

Introduction of a Model of Students' Practice in Social Work Education: Case of Republic of Srpska

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Abstract : Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Banja Luka is the only School of Social Work in the Republic of Srpska (entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina). This Department has been implementing students' practice as mandatory module since it was established in year 2000. As of 2006, the University of Banja Luka initiated the transformation of the education system in accordance with the Bologna Agreement. The Department of Social Work adopted a new Curriculum that anticipated 120 hours of Students' practice. After ten years, a new process of changing and improving the Curriculum has been initiated, and research was conducted, in order to meet both the needs of practice and academic standards in the field of social work education. From 2006-2016 students were evaluating their practice experience under the mentor's supervision. These evaluations were subject to the evaluation process of current Curriculum, including students practice module. Additional research was designed in order to assess the opinions of certified mentors on specific aspects of students' practice, the needs of practice and possibilities for improving the education for social workers. Special research instruments were designed for the purpose of this research. All mentors were graduated social works working in all fields where social work services are provided (social welfare sector, health, education, non-government sector etc.). The third dimension of the research was a qualitative analysis of curriculums of Schools of Social Work in the region of Southeast Europe. This paper represents the results of the research, conclusions and consequences that led towards the improvement of Students' practice and Curriculum of the Department of Social Work. The new Model anticipates 300 hours of Students' practice, divided in three years of study, with different and specific learning outcomes.

Keywords : curriculum, Republic of Srpska, social work education, students' practice

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