extreme advocacy which does not work within the organizations that we work in. In fact it simply does not work and makes us ineffective and unhelpful to those we serve. We have to learn how to work within systems and move to more of a collaborative advocacy. Now there are times you will need to take a stand but I see students come in with this idealistic model of advocacy that does not serve them well at all. They sever important relationships and find it very difficult to work in a team environment. In fact I find it very interesting that this is being taught yet I do not see faculties of social work doing this radical advocacy themselves because you would lose your jobs -- so why would you teach this to social work students? The goal is to prepare them for front line practice as that is where most social workers go out of University. They will have to develop other skills as they grow in their practice. The ability to do key assessments, case manage, document, work collaboratively, know your practice guidelines and competencies and code of ethics etc are only a few and I do not profess to be an expert in this area. In closing I am glad you are doing this survey. I am proud to be a social worker and love this profession. I hope this survey is beneficial and is put to some good use.*
- *The survey was excellent as it addressed key areas for the practice of social work. I would have liked to see a clear theoretical base attached to practice skill questions. Also I would like to know whether universities are rated on these competencies because students are coming out of these programs without clear knowledge of these competencies. Thus, these programs should be bumped up from two to four year programs to effectively evaluate the student's understanding of the complexity of social work. Students would also benefit from increased practical experience.*

Not all the respondents viewed the project as beneficial. Some respondents expressed concerned that the Profile would be used ***to narrow the scope of the profession*** by focusing on measurable outcomes and competencies.

- *It strikes me that this leads to turning social workers into drones, able to perform task in a mechanistic fashion, devoid of judgement or knowledge, empathy, passion or relationships. It's clearly geared to dumbing down the social work profession in keeping with the best of neoliberalism. To the extent it is used in the context of AIT, the federal/provincial governments will be happy another profession has signed on. But will anyone ask the question, how many social workers will actually move from one province to another only because social work regulators have finally come to sign off an*

agreement? I am deeply disappointed that social work educators are not prominently included in the list of organizations who sponsored this survey. In a similar vein, I see no sign of consultation with social workers across the country, CASW or the IFSW.

- *I am concerned about this project being driven by Internal Trade. The needs of the project and work is NOT the same as Social Workers and instead of working with them to narrowly define social work, we should be advocating together to RESIST this. I wonder what the involvement has been with other social work organizations including those that are involved in educating social workers??? Please review their recommendations.*

On the other hand, respondents involved in hiring of entry-level social workers suggested that a Competency Profile would be a good human resources tool that ***clearly describes professional expectation***.

- *I can't know the outcome of this survey but as a supervisor and often trainer of new social workers, I know that clarity about the expectations of those new to our field is very necessary. Thanks for your work in this area.*

A number of respondents commented that the ***current level of preparation of beginner social workers is insufficient***. A number of respondents said that beginning professionals often do not have the skills and knowledge required to provide quality service. In contrast, others argued that it is important to teach entry-level professionals the key values of the social work profession, as they will learn other practical skills on the job.

- *Often entry level social workers (new BSW) in many venues, do not possess the skills and abilities to perform the important functions that are associated with the position - particularly because the job does require a sound clinical grounding in human behaviour, mental health, family systems, systems theory, policy, and policy development to name a few. As well, I have noted that many-many social workers (entry level and otherwise) in BC lack training in group facilitation skills -whether they be for facilitating client CBT groups, and/or facilitating meetings with team members or community partners.*
- *Here is such inconsistency within the practice of social work that suggests organizational accountability is lacking. When hiring, we have learned we cannot assume competency at MSW levels. The lack of professionalism is striking. But when a profession does not compel organizations to have policies consistent with the practice of SW, short cuts are taken. Performance outcomes are ignored. I am heartened to learn of this initiative*
- *Entry level rehab social work is most frequently completed by non-social workers who speak English as a second language and have limited education.*
- *I feel that our social work education includes too much theory and not enough practise, and employers often don't really know what to expect of a beginning social worker - there is very little mentoring in the field; thus more could be done during the education*

process.

- *It is very important for new workers to be prepared for the field after graduating from their BSW. It is important for them to have practical skills in assessment, interviewing, engagement, active listening, crisis management. Often what a student learns in their BSW is much different from the skills they require to survive in the world of child protection. If new workers were better prepared in their BSW, there may be less burn out rates in the field.*
- *Thank you for conducting this survey. I completed almost 15 years employment in social-work-related positions within the provincial and federal government prior to completing my BSW. I developed most of my competencies through my work experience rather than my educational experience. In my opinion, many of my fellow graduates were not as competent as was necessary for their roles when they were entry-level social workers. If not for my prior work experience, I do not believe I would have been competent either to practice in the entry-level social worker role I obtained upon completion of my BSW education.*
- *Social workers are often employed in Mental Health Settings. In general schools of social work in BC have slipped in their teaching of Clinical Knowledge skills and treatment modalities. This is unfortunate as there is a great deal of mental Health research which could be incorporated into the teachings at Schools of Social work. It has been quite difficult having Masters SW students doing their practicums in a hospital mental health setting with little to no knowledge of the DSM IV, of psychiatric assessment skills and of treatment modalities. It is of great importance that the schools adjust and adapt to current practices in mental health. Many more American schools of social work do this task very well. For example, it is hard to have students who focus only on engagement and social discrimination when parents of anxious children need and want skills to help them parent. I am hopeful that the focus will change with more College input.*
- *Social work and social workers are so diverse that it's impossible to teach everything that you need to know before a person graduates. Social workers can learn skills such as customer service, intake, gathering community resources, or other tasks that are required in their positions once they have started their work. However, the foundational values of social work are required of entry level social workers to ensure that they have a "compass" that can help to guide their work in those inevitably difficult situations that arise.*

The ***role that Schools of Social Work*** play in preparation of the social workers was discussed at length by the respondents. They suggested that the focus of post-secondary programs has shifted away from practical skills and knowledge towards more theoretical, policy and advocacy oriented topics, producing beginning professionals who are not adequately prepared for

practice.

- *Social work educators are destroying social work as a practice based profession by mass producing policy oriented social work graduates who then take clinical/practice oriented positions created for direct practice social workers-based on historical social casework model (which relied on clinical social work training) - social work educators are accountable to no one and are in fact largely in control of the social work profession - the executive director of OCCSWSSW stated that the schools of social work provided excellent training for beginning level practice - where is the empirical proof of this assumption? OCCSWSSW created a structure to implement the competency interprovincial process by striking a faculty group to set the framework - as usual in social work - the (faculty) tail is wagging the (practice) dog - unless empirical competency determination tests are used-based on US models - to determine competencies of graduates and force schools of social work to produce competent practitioners - the profession will lose whatever credibility it still has - which is diminishing rapidly - due to social work faculties and the supposed protectors of the profession forming an elite removed from realities of practice - the college and association representatives seem to be more interested in ingratiating themselves to social work faculties - it is a sad state of affairs when highly credentialed practitioners are desperately attempting to obtain faculty positions due to practice/work conditions becoming so difficult (due to the erosion of social work in the field resulting from faculties flooding the market with clinically incompetent social work graduates) - with no attempt by the colleges or associations to address the matter.*
- *I have been quite dismayed at how the faculties here have focused so much on training primarily for child welfare. Seniors are the fastest growing population and a very challenging group. We need more education offered re seniors.*
- *Of course knowledge of and respect for cultural diversity and ethical practice is fundamental. However, the emphasis seems like 'overkill' at times at the expense of basic skills and fundamental theoretical knowledge about working with individuals and families. E.g., young workers are often faced with crises in very disturbed families and don't have a clue what to do next because they have not had the training - basic education and role playing for example. Social work needs to find a better balance and return to teaching some basic knowledge and clinical skill.*
- *Many BC universities are trying to "assist" larger systems (MCFD for example) by tailoring "specialised" course work for new SW to enter into CP work for example; or working with "aboriginal" peoples - I believe at the expense of failing to meet the needs of a comprehensive social work education in various SW theories that should be applied to the clinical, group, and systems education, and enhanced by direct connection of the theoretical perspectives to the practicum experience (regardless of where the practicum*

is). I have spoken with social workers who have done these "courses" and no one has ever felt that they were really "prepared" for the work. I have often witnessed young, new social workers trying to "counsel" older people, parents, do "assessments" "on children" or "on families" or "on risk situations" and although they have the concrete "tools" provided (the form for example), they lack the practice wisdom (as do many of their supervisors) to use the assessment tools in a client-centred strength-based way. Being truly "client centred" and "strengths based" is, I believe Social work 101 - and SW 201 - and SW 301 etc ---as it provides the confidence needed in any setting to be able to articulate one's role a social workers within the mandate of a program.

- *I will be very interested to see the outcome of this survey and having now completed this I see why some social work universities in Canada (NS) have discouraged people from participating in this survey (although do not agree with this position). Some schools of social work do not appear to be doing a very good job at preparing people for the "real world" work force.*
- *I think this survey asked a fair share of questions related to various sectors of social work practice (i.e., direct intervention, community work, or policy research and development). This competency profiling is a great thing - very much needed as there are schools of social work that are not adequately preparing their graduates for real world practice!!*
- *After going through all of this survey I realize that I received the best training to be a Social Work Professional in my Social Service Diploma at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton. Thanks to them I can make ethical decisions and serve clients in their environment. At university I learned more theory and had less direct practice.*
- *It might be a good idea to send a copy of this to Université de Moncton to show them how much more the students should learn before having their diploma.*

Respondents also noted that competencies depend on the employment situation (context and position).

- *Social work has such a wide scope of practice. Depending on where the entry level social worker works and in what specific job may depend on what their responsibilities are. An entry level social worker child protection may be charged with different responsibilities as opposed to someone who is working in a supporting agency. As I reflect on this, it may mean entry level social workers should not be making those decisions in child protection.*
- *The role and scope of social work can be so varied between practice settings and areas of focus. There were some skills that I rated as being inappropriate for an entry level social worker based on my experience but that may be very appropriate in a different setting.*
- *Role of new social worker may be different depending on the size and structure of the organization/area that they are working in. In working with very young children and*

families, there may be less emphasis on advocacy/discrimination etc and more on relationship building with parents.

There was disagreement among the respondents about whether certain competencies can be considered entry-level. For example, while the ability to conduct research was considered an entry-level competency by some respondents, others believed that it is usually conducted by professionals in advanced positions.

- *I am a senior level clinician and some of the statements reflect things I do that [an] entry level [professional] isn't skilled enough or specialized enough to do, i.e. research.*
- *Entry level workers should participate in all areas but should not have main responsibility for policy, research, and evaluation.*
- *Most entry-level social workers will not be engaged in any type of research and social work education should reflect this reality.*
- *This survey fails to identify competencies for social workers whose primary practice include development of social policy, social action, advocacy, research, non-profit management and community development.*
- *I'm surprised that there is nothing about community, policy, or research in your identification of practice areas. While the majority of new grads may work in direct practice, some do go into indirect roles.*

Some respondents also disagreed about whether policy development, program evaluation, advocacy, social actions should be included as entry-level competencies.

- *Little is mentioned about social work activism, proposal writing, social advertising & ground breaking paper presentations and research.*
- *My responses are my act of resistance. Your survey is culturally incompetent, individual/casework focused and in no way a balanced reflection of the social work field. I am appalled that my profession would administer such a small minded survey. Aboriginal social workers are hopefully engaged in emancipatory practices that do not oppress Aboriginal populations by working too closely with existing structures and imposing Eurocentric measures and timelines. You have performed a disservice to all Anti-oppressive practitioners and to all operating outside the Eurocentric worldview.*
- *Some of the language used seemed to reflect a particular point of view about social work practice as is articulated by the University of Victoria School's of Social Work. This is the anti-oppressive practice philosophy. I am not clear that this is the way all social workers would view the world of social work.*
- *I don't think entry level social workers should be relied upon to evaluate agency policies, advocate for resources that the agencies don't have and "change the system".*
- *The required entry skills depend on the job. Entry level positions are often direct service,*

so things like program evaluation are barely relevant at that stage but could be critical later.

- *And depending on the position/job - one won't have the opportunity to for instance, advocate for better human rights policies or work with emerging grass-roots organization -- they are great ideals, but not always practical in a first (or ongoing) job setting.*

Finally, a number of respondents provided some suggestions regarding the wording of some of the questions and identified the redundant items. These suggestions and comments were reviewed to identify items that might be removed from the Competency Profile.

The results of online survey were presented to the CCSWR Steering Committee and then to all members of the Council during a face-to-face meeting in October of 2011. Profile was revised further based on the recommendations from the Council meeting and submitted to the CCSWR Council for second review. Specifically, the draft Profile was revised to ensure that:

1. All items are placed in appropriate blocks;
2. All items are worded as a measurable indicator.

The CCSWR Council reviewed the second draft and finalized the profile during the face-to-face meeting in March of 2012. The Profile presented below reflects the recommendations of the Council.

Social Work Competency Profile: Revised Draft

The revised Profile is organized into six competency blocks that present six primary areas of practice, including

- **Applying Ethical Standards**: Competencies required for ethical and responsible service delivery.
- **Conducting Assessments**: Competencies required to determine the needs of the clients and assess their situations and eligibility for services.
- **Planning Interventions**: Competencies required to identify clients' goals and plan appropriate treatment and services.
- **Delivering Services**: Competencies required to provide services to address clients' needs.
- **Improving Policies and Practices**: Competencies required to actively engage in changes social work policies and practices and for effective communication and collaboration with community stakeholders and professionals in social work and other professional

areas to address issues related to social work interventions and protect best interests of the clients.

- **Engaging in Reflective Practice and Professional Development:** Competencies required to monitor and manage one's own professional development, attitudes and behaviour to promote and advance the social work practice locally, nationally, and/or internationally.

Each of the competency blocks are further divided into families of key global competencies which consist of competencies that focus on activities of similar nature. For example, *Conducting Assessments* block incorporates three families of competencies: competencies related to assessment of clients' needs and situations; competencies related to gathering pertinent information by questioning and discussions; and competencies related to informing and engaging clients in the intake and assessment process. Each of the families contains sub-competencies that describe a range of specific professional activities expressed in measurable terms.

The revised Competency Profile consists of 156 items organized into six categories (presented in
Table **10**).

Table 10: Items by Competency Block

Competency Block	Number of Items
Applying Ethical Standards	22
Conducting Assessments	44
Planning Interventions	18
Delivering Services	46
Improving Policies and Practices	13
Engaging in Reflective Practice and Professional Development	9
Total	**152**

Tables below present the final draft of the Competency Profile.

APPLYING ETHICAL STANDARDS

Applying Ethical Standards competency block includes competencies required to ensure ethical and responsible service delivery. The professionals have an obligation to engage in ethical practice and decision making, protect clients' rights, and follow ethical guidelines and principles in their interactions with clients, colleagues, and external partners.

Table 11: Applying Ethical Standards

Global Competency (families)	Sub-competencies
Identify ethical considerations related to the problem or needs being addressed	1. Identify ethical considerations related to the problem or needs being addressed.
	2. Determine whether a planned course of action is consistent with professional ethics.
Act ethically	3. Act in accordance with the regulatory framework for social work practice.
	4. Evaluate professional and organizational policies, procedures, and materials to assure adherence to social work ethics.
	5. Follow appropriate protocols for seeking assistance when facing conflict in the workplace.
	6. Ensure proper handling and storing information (including information transmitted electronically) to protect confidentiality.
	7. Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.
	8. Identify and manage conflicts of interest and/or dual relationships with clients or former clients.
	9. Establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in professional relationships.
Bring ethical transgressions to the attention of relevant parties	10. Address conflicts of interest with relevant parties.
	11. Inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary.
	12. Report alleged abuse and neglect in compliance with laws and social work ethics.
	13. Identify and address inappropriate behaviour or discriminatory practices.
	14. Identify ethical violations and take appropriate action.
Advocate for and engage in practices to further human rights and social justice	15. Advocate for clients' right to autonomy and self-determination.
	16. Protect individuals from the undue influences and abusive use of power.
	17. Identify linkages between situation/problem and life conditions, with particular attention to issues of oppression and discrimination.
	18. Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social justice and well-being.
	19. Advocate for policies and services sensitive to diversity issues.
	20. Advocate for the equitable access of all persons to resources, services and opportunities.
	21. Advocate for appropriate resources.
	22. Identify how a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.

CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS

Conducting Assessments competency block includes competencies required to select, administer, and interpret screening and assessments to determine the needs of the clients, and assess their situations and eligibility for services. Entry-level social workers need to be able to

assess clients (including individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations) as to their needs, issues and challenges, and strengths in order to make informed decisions regarding service planning and delivery. Screening and assessment competencies include: collecting information using a variety of techniques; organizing and interpreting information about the clients and their situations; assessing clients' needs; and motivating and engaging clients in the development of interventions plans.

Table 12: Conducting Assessment

Global Competency (families)	Sub-competencies
Assess clients' ***situation and needs*** in relation to current professional standards and jurisdictional requirements	23. Assess clients' eligibility for services.
	24. Assess the strengths, needs and resources of individuals, groups, families, and communities
	25. Assess the nature and severity of clients' crisis situations.
	26. Assess clients' risk of danger to self and others.
	27. Assess suspected abuse and/or neglect.
	28. Assess and refocus clients' individual goals.
	29. Assess the risk of future harm to clients by others.
	30. Assess clients' need for medical evaluation.
	31. Assess clients' use/abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescribed medication.
	32. Assess clients' needs for training and employment services.
	33. Assess the clients' needed level of care (e.g., geriatric, other special needs, foster or group care).
	34. Assess parenting skills and capacities.
	35. Assess needs for protective services for children.
	36. Assess needs for protective services for adults.
	37. Assess clients' needs for out-of-home placement.
	38. Assess clients' needs for housing.
	39. Assess clients' needs and readiness for adoptive placement.
	40. Assess suitability of applicants to be foster parents.
	41. Assess suitability of applicants to be adoptive parents.
	42. Assess clients' readiness for service.
	43. Assess the impact of biopsychosocial history, including social isolation and marginalization, on the client system.
	44. Assess the impact of cultural factors on the client system
	45. Assess the impact of sexual orientation on the client system.
	46. Assess the impact of spiritual beliefs on client system.
	47. Assess the impact of sexual history on client system.
	48. Assess the impact of addictions on the client system.
	49. Critically analyze social context and barriers as foundational for understanding individual issues and subsequently engage in change efforts to address them.
	50. Critically analyze social context and barriers as foundational for understanding community issues and subsequently engage in change efforts to address them.
	51. Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and

Global Competency (families)	Sub-competencies
	environment.
	52. Administer simple, standardized instruments to measure clients' symptoms and behaviours.
	53. Demonstrate an ability to develop a helping relationship with the client.
	54. Formulate and document conclusions about the assessment.
Gather pertinent information by systematic questioning and discussions	55. Interview clients to gather information from the clients' perspective regarding the nature and degree of problem.
	56. Collect and verify relevant information pertaining to social functioning and development.
	57. Collect and verify information about clients from collateral sources.
	58. Collect and verify clients' biopsychosocial history, including social isolation and marginalization.
	59. Interview clients to gather information on their cultural background.
	60. Interview clients to gather information about their sexual orientation.
	61. Interview clients to gather information about their spiritual beliefs.
	62. Interview clients to gather information about their sexual history.
	63. Maintain and utilize information about resources and community services including the use of technology.
Inform and involve clients in the intake/assessment process	64. Involve clients in the intake/assessment process.
	65. Provide information to clients about policies and services of the agency/practice.
	66. Provide information to clients regarding their rights and responsibilities, including limits to confidentiality.

PLANNING INTERVENTIONS

Planning Interventions competency block includes competencies required to plan appropriate treatment and services that are based on the clients' goals, needs, strengths, and limitations. This collaborative process will require entry-level professionals to participate in identification of clients' goals, matching these goals to intervention activities and strategies, and monitoring/adjusting the intervention plans as needed.

Table 13: Planning Interventions

Global Competency (families)	Sub-competencies
State clearly the nature of the clients' problem or need being addressed	67. State clearly the nature of the clients' problem or need being addressed.
Identify potential interventions appropriate to clients' problem	68. Explain to the clients the range of potential interventions.
	69. Identify program/intervention objectives and outcomes.
Elicit the clients' point of view, suggestions and consent, about the proposed interventions	70. Obtain clients' informed consent for services.
	71. Identify issues regarding involuntary clients and consent.
	72. Identify issues regarding consent with children and youth.
	73. Formulate measurable objectives to assist clients' change.
	74. Determine with (or explain to) the client-relevant standards for

	evaluating proposed interventions.
	75. Discuss with (and explain to) clients ways to assess the outcome of services.
	76. Work with clients to address their own needs and problems in living.
	77. Promote and facilitate clients' participation in decision making.
	78. Engage clients in planning and implementing service plans.
Select from a universe of potential interventions, the intervention that will most likely alleviate the clients' problem/ need.	79. Develop a treatment or service plan based on assessment findings.
	80. Formulate a timeframe for interventions with clients.
	81. Choose/modify intervention methods to meet clients' needs.
	82. Select strategies for community action.
	83. Develop programs and services to meet community needs.
	84. Assess the appropriateness of client service or treatment plans.

DELIVERING SERVICES

Delivering Services competency block incorporates competencies required to provide effective services to address clients' needs. This block includes a wide range of competencies including implementing evidence-informed plans, services, models, and strategies to address needs of individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations, matching clients with appropriate services based on the results of the assessment and planning process, providing information and feedback to clients, collaboration with partner services and community organizations as required, and managing conflicts.

Table 14: Delivering Services

Global Competency (families)	Sub-competencies
Explain the intervention plan to relevant stakeholders involved in the intervention delivery.	85. Identify and communicate with relevant stakeholders about the implications of the intervention plan.
Document various steps in the intervention plan	86. Keep accurate and comprehensive records, documents, and correspondence using appropriate technology.
	87. Prepare reports summarizing work activities.
Implement the intervention according to the established plan	88. Support the development of the clients' competencies particularly with respect to his/her capacity to play different social roles (e.g., worker, parent, community member).
	89. Facilitate groups' mobilization of their resources to reach goals.
	90. Support persons and families dealing with a variety of life-span issues.
	91. Facilitate the development of clients' communication skills effectively.
	92. Provide mediation support during conflict situations.
	93. Provide case management.
	94. Engage with involuntary clients.
	95. Provide psycho-educational services for clients.
	96. Provide group work services to clients.
	97. Provide outreach services to clients and potential clients.
	98. Provide feedback to clients about progress toward achieving their

Global Competency (families)	Sub-competencies
	goals.
	99. Respond to community emergencies when requested.
	100. Refer clients for services.
	101. Follow up on referrals.
	102. Conduct case conferences.
	103. Applies relevant services as required in accordance with legislation and regulation, including the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, etc.
	104. Implement out-of-home placements.
	105. Provide services in manner that reflects the needs and sensitivities of vulnerable populations.
	106. Motivate and engage with a group of clients in the treatment process.
	107. Design and implement strategies to meet needs of a specific group.
	108. Provide a rationale for one's professional opinion or decision.
	109. Respond to clients and/or community in a timely and reasonable manner.
	110. Facilitate meetings.
	111. Use relevant provincial and federal legislation pertinent to area of practice.
	112. Use research and evaluation and integrate evidence to inform practice.
	113. Provide services to clients in a culturally supportive manner.
	114. Encourage client feedback regarding service.
	115. Inform a client of the client's right to consult another professional at any time during the provision of social work services.
	116. Understand First Nations history, traditions, and governance.
	117. Identify and manage the dynamics of power in social work relationships.
	118. Identify experts and consult them as needed.
Promote self-determination of clients	119. Support clients to obtain needed resources.
	120. Raise awareness of how environment influences human behaviour.
	121. Inform clients about strategies to address separation issues
	122. Inform clients about strategies to address the grieving process.
	123. Inform groups about strategies to create, identify, and use helping networks
	124. Inform clients about strategies to advocate for their rights.
	125. Inform clients about strategies to address issues of discrimination and oppression.
	126. Raise awareness of parents' about child development.
	127. Raise awareness of clients about the impact of their behaviours.
Assess and adjust process of intervention	128. Determine whether the need or problem has been addressed by the intervention.
	129. Adjust the intervention in the light of evidence gathered through monitoring.
	130. Bring intervention process to a conclusion.

IMPROVING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Improving Policies and Practices competency block includes competencies required to advocate for the improvement of policies and services to better meet the needs of the clients as well as maintain documentation that supports the direct delivery of the services. These are the professional activities that do not involve immediate or personal contact with the client being served.

Table 15: Improving Policies and Practices

Global Competency (families)	Sub-competencies
Assess adequacy of existing policies and practices in light of professional standards	131. Assess adequacy of existing policies and practices in light of professional standards.
	132. Assess organizations' policies and practices.
Determine the change necessary for improving practices and policies	133. Determine the change necessary for improving practices and policies.
	134. In partnership with other stakeholders, perform needs assessments.
	135. Evaluate relative costs of service program alternatives.
Advocate for system change	136. Take action to bring about needed changes.
	137. Establish and maintain professional collaborations.
	138. Promote changes in organizational practices and policies in the best interests of the clients.
	139. Work with colleagues to develop policies and procedures for practice setting.
Work with existing and emerging community organizations	140. Work with grassroots and existing and emerging community organizations and coalitions.
	141. Facilitate participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.
	142. Facilitate resource capacity building in the community through leadership, support and education.
	143. Collaborate with other professionals and/or community members regarding services and resources.

ENGAGING IN REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Engaging in Reflective Practice and Professional Development competency block includes competences required to effectively monitor and manage one's own professional development, attitudes and behaviour to promote and advance the social work practice. The entry-level professionals are expected to participate in professional development and self-reflection, and maintain currency of social work knowledge.

Table 16: Engaging in Reflective Practice and Professional Development

Global Competency (families)	Sub-competencies
Engage in reflective practice and professional development.	144. Reflect upon one's professional practice.
	145. Evaluate one's practice in light of professional standards.
	146. Establish a personal plan for professional development upon a self-assessment of one's strength and limitations.

	147. Monitor the implementation of one's personal plan for professional development
	148. Adjust the personal plan for professional development in the light of evidence
	149. Develop professional identity through professional development activities.
	150. Contribute to the professional development of others
	151. Receive and use supervision to enhance practice.
	152. Participate in professional development activities.

Next Steps

The Entry-level Social Work Competency Profile presented above describes a set of core professional competencies that apply across fields of social work practice in Canada. In addition to enabling full labour mobility, this framework can be used to clarify standards of social work practice across jurisdictions and, thereby, facilitate the monitoring of expectations and performance in diverse fields of social work practice.

To facilitate understanding of the competencies, it is recommended that the Council:

- develop performance standards and exemplars for each competency at three performance levels: meeting standard, approaching standard, below standard (required for registration);
- develop a communications plan for disseminating the competencies, performance standards, and exemplars to various audiences, including prospective and current students of social work, social work educators, governments, employers, migrants seeking a career in social work, and the general public.
- develop assessments tools that would allow persons with international credentials and experience to demonstrate the competencies required to practice social work in Canada; and
- develop or assist in the development of training programs designed to cultivate the relevant competency(ies) in those cases where persons including those with international credentials fall short of the standards.

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