

SWK278 Ethics, Law and the Helping Professions

School: School of Law and Society

2025 Semester 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.

Please go to 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 act for the rights and well-being of people, animals and the ecosystem is considered. 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
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – online content	1hr	Week 1	11 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – face-to-face tutorial	2hrs	Week 1	11 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – online content	1hr	Week 1	11 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – 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: Children and law

Ethical decision-making

Culturally responsive practice & workplaces

Professional responsibilities: Documentation

Building literacy about legislation: The Mental Health Act (2016)

Animal and ecosystems ethics

[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 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 verbal and written communication skills relevant to professional ethico-legal issues in the helping professions	Empowered Engaged	1, 5, 6, 9
8 Be an active learner and engage in tutorial discussions.	Engaged Sustainability-focussed	9
9 Be able to work effectively with others in a group environment and contribute to the group process.	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

Students can provide a one page plan for Task 2 assessment to ensure they are covering all the required concepts and understand how to explore a practice scenario using these. This will not be an assessed piece and will form part of an in class peer and tutor constructive feedback process.

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 for all tutorials	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	In Class
All	2	Oral	Individual	40%	A 5 minute presentation and another 5 minutes discussion in tutorial.	Refer to Format	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check and in class
All	3	Case Study	Individual	50%	15 minutes (2500 words equivalent)	Week 11	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Tutorial Attendance and Participation

GOAL:	To integrate key concepts of the course in tutorial based activities and discussions with an interdisciplinary focus.	
PRODUCT:	Activity Participation	
FORMAT:	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.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1 Be active learners, open to new knowledge, and actively engage with peers in classroom learning opportunities	1 2 5 6 7 8
	2 Demonstrate an ability to work effectively with others in a group environment and contribute to the group process.	1 2 5 7 9
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy	

All - Assessment Task 2: Presentation of key ethical and legal concepts & reflective analysis

GOAL:	Each student is to create a powerpoint or powerpoint with narrative to show a developed knowledge of: professional values, ethical theories, ethico-legal principles and legislation.	
PRODUCT:	Oral	
FORMAT:	Presentation in tutorial time, and the powerpoint document should be submitted by end of the week of presentation, namely inclusive of weeks 6 to 8. This is an online assessment submission with plagiarism check.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1 Define, explore and critically analyse the provided key ethical and legal concepts.	2 3 6 7
	2 Show an example of how these concepts could be used in a practice situation.	2 3 4 6 7
	3 Demonstrate ethical use of self by reflecting upon the ethical and legal concepts and justify how you would apply them in professional practice	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	4 Quality of presentation and reflective statements using course references, within time and the word count, appropriately referenced using the Harvard or APA system of referencing.	2 3 4 5 6 7
	5 Demonstrate an ability to work effectively with others in a group environment and contribute to the group process.	2 5 6 7 9
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy	

All - Assessment Task 3: Ethical Dilemma on PowerPoint with Voice Over

GOAL:	To apply an ethical decision-making model to a provided case study, which will inform professional practice.													
PRODUCT:	Case Study													
FORMAT:	<p>This is an individual assessment and can be presented with sub-headings from the recommended ethical decision-making model.</p> <p>You need to identify and critically reflect upon one possible ethical dilemma within a practice situation, as presented through a provided case study. You will be required to demonstrate: a sound application of ethical theory; professional values; a clear understanding of Australian ethico-legal principles and laws that may apply; and a sound working knowledge of your own profession's code of ethics. You will also need to research your role and your agency related to the case study and show an understanding of issues that may be impacting on the situation. You will demonstrate your ability to work through a decision-making model overviewed in this course, that will guide your ethical practice.</p> <p>Case studies will be provided to you and you can create an alternative case study in consultation with your tutor. You will be required to place yourself as a worker from your own discipline into this case study and apply an ethical decision-making process that leads to particular action you would take in relation to this case.</p>													
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Apply an ethical decision making model to a case study, showing an understanding of ethical theories, your own profession's code of ethics, Australian ethico-legal principles and legislation, relevant case study specific research & power issues.</td> <td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>An ability to identify the limitations of the ethical decision making model and how you addressed those limitations.</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>A well prepared powerpoint with voice over - logically structured, coherent analysis, within the time limit and word count, appropriately referenced using Harvard or APA system of referencing and with a minimum of 6 references from the course.</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Apply an ethical decision making model to a case study, showing an understanding of ethical theories, your own profession's code of ethics, Australian ethico-legal principles and legislation, relevant case study specific research & power issues.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2	An ability to identify the limitations of the ethical decision making model and how you addressed those limitations.	3	3	A well prepared powerpoint with voice over - logically structured, coherent analysis, within the time limit and word count, appropriately referenced using Harvard or APA system of referencing and with a minimum of 6 references from the course.	7	
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GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, 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	Ethical Dilemma on PowerPoint with Voice Over
	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		
	Oral	Presentation of key ethical and legal concepts & reflective analysis	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

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.

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.

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.

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 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 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