

Track Descriptions

Developing your own online or hybrid/blended program

The number of schools and programs interested in developing an online presence, either complete or hybrid/blended, is expected to dramatically increase within the next few years. These sessions focus on the specific “nuts and bolts” for developing a partially or completely online program. Topics may include issues such as approvals, faculty governance, planning, curriculum development, technology choices, instructional design approaches, assessment, accreditation, and other dimensions that need to be thought through when starting out. We anticipate that this may be a very popular track and attendees will have major concerns about pragmatic approaches for program development. Both hybrid (part online) and completely online models and strategies are appropriate. Track attendees need to:

1. develop a basic understanding of the process of online or hybrid program development.
2. gain specific awareness of programmatic decision choices, issues and details.

Teaching and learning social work online

Just how can we teach online? This track focuses on the dimensions of teaching and learning online in both completely and hybrid programs. Critical choices in instructional design need to be thought through as online instruction is often quite different from the traditional classroom. Choices such as when to use synchronous or asynchronous modalities, for example, are important. Selection of different instructional platforms and applications can empower or constrain various approaches. Class management in an online environment may be a concern. Assessment of learned competencies needs to be addressed. Track attendees need to:

1. gain a basic understanding of instructional choices, strategies, and techniques for successful online teaching and learning.
2. develop familiarity with various platforms and applications that may be useful for instruction and also the limitations of these.

Field issues and distance placements

Several field issues will emerge as more and more programs develop distance-anchored placements. First, for some programs direct face-to-face placement development and liaison obligations need to be electronically mediated. Proposals that address how to use technology appropriately and effectively for placement development; student, field instructor, and liaison orientation; assessment; and supervision are welcome. Second, as programs seek to develop placements in other programs’ territories, competition will result. Proposals that address solutions to this anticipated problem will be most helpful.

Track attendees need to:

1. gain specific knowledge of strategies and techniques for field placement development, evaluation, and administration at a distance.
2. identify emerging problems concerning field placement availability and strategies to overcome them.

Administrative strategies and issues

Numerous issues and problems challenge the online program administrator. For example, resources necessary to support the implicit curriculum are critical and may be different and/or more extensive than traditional program needs and characteristics. Faculty recruitment and retention may be an issue. Teaching evaluations in an online program may be different from and less useful for promotion and tenure purposes. To what extent to rely

on adjunct colleagues is another administrative decision. Assessment for accreditation is a critical obligation. Keeping adequate enrollment numbers to sustain both a traditional and online program going in the same unit may be problematic. Marketing in a virtual world may require different approaches than face-to-face efforts. Cross-border issues between states remain unresolved. Multi-state licensure issues may be problematic. Sustained support may be an issue once a program is beyond start-up mode where resources are more usually available. Track attendees need to:

1. explore different administrative strategies and tactics for marketing, faculty recruitment and retention, governance, evaluation, program sustainability and other issues.
2. gain an understanding of horizon-level issues that may challenge program administration and support.

Online practice issues

Information technology advances have made and continue to make significant changes in how we communicate. In the arena of social work practice, practitioners will be challenged to make decisions about their use of technology and the role it will play in practice intervention with clients. While technologically-mediated practice intervention is not new, it continues to evolve, increasing concerns about its efficacy and appropriateness. This brings up several questions. How is technology currently being employed and in what contexts? What are the ethical implications and the variety of issues raised when practicing in a technically mediated context? What are the boundaries for effective practice? How are licensure, cross-border, and insurance issues dealt with? How will the next set of recommendations by ASWB be addressed, and what issues may be arise? In what directions can we foresee the growth of technologically-mediated practice? Track attendees need to:

1. gain an understanding of the state of the art for electronically mediated practice interventions.
2. address how students and faculty learn to use technology in practice.