

# SWK278 Ethics, Law and the Helping Professions

**School:** School of Law and Society

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast  
UniSC Moreton Bay  
UniSC Fraser Coast

**BLENDED  
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

**ONLINE**

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to [usc.edu.au](http://usc.edu.au) for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

## 1. What is this course about?

### 1.1. Description

The course explores legal dimensions of professional practice. Students will learn how values influence decisions and actions in practice using ethical theories, ethico-legal principles and law. Attention is given to understanding ethics and law as the linked capacities to uphold rights. The course provides students with ideas and skills for building ethical literacy, resolving ethical dilemmas, interpreting legislation and understanding the importance of professional integrity in complex human services practice settings.

### 1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
<b>BLENDED LEARNING</b>			
<b>Learning materials</b> – online content	1hr	Week 1	11 times
<b>Tutorial/Workshop 1</b> – face-to-face tutorial	2hrs	Week 1	11 times
<b>ONLINE</b>			
<b>Learning materials</b> – online content	1hr	Week 1	11 times
<b>Tutorial/Workshop 1</b> – online tutorials	2hrs	Week 1	11 times

### 1.3. Course Topics

Introducing ethics and law

Professionalism, ethical use of self & reflective practice

Ethical theories

Ethico-legal principles

Ethics, power and legislation

Ethical decision-making

Culturally responsive practice

Professional responsibilities: Documentation

Building literacy about legislation

[All topics may contain adult themes]

### 1.4. Mature Content

Adult themes

## 2. What level is this course?

200 Level (Developing)

Building on and expanding the scope of introductory knowledge and skills, developing breadth or depth and applying knowledge and skills in a new context. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally, undertaken in the second or third full-time year of an undergraduate programs.

## 3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

#### 4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES MAPPING	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING *
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	Australian Association of Social Workers
1 Demonstrate ability to make and be accountable for professional decisions based on ethical frameworks, legal obligations, relevant legislation, to resolve ethical dilemmas and issues	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Empowered	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
2 Develop and justify arguments based on understanding of ethical and legal dimensions of practice	Knowledgeable Ethical Engaged	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9
3 Describe and critically evaluate theoretical components of ethical practice	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
4 Demonstrate understanding of relevant legislation that influences ethical practice	Knowledgeable Ethical	1, 3, 6, 7, 9
5 Demonstrate understanding of need to act in culturally appropriate ways	Knowledgeable Ethical	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
6 Develop and demonstrate critical analysis and reflective skills, including ethical use of self in practice	Empowered Ethical Sustainability-focussed	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
7 Demonstrate written communication skills relevant to professional ethico-legal issues in the helping professions	Empowered Engaged	1, 5, 6, 9
8 Demonstrate active and engaged learning in tutorial settings.	Engaged Sustainability-focussed	9
9 Demonstrate verbal communication skills reflective of an emerging professional helping practitioner.	Ethical Engaged Communication Collaboration	7

\* Competencies by Professional Body

CODE	COMPETENCY
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS	
1	Practice Standard 1: AASW Code of Ethics
2	Practice Standard 2: Working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
3	Practice Standard 3: Human rights and social justice
4	Practice Standard 4: Culture, identity and intersectionality
5	Practice Standard 5: Critical thinking in practice
6	Practice Standard 6: Exercising professional judgement
7	Practice Standard 7: Professional identity
8	Practice Standard 8: Professional supervision
9	Practice Standard 9: Professional growth

#### 5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

### 5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

### 5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

### 5.3. Anti-requisites

SCS278

### 5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

## 6. How am I going to be assessed?

### 6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

### 6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Early non-graded feedback will be provided in tutorial settings during group activities.

### 6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Activity Participation	Individual	10%	Weekly tutorials	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	In Class
All	2	Quiz/zes	Individual	20%	60 minutes	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	Online Test (Quiz)
All	3	Written Piece	Individual	20%	500 words	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	Online Discussion Board
All	4	Case Study	Individual	50%	10-15 minute video recorded Powerpoint presentation	Week 11	Online Submission

#### All - Assessment Task 1: Tutorial Attendance and Participation

<b>GOAL:</b>	To integrate key concepts of the course in tutorial based activities and discussions with an interdisciplinary focus.						
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Activity Participation						
<b>FORMAT:</b>	Tutorial attendance will be recorded to meet external AASW accreditation requirements for social work students. Student participation and engagement in tutorial activities are assessed based upon attendance and active participation.						
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>		<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>				
	1	Be active learners, open to new knowledge, and actively engage with peers in classroom learning opportunities	1	2	5	6	7
	2	Demonstrate an ability to work effectively with others in a group environment and contribute to the group process.	1	2	5	7	9
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy						

#### All - Assessment Task 2: Quiz/zes

<b>GOAL:</b>	Demonstrate knowledge of key ethical theories/ethico-legal contexts/legislation.		
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Quiz/zes		
<b>FORMAT:</b>	Online Quiz/zes		
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>		<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Demonstrate understanding of relevant legislation that influences ethical practice	4
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Problem solving, Information literacy		

#### All - Assessment Task 3: Discussion Board

<b>GOAL:</b>	Engage in active discussion with peers about key principles of ethical practice.		
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Written Piece		
<b>FORMAT:</b>	Submit online Discussion Post and response to peer post/s		
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>		<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Develop and justify arguments based on understanding of ethical and legal dimensions of practice	2
	2	Demonstrate critical analysis and reflective skills including ethical use of self in practice	6
	3	Demonstrate written communication skills with peers regarding ethico-legal issues in the helping professions	7
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Collaboration, Information literacy		

#### All - Assessment Task 4: Case Study Oral Presentation

<b>GOAL:</b>	Apply an ethical decision-making model to a provided case study.		
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Case Study		
<b>FORMAT:</b>	Online assessment submission.		
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>		<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Apply an ethical decision making model to a case study, demonstrating understanding of relevant ethical considerations, ethico-legal principles and legislation.	1 2 3 4
	2	Clearly justify, from an evidence-base, how you would respond to the case study to align with professional values, ethics, and legislative responsibilities.	1 2 4 6 9
	3	Evidence well prepared powerpoint with voice over - logically structured, coherent analysis, within the time limit, appropriately referenced using Harvard or APA referencing.	7 9
	4	Demonstrate effective critical self-reflection to address 'self' in professional practice.	6 9
	5	Oral presentation style is reflective of an emerging helping professional.	9
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Problem solving, Information literacy		

#### 6.4. Assessment to competency mapping

PROGRAMME DELIVERY MODE	ASSESSMENT TYPE	TITLE	COMPETENCY	TEACHING METHODS
AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS (ASWEAS)				
All delivery modes	Activity Participation	Tutorial Attendance and Participation	1	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			2	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			3	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			4	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			5	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			6	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			7	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			9	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
	Case Study	Case Study Oral Presentation	1	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			2	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			3	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			4	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			5	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			6	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			7	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			8	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			9	Taught, Practiced, Assessed

#### 7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

#### 8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

##### 8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

##### 8.2. Specific requirements

Nil

#### 9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

## 10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

### 10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

### 10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

#### Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

### 10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

### 10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email [safe@usc.edu.au](mailto:safe@usc.edu.au).

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email [studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au).

### 10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or [studentcentral@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au).

### 10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email [studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au) or call 07 5430 1226.

### 10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email [AccessAbility@usc.edu.au](mailto:AccessAbility@usc.edu.au) or call 07 5430 2890.

## 10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

## 10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

## 10.10. General Enquiries

### In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

**Tel:** +61 7 5430 2890

**Email:** [studentcentral@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au)