

## PSCSW Awards for Clinical Excellence Application Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Paper Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Clinical Practice Professor: \_\_\_\_\_

Professor Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Placement: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that I am a graduating MSW/MSS Student: \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

I understand that the award is contingent upon my attendance at the PSCSW

Annual Meeting, held on a Sunday afternoon in late fall: \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

Applications Due by **May 19th, 2025** send via **email** to  
**pscsw@pscsw.org**

### THE PSCSW AWARDS FOR CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

The **PSCSW Awards for Clinical Excellence** were established by the Pennsylvania Society for Clinical Social Work to acknowledge the outstanding clinical work of students. The Awards are presented annually to students who submit a paper for review by distinguished judges. **The program is open to all graduating Master of Social Work Students in Pennsylvania.** The Awards program is dedicated to four distinguished PSCSW leaders who have provided inspiration for future clinicians: Patricia Burland, Mary Montague, Judith Kasser, and Anna Wiggins. The Awards are given to students who demonstrate in their case study the following abilities:

1. To integrate theories of human behavior with practice in clinical social work;
2. To explore a client's problems within a bio-psycho-social content;
3. To guide practice interventions systematically, based on theoretical understandings that emerge from the assessment;
4. To understand the meaning of the clinical use of the social work relationship including the use of self in either a dyadic or group context;
5. To critique one's work and recognize the need for consultation;
6. To use literature as an appropriate resource;
7. To reflect on the process of clinical social work including team collaboration and adherence to professional ethics.

Papers will be judged by a panel including professors, supervisors, and experienced clinicians. Winners will be notified by phone and email over the summer.

**The winner of First Prize will be awarded \$500.00. The award for Second Prize is \$300.00. The award for Third Prize is \$200.00.** All winners receive free membership in PSCSW for one year following graduation.

The winners will be honored at the PSCSW Annual Meeting, which occurs in the fall. The meeting will be held in the greater Philadelphia area. The professors and supervisors of the award winners will be invited as guests to the dinner. Winners must be present to receive their award as the ceremony will celebrate their achievement.

The awards convey significant recognition upon the recipients within the professional social work community. PSCSW encourages all students to submit papers for consideration. For additional questions please contact Merin Wexler at [merinwexler411@gmail.com](mailto:merinwexler411@gmail.com)

**The deadline is May 19, 2025**  
**Application Form and Guidelines are available on the PSCSW website:**  
**[www.pscw.org](http://www.pscw.org)**

## GUIDELINES FOR THE PSCSW AWARDS FOR CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

These guidelines are applicable to students working in all field settings, including those offering single-session or short-term case assignments, as well as those providing opportunity for ongoing client and/or family contact. The guidelines are applicable to the student's role as a primary-service provider or as a support-term member and to interventions with individuals or families. **Judges will consider the written quality of the paper including style, grammar, organization, focus and flow. *All identifying client and agency information must be rendered anonymous.* An abstract consisting of 5 – 8 sentences is required to headline the facts of the case, central points of discussion and conclusions.** Many students have found that by following these guidelines, they can adapt a case-study paper they wrote for one of their classes to be competitive for the program.

### I. Introduction to Practice Setting

- A. Description of the practice setting and focus of service.
- B. Description of the population served, including socio-economic, community and cultural factors.
- C. Ease of access and/or barriers for the population served.

### II. Case Presentation: Case Study of Individual Client, Family or Group

- A. Presenting problem or precipitating event that triggered client contact with the agency (individual, family or group).
- B. Bio-psycho-social assessment of the client (individual, family or group).
  1. Biological: Age, sex, physical appearance, physical health, level of intellectual functioning, cognitive deficits. If the client is a child, include developmental history. Include behaviors that may have biological effects such as eating disorders and substance abuse.
  2. Psychological: Mood/affect, psychological functioning, psychopathology, family history of mental illness, substance abuse, trauma history.
  3. Social Factors: Client's family and social relationships, sexual and gender identity, ethno-cultural identity, economic situation including access to basic needs.
- C. Clinician's initial assessment of client and presenting problem including DSM-5 if indicated. To what extent are client's behaviors adaptive? Systemic oppression or societal or environmental injustice impacting the case should be noted.
- D. Why did you choose this client?

### III. Review of the Literature

- A. Present and document theories relevant to case study.
- B. Explain clinical interventions or strategies implemented.
- C. Provide rationale for chosen intervention or strategies particularly as they relate to the initial assessment, to the literature review and the nature and parameters of the setting.

### IV. Process of Treatment

- A. Treatment goals and expectations of progress (including constraints such as the practice setting, time frame, the role of the clinician, level of client engagement, etc.).
- B. Description of the clinical relationship including examples of the working alliance from actual sessions, clinician's use of self, transference, and countertransference. These concepts pertain to clients receiving ongoing services as well as clients utilizing short-term interventions.
- C. Description of student's collaboration with other treatment team members or professionals, if applicable.

- D. Discussion of client's response to treatment noting intrapsychic and interpersonal growth and changes in external functioning.
- E. Discussion of how the NASW Code of Ethics is relevant to the intervention process, particularly the six core values and standards of responsibility one through three.
- F. What is the most salient learning garnered from the experience?

### V. Use of Supervision

- A. Description of case or organization-related questions, self-awareness, self-growth and guidance inside the supervision process.
- B. Description of student's relationship with supervisor including, if applicable, any challenges in the supervision process and how those were negotiated.

### VI. Conclusion

- A. Evaluation of your work. What went well? What would you do differently? What would be your goals or expectations if you continued to work with this client or with this agency?
- B. Self-Reflection: How did writing this paper add to your understanding of your experience? What did you learn about the client's social, cultural and economic reality? About the organization and its mission? What did you learn about yourself?

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## PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

Students who want to be considered for the ***PSCSW Awards for Clinical Excellence*** should email the application form to [pscsw@pscsw.org](mailto:pscsw@pscsw.org). In addition, you must:

1. Complete the application form.
2. Complete one case-study paper, 20 pages or less. ***The paper must preserve the client's and the agency's anonymity and disguise all identifying details.*** Please apply a descriptive title, include a reference page and utilize APA format. Please adhere to the guidelines provided as closely as possible in writing the paper as the judges will reference them in their review. If your clinical work does not correspond to a particular guideline, please integrate an explanation into the paper. Candidates may find that papers written for course work with revisions that follow the guidelines will meet the criteria to be considered for the Award.
3. Obtain written permission (a hardcopy letter) from the agency to submit paper for review. Send permission letter and application form to: **PSCSW, 300 Brookside Avenue, Building 4, Suite 25, Ambler, PA 19002**. Please indicate to agency administrators that identifying details of the case will be disguised and the paper will not be published by PSCSW but may be available for PSCSW members to read upon request. If administrators are not available, please contact the awards program coordinator.
4. Submit your paper by email, attaching the application form and paper in Microsoft Word, and send to [pscsw@pscsw.org](mailto:pscsw@pscsw.org).

Put "**PSCSW Paper Competition**" in the subject line. You will get a confirmation email. You **must** send the agency permission letter by mail, postmarked by the deadline. Please keep PSCSW informed of any changes in your phone number or email address.

**The deadline is May 19, 2025**  
**Application Form and Guidelines are available on the PSCSW website:**  
[www.pscw.org](http://www.pscw.org)