

**Saint Louis University  
School of Social Work**

**MSW Field Education  
Policy and Procedures Manual**

**2025-2026**



**SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

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<https://catalog.slu.edu/colleges-schools/social-work/social-work-msw/>

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## I. Introduction

Welcome to Field Education! Many students report that field education is the best part of social work education. It is the “signature pedagogy” due to the uniqueness in which students are prepared to become professional social workers. As part of the MSW degree, students will complete 3 practica<sup>1</sup>. “Practica” is a Latin word meaning “practical trainings.” In the practica, students will have structured learning agreements that focus on competencies needed for the generalist foundation and advanced practice. In developing competencies, students will have designated practice behaviors that include skill and knowledge development, as well as integration of social work ethics. In the practica, the emphasis will be on skill development in micro, mezzo, and macro practice, while also having learning through practice behaviors in social policy, human behavior, research, cultural competence, and ethics.

The practicum experience involves supervision, training, and mentoring from a qualified MSW Field Instructor (and when relevant to the concentration, a BCBA supervisor) in an approved social service agency or human service organization. In practica, students will provide social work services and function in master’s level social work positions.

Students will have a supportive and helpful relationship for their practica as they work closely with a Faculty Liaison who has expertise in their area of advanced practice and concentration. The Faculty Liaison will help with the planning and preparation, designing of learning agreement, visiting at mid-semester, and review work for the final evaluation and grade. In addition, the role is to facilitate quality practicum experiences and assist with any challenges. Further information on the practicum, the office of field education’s policy and procedures, and other helpful information follow.

## II. School mission, goals, and program competencies

The School’s mission and goals, and the MSW Program competencies frame the education experience throughout the coursework and practica.

The School’s mission: *Saint Louis University School of Social Work prepares students for professional social work and applied behavior analysis practice with a commitment to social justice and the empowerment of vulnerable and oppressed populations. The School strives for a dynamic community of learning with excellence in teaching, research, and service.*

The goals of the School of Social Work are:

- 1) **To use knowledge, values, and skills in generalist social work practice.**

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<sup>1</sup> Students in MSW-MS ABA dual degree or ABA concentration, will enroll in additional semesters, clarified later in this document as well as the ABA Field Manual

- 2) To use knowledge, values, and skills in advanced social work and applied behavior analysis practice.
- 3) To contribute to the advancement of knowledge of the professions.
- 4) To use skills, talents, and time in pursuit of social justice in the community.

### III. Master of social work (MSW) competencies

#### A. Generalist Foundation Competencies

***At the completion of the MSW generalist foundation courses and practicum, students will demonstrate the ability to:***

- 1) Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
- 2) Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice
- 3) Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice
- 4) Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
- 5) Engage in policy practice
- 6) Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- 7) Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- 8) Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- 9) Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

(adopted from CSWE EPAS, 2022)

#### A. Advanced Practice Competencies

***As delivered through the concentration coursework and practica, advanced practice competencies build on the generalist foundation curriculum. At the completion of the advanced practice coursework and practica, students will demonstrate the ability to:***

- 1) Applied Behavior Analysis Concentration<sup>2</sup>
  - Construct applied behavior analysis services within the context of responsible professional social work and behavior analysis codes of ethics.
  - Demonstrate competent applied behavior analysis practice to social work clients.
  - Provide leadership in addressing social constraints that inhibit the expression of human fulfillment and human rights, especially regarding diverse and vulnerable populations.
  - Design and evaluate applied behavior analytic services provided for social work clients.

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<sup>2</sup> Students pursuing the dual degree of MSW-MS ABA will follow criteria noted for clinical concentration as well as those requirements set forward in the ABA Field Handbook for ABA-specific students, regardless of degree.



- Functionally analyze the behavior of social work clients within their social context.

### 2) Community and Organization Concentration

- Provide leadership in a variety of roles in community and organization practice.
- Uses codes of ethics and human rights principles to guide practice with communities and organizations.
- Approach community and organizational planned change using logical, scientific and theoretical frameworks.
- Demonstrate culturally competent practice with communities and organizations.
- Use research and professional expertise to improve practice with communities and organizations.

### 3) Clinical Concentration

- \* Demonstrate professional behavior consistent with social work values and ethics in clinical practice.
- \* Develop competence in working with diverse families and performing a bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment.
- \* Use evidence-based social work practice processes in clinical work with individuals, families, groups, and larger systems.
- \* Use policy practice approaches to advocate for social policies that enhance clients and clinical service delivery.
- \* Use research and clinical expertise to evaluate client, practice, and program outcomes.

## IV. MSW PRACTICUM CURRICULUM

### A. Generalist Foundation Practicum—300 hours-SWRK 5841 (ABA–SWRK 5821)

#### Description

The Generalist Foundation Practicum provides for skill development in generalist social work practice. The competencies and behavioral indicators focus on students gaining generalist skills through learning opportunities involving micro, mezzo and macro practice. This practicum serves as the basis for subsequent advanced practice. For students in dual degree MSW-Clinical and MS ABA, the foundation experience will also include an introduction to behavior analytic practice..

#### Prerequisites

- 1) In order to enroll in SWRK 5841 (ABA- SWRK 5821), Professional Foundation Practicum, students must have previously completed:

SWRK 5750 - Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families and Groups And completed

or be concurrently enrolled in all other professional foundation courses<sup>3</sup>:

SWRK 5702 - Social Policy

SWRK 5725 - Human Behavior and Environment

SWRK 5751 - Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations

- 2) Students who do not have an undergraduate degree in social work (BSW or BSSW) are required to complete 2 practica: 1-300 hour Generalist/Foundation practicum and 1 Concentration practicum over 2 semesters at the same site (600 total hours). Advanced Standing students will complete 2 practica, 300 hours each, at one site. Students completing their concentration practicum are required to complete it at one site.
- 3) The Generalist Foundation Practicum must be completed in an approved practicum site within a two-hour driving distance from the School of Social Work or its Learning Sites to enable the Faculty Liaison to conduct an on-site practicum visit. In instances where an appropriate practicum site is beyond a two-hour driving distance (i.e., Online MSW students or special request for on-ground students approved by the Director of Field Education or their designee), the practicum site, Field Instructor, and student must have access to stable, high-speed internet to conduct virtual site visits.

## **B. Advanced Practice Concentration Practica**

### Description

The concentration practicum builds on the generalist foundation and includes competencies and practice behaviors in the area of concentration.

### **1. \*Prerequisites for Clinical and Community Concentrations (SWRK 5832/5842 and 5833/5843 - 300 hours each)**

Concentration Practicum II, SWRK 5832/5842, may be completed only after the student has successfully completed the professional foundation courses (SWRK 5702, SWRK 725, SWRK 5750, SWRK 5751, and SWRK 5841/819). The student must also have completed or concurrently be enrolled in the appropriate concentration core courses:

- 1) Community and Organization Concentration
  - SWRK 5721—Community Theory and Practice
  - SWRK 5785—Organization Planning and Programming
- 2) Clinical Concentration<sup>4</sup>
  - SWRK 5755—Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice (must be taken concurrently with

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<sup>3</sup> Note, students in the dual degree program for MSW Clinical Concentration and MS ABA or ABA concentrations should meet with their advisor to discuss the variation to this prerequisite.

<sup>4</sup> Note, students in the dual degree program for MSW Clinical Concentration and MS ABA should meet with their advisor to discuss the variation to this prerequisite.

SWRK 5842 1<sup>st</sup> Clinical Concentration Practicum)

- SWRK 5742—Human Behavior and the Social Environment Part II

Additional Concentration Practicum Information:

- 1) Practicum III, SWRK 5833/5843, may be completed only after the completion of Practicum II, SWRK 5832/5842.
- 2) Practicum V, SWRK 5844, is an elective that may be completed at any point following the completion of SWRK 5841.
- 3) Each concentration has specific competencies and behavioral indicators. Practica II and III must have a focus consistent with the chosen area of concentration.

**2. \*Prerequisites for ABA Concentration (SWRK 5822, 5823, and 5824, 350 hours each or ABA 5116 –225 hours)**

Concentration Practicum II, SWRK 5822, may be completed only after the student has successfully completed the professional foundation courses (SWRK 5725, SWRK 5750, SWRK 5751, and SWRK 5821) and concurrently enrolled in SWRK 5702. The student must also have completed or concurrently be enrolled in the appropriate concentration core courses:

Applied Behavioral Analysis

SWRK-ABA 5746 Principles and Concepts in Behavior Analysis Additional Concentration Practicum Information:

- 1) Practicum II, SWRK 5823, may be completed only after the completion of Practicum I, SWRK 5822.
- 2) Practicum III, SWRK 5824, may be completed only after the completion of Practicum II, SWRK 5823.
- 3) Practicum IV, ABA5116, may be completed only after the completion of practicum III, SWRK 5824.
  - a. SWRK 5825 is an elective that may be completed at any point following the completion of SWRK 5821 and can occur separately from all other experiences, or it can be selected in lieu of ABA 5116, reflecting supervision from both ABA and social work supervisors. This may be selected following the successful completion of SWRK 5824.

**C. Recommended Courses for Students Interested in Practica Outside their Concentration Area**

The MSW curriculum offers considerable flexibility for MSW students. Students may choose to complete a practicum that is outside the domain of their chosen concentration. The following chart offers recommendations for coursework for specific types of settings. For example, a student in the family concentration may wish to complete a practicum in a hospital setting. Specific courses in the health and

mental health concentration taken as electives can offer a student the specific information helpful for success in that setting.

### MSW Courses Recommended for MSW Practica Outside of Chosen Concentration

Level of Practicum	Type of Practicum Setting and/or Services Provided	Required	Strongly Recommended <i>(Courses that have been completed prior to the practicum or taken concurrently with the practicum)</i>
Concentration Practica Clinical Sites	Hospital: Acute Medical	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5755:</b> Social Work Practice in the Health Field <b>SWRK 5791:</b> Pharmacology and Social Work <b>SWRK 5735:</b> Complementary Approaches to Healing in Social Work Practice
	Hospital: Psychiatric	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5742:</b> Evidenced-based Practice in Community Mental Health <b>SWRK 5762:</b> Clinical Diagnosis
	Outpatient Mental Health	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5742:</b> Evidenced-based Practice in Community Mental Health <b>SWRK 5744:</b> Substance Abuse Interventions <b>SWRK 5762:</b> Clinical Diagnosis
	Community Mental Health	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5742:</b> Evidenced-based Practice in Community Mental Health <b>SWRK 5744:</b> Substance Abuse Interventions <b>SWRK 5762:</b> Clinical Diagnosis <b>SWRK 5772:</b> Cognitive Behavior Therapy in Social Work Practice

	Hospice	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5745:</b> Health and Mental Health Interventions with Older Adults <b>SWRK 5755:</b> Social Work Practice in the Health Field <b>SWRK 5786:</b> Death, Dying, and Grief
	Rehabilitation: Acute Physical or Sub acute	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5755:</b> Social Work Practice in the Health Field
	Community Health Center	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5734:</b> Health and Human Behavior <b>SWRK 5755:</b> Social Work Practice in the Health Field
	Skilled Nursing Facility	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5745:</b> Health and Mental Health Interventions with Older Adults <b>SWRK 5755:</b> Social Work Practice in the Health Field
	Home Health Agency	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5745:</b> Health and Mental Health Interventions with Older Adults <b>SWRK 5755:</b> Social Work Practice in the Health Field
	Schools	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5720:</b> School Social Work <b>SWRK 5760:</b> Behavior Interventions with Children & Adolescents <b>SWRK 5808:</b> Social Work, Education, & Individuals with Exceptionality

	Clinical/Therapy	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5741:</b> Family Interaction Under Stress <b>SWRK 5742:</b> Evidenced-based Practice in Community Mental Health <b>SWRK 5757:</b> Foundations of Family Practice <b>SWRK 5762:</b> Clinical Diagnosis <b>SWRK 5769:</b> Marital/Couples Counseling <b>SWRK 5772:</b> Cognitive Behavior Therapy in Social Work Practice <b>SWRK 5777:</b> Classic Approaches to Family Practice <b>SWRK 5829:</b> Post-Modern Approaches to Family Practice
	Trauma Care		<b>SWRK 5773:</b> Trauma Care <b>SWRK 5775:</b> Advanced SW Practice in Trauma with Children and Adolescents <b>SWRK 5776:</b> Advanced SW Practice in Trauma with Adults
Concentration Practica Com/Org Sites	Community Organizing/Faith- Based Organizing	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5721:</b> Community Theory & Practice
	Faith- Based Social Ministry	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5715:</b> Social Work Practice with people and communities experiencing poverty <b>SWRK 5704:</b> Spirituality and Social Work
	Homeless Services	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5715:</b> Social Work Practice with Families & Communities Experiencing Poverty

	Economic Development, Community Development	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5721:</b> Community Theory & Practice
	Advocacy	All foundation courses and SWRK 707 Policy Practice for Social Justice	<b>SWRK 5701:</b> Social Justice: Human Liberation and Community Building <b>SWRK 5716:</b> Diversity and Anti-Oppression Practice <b>SWRK 5717:</b> Foundations of Peacemaking
	Administration/ Planning	All foundation courses and the appropriate courses indicated for student's concentration	<b>SWRK 5785:</b> Organizational Planning & Programming <b>SWRK 5798:</b> Nonprofit Management <b>SWRK 5799:</b> Social Entrepreneurship <b>SWRK 5828:</b> Fundraising for Nonprofit Organizations
Additional Practice areas	Corrections/Justice system  Intimate Partner Violence Addictions Global  Veterans		<b>SWRK 5729:</b> Social Work Practice in Corrections <b>SWRK 5711:</b> Social Work and the Law <b>SWRK 5744:</b> Substance Abuse Interventions <b>SWRK 5771:</b> IPV: Contemporary Strategies for SW Practice <b>SWRK 5703:</b> International Social Work (Trips: India, Ghana, Cuba) <b>SWRK 5705:</b> Practice in Global Issues <b>SWRK 5756:</b> Clinical and Public Health Approaches to Working with Veterans and Military Families

## **V. Roles, responsibilities and expectations in field education**

### **A. Role of the Student**

The School of Social Work uses a structured self-selection model for practicum selection. As such, regular communication with their Faculty Liaison throughout the practicum planning and practicum search phase is critical. It is the student's responsibility to check their SLU email regularly and respond to communications from their Faculty Liaison in a timely manner. The deadline for final confirmation of practicum for MSW students is set and communicated at the beginning of each semester; failure to meet this deadline can result in the delay of starting practicum. In the event that a student misses the deadline for confirming practicum, it is their responsibility to maintain weekly contact with their Faculty Liaison to apprise them of their progress in the process (contacting sites scheduling interviews, interviewing, making a decision, etc.)

In consultation with the assigned Faculty Liaison, students are responsible for securing a practicum site. Students have a wide variety of choices in selecting their practica options from the school's approved practicum sites. Students initiate the practicum planning process by completing and submitting a "Request for Liaison" form to the Office of Field Education through the Field Education page on the School of Social Work's website; the window for doing so and explicit steps will be communicated via the SSW Field Canvas page.

Students will be notified of their assigned Faculty Liaison via email from the Field Education Director after their request has been approved. Students then contact their Faculty Liaison for a planning appointment as soon as possible. Students who reside outside of the St. Louis Metro area may have a more active role in establishing their practicum site (i.e.: identifying potential practicum locations, contacting potential practicum sites, etc.). To ensure this is a successful placement experience, early and frequent initial meetings and communication with your assigned Faculty Liaison will be required. After consulting with the Faculty Liaison, students have the responsibility to follow-up with desired agencies and organizations to pursue setting up formal interviews with the professionals who serve as the contact persons for their agencies. The process is similar to a job search and employment interview. Students will need to have a professional résumé and cover letter ready for the process. Contacts can be made through emailing or telephoning the listed contact for the specific practica.

Prior to contacting and interviewing, students need to be able to articulate their interests in the practicum site, their desired learning experiences, and their career goals. Students should have researched the practicum site through reading their website or other on-line materials to have knowledge of what the agency's mission, programs, and services include. During the interview, the Field Instructors may ask about students' interests in completing a practicum at the agency, their learning style and needs for supervision, and previous volunteer or employment background that can provide some experience for the practicum. Students should also be prepared to ask questions that will provide information on learning experiences, preferred times for practica, and style of supervision. Students are then able to determine if the practicum is



a “fit” for them if they receive an offer. Students are free to have as many interviews or offers that they desire to locate a practicum. It is very important to be professional and respond to all offers. It may be that the student would like to have one practicum first and so they can negotiate with other offers to have a future practica.

The student’s Faculty Liaison is available to provide additional resources or ideas in the process. Once a student has selected an offer, a Confirmation of Practicum form is submitted through a link provided by the student’s Faculty Liaison. If the student has not confirmed their practicum site with the Faculty Liaison, practicum work hours may not be counted.

Students are required to submit their Learning Agreements to their Faculty Liaison via Tevera (soon to be rebranded as "Experiential Learning Cloud") within three weeks of the beginning of each semester (due date to be announced in seminar class and posted on the School of Social Work site and on the School of Social Work’s Field Education page on Canvas). In addition, the student will track their completed hours to record their practicum and supervision hours within Tevera (soon to be rebranded as "Experiential Learning Cloud"). This log will be submitted to the Field Instructor via Tevera (soon to be rebranded as "Experiential Learning Cloud") for approval. Students will also work with their Field Instructors to complete their final evaluation. All documents, and their stages of completion, are visible to your Faculty Liaison in Tevera (soon to be rebranded as "Experiential Learning Cloud").

Students are also expected to contact their Faculty Liaison as soon as any concerns should arise in the practicum.

Students are expected to follow the policies and procedures of the following:

- Office of Field Education
- Practicum Agency
- NASW *Code of Ethics* (students will sign a pledge of ethical conduct in their generalist foundation and advanced practice integrative seminars)
- For MSW ABA students (concentration or dual degree), they will also be asked to follow the BACB’s Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts
- For MSW ABA students (concentration or dual degree), students should remain current on BACB requirements around field experience for becoming certified in behavior analysis

## **B. Role of the Faculty Liaison**

The Faculty Liaison serves as the “professor” for the practicum courses. The Faculty Liaison is ultimately responsible for the grading of the practicum. The Faculty Liaison provides the on-going linkage between the student, agency, and school. The Faculty Liaison has the following key roles:

- 1) Planning: In /planning, Faculty Liaisons meet and assist students in preparing and planning for

practica through reviewing the practicum process, reviewing resumes, practicing interviewing skills, and providing referrals on possible practicum sites that meet the students interests and learning needs. The Faculty Liaison will also work with the Director of Field Education in approving any new practicum sites, Field Instructors, or place-of-employment practica. Faculty Liaisons, along with the Director of Field Education, have the discretion to determine the readiness of a student for practicum.

- 2) **Monitoring:** In monitoring, the Faculty Liaison assists, reviews, and approves students' learning agreements. In addition, the Liaison is available to the student or Field Instructor at any time should concerns arise.
- 3) **Evaluating:** In evaluating, the Faculty Liaison will set up a mid-semester visit with the student, Task Instructor and Field Instructor<sup>5</sup> to review the student's practicum experience and progress in meeting the learning agreement behavioral indicators. The Liaison visits primarily to support and advocate for a quality learning experience. In addition, the Liaison will be involved in any special concerns or performance issues that might arise and has the final responsibility of assigning a grade after reviewing the Field Instructor's ratings on the final evaluation and recommendation.

### **C. Role of the Practicum Agencies**

Agencies and organizations that are approved as practicum sites for the School of Social Work have agreed to the following:

- 1) Partner with the School of Social Work to provide quality practicum experiences for SLU students.
- 2) Adhere to recognized standards and evidenced-based social work practice and be in good standing within the professional community.
- 3) Provide a MSW degreed professional who is a staff member, board member, volunteer or officially affiliated with the agency that will provide supervision for the student.
- 4) Create a climate for student learning with a range of appropriate learning experiences for students.
- 5) Provide support and resources that enable the Field Instructor(s) to complete the St. Louis Collaborative's Field Instructor Certification Program within a two-year period.
- 6) Regularly update collaborative on-line database for their agency and Field Instructors and provide the school with a signed affiliation agreement.

### **D. Role of MSW Field Instructors**

Field Instructors that are approved for field instruction for students have agreed to the following:

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<sup>5</sup> For students seeking ABA concentration or dual degree with MSW, there will be two field instructors

- 1) Partner with the School of Social Work to serve as a Field Instructor.
- 2) Verify that they have a Master of Social Work degree from a CSWE-accredited school by completion of a profile in the St. Louis Field Education Collaborative Database.
- 3) Verify that they have at least two years of successful practice in social work following completion of the degree through their profile.
- 4) Verify their employment history at the agency for at least one year through the profile.
- 5) Serve as a teacher, mentor, and supervisor for students.
- 6) Meet with the student for a minimum of one hour per week of face-to-face supervision.
- 7) Commit to completing the Field Instructor Certification Program as a new Field Instructor within a two-year period.
- 8) Demonstrate ethical practice and be in good standing with the professional community.
- 9) Provide a quality learning experience appropriate to the student's level in practicum.
- 10) Assist in development and approval of the student's learning agreement.
- 11) Perform timely final evaluation and grade recommendation at the end of the student's practicum.
- 12) Contact the Faculty Liaison at any time for concerns or resources.
- 13) Nominate students for "Outstanding Practicum Student" when indicated.

In the rare situation where the Field Instructor is not "affiliated" with the agency, the agency is required to provide permission and support for an outside MSW to provide field instruction.

#### **E. Role of BCBA® Field Instructor**

MSW students who choose the ABA concentration or seek a dual degree of MSW-Clinical Concentration and MS ABA degree, spend their concentration practica under the guidance of a BCBA® Supervisor (along with an MSW supervisor for two of the practicum semesters). The following criteria, established by the School of Social Work, are used by the ABA Program in selecting Applied Behavior Analysts to serve as BCBA® Supervisors at affiliated agencies:

- 1) Board Certified Behavior Analyst in good standing, or
- 2) Approved University Experience: A faculty member who has been approved by the BACB® as a Supervisor in the university's approved course sequence.
- 3) And the supervisor has met one of the two requirements above and also has completed the required supervision standards set forth by the BACB®

BCBA® Supervisors are not required to attend the Certified Field Instructor training required for Field Instructors, because of their BACB® certification.

#### **F. Field Instruction Certification Program for New Field Instructors**

Saint Louis University partners with Washington University in St. Louis, University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) and Fontbonne University as members of the "St. Louis Field Education Collaborative." The

Collaborative provides the on-going database of approved practicum agencies and Field Instructors and provides orientation and advanced education sessions for Field Instructors to become “Certified Field Instructors.” This training is designed to provide an on-going focus on the provision of quality field instruction for students in the St. Louis metropolitan and nearby communities. All newer Field Instructors (since 2007) are required to complete these sessions within a two-year period. <http://www.fieldedu.com/>

### **G. Role of Task Instructors**

A Task Instructor is an agency-based professional who typically has a master’s degree in another field or has a Master of Social Work, but is not yet eligible to serve as the MSW Field Instructor. In some instances, Task Instructors may meet the qualifications to be a Field Instructor, but they may assume a Task Instructor role, such as in larger organizations and hospitals. Task Instructors serve as day-to-day supervisors and, in conjunction with a MSW Field Instructor, will assist and approve the learning agreement, participate in the mid-semester visit, and perform the final evaluation. Task Instructors are also invited to the St. Louis Field Education Collaborative’s orientation and education sessions but are not required to attend.

### **H. Role of the Director of Field Education**

The Director of Field Education is responsible for the development, management, and evaluation of the practicum operations of the School of Social Work. The Director fulfills these roles through the following responsibilities:

- 1) Structure the practicum program in concert with the School’s mission and Curriculum.
- 2) Arrange for notification to students and Field Instructors of the timeframes and deadlines for requesting and confirming practicum placements and for submitting a learning agreement with the Field Instructor.
- 3) Assign Faculty Liaisons to students for the planning, monitoring, and evaluation phases of practicum.
- 4) Support and monitor the activities of the Faculty Liaisons.
- 5) Participate with the St. Louis Field Education Collaborative for the orientation and educational programming, along with administration of the database.
- 6) Relate to community agencies affiliated with the School of Social Work as practicum sites.
- 7) Promote the development of and approval of new practicum sites.
- 8) Monitor the quality of learning experiences offered by practicum sites.
- 9) Oversee the development of policies and practices for practicum operation.
- 10) Serve as a member of relevant school committees such as program assessment.
- 11) Serve as voting member of the BSSW and MSW Program Committees.
- 12) Approve practicum placements at the student’s place of Employment.
- 13) Review and supervise revision of practicum forms including learning agreements and

evaluation instruments.

- 14) Assure that the practicum program meets CSWE guidelines.
- 15) When appropriate, pursue financial resources to support students in practica.
- 16) Network with local and national field education programs within schools of social work.
- 17) Review and revise internal docs, SSW Field Education Canvas page, & on-line practicum management system.
- 18) Perform other duties as required to assure the smooth operation of the Practicum.

### **I. Role of the Field Education Advisory Committee**

The Field Education Advisory Committee reviews and advises the Office of Field Education on issues related to practicum policies, to include site and Field Instructor criteria, evaluation of students and Field Instructors and Integrative Seminar content. Membership, appointed by the Director, includes: the Director of Field Education, Faculty Liaisons, one tenure-track faculty member, Field Instructor representatives from the BSSW program and each of the MSW advanced practice concentration areas and a minimum of one student representative each from the BSSW and MSW programs. The Field Education Advisory Committee meets a minimum of one time each semester and reports its ongoing work to the appropriate curriculum committees.

### **J. Role of the Faculty Advisors**

The Faculty Advisor provides a supportive role to the field education component of the student's curriculum. The MSW Advisor assists MSW students in registering for the appropriate practicum using the section number of the assigned Faculty Liaison and the appropriate Integrative Seminar, when needed. Advisors also can help students to take courses that would best prepare them for the specific practicum they are planning.

## **VI. Practicum requirements for dual degree programs**

The practicum requirements for the six dual degree programs are described below:

### **A. Master of Social Work/Master of Applied Behavior Analysis (MSW/MS ABA)**

Three of the practicum experiences that fulfill the degree requirements for both ABA and Social Work degrees will be shared. The focus of this shared practicum experience must address social work and behavior analytic activities. While activities can be shared, two learning agreements will be developed, one with each degree's specific language and certifying requirements for any experience with two supervisors.

### **B. Master of Social Work/Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice**

### **(MSW/MACCJ)**

Students complete 36 credit hours of MSW coursework (24 credit hours for students qualifying for Advanced Standing status). This includes foundation coursework, concentration coursework (Clinical or Community & Organization), Hallmark coursework, and the completion of practica. In addition, students complete 21 credit hours of CCJ coursework, regardless of social work Advanced Standing status. This includes 15 credit hours of core CCJ coursework and 6 credits hours of approved CCJ Electives. While there is not an internship requirement for the Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice (CCJ) degree, students are encouraged to pursue learning opportunities that allow them to obtain real-world experience. Students interested in pursuing a CCJ Internship should speak with the CCJ Program Coordinator of Internships.

### **C. Master of Social Work/Master of Public Health (MSW/MPH)**

One of the practicum experiences that fulfill the degree requirements for both the School of Social Work and the School of Public Health will be shared. The shared practicum can be any of the two concentration-level social work practica. The focus of this shared practicum experience must be in the area of social work and public health. All practica will be enrolled in and monitored through the School of Social Work. Addenda to the Clinical Concentration Learning Agreement and Evaluation have been jointly developed and approved by the School of Social Work and Public Health. The addenda integrate both public health and social work concepts and are to be completed by the student and Field Instructor as a part of the public health-focused practicum experience.

Goals developed by the School of Public Health for the public health/social work dual practicum include:

- 1) Provide the student with the “real world” experience against which to compare concepts and models learned in the classroom.
- 2) Cultivate an appreciation of the complexity of organizations and the individuals that comprise them.
- 3) Effectively distinguish the similarities and differences between public health and social work.
- 4) Demonstrate ability to work within and among established and emerging community systems.
- 5) Effectively integrate knowledge, values and skills into a combined public health/social work practice.
- 6) Provide insights for further development of a professional public health and social work identities.

### **D. Master’s in social work/Master of Arts of Pastoral Studies (MSW/MAPS)**

One of the practicum experiences that fulfill the degree requirements for the School of Social Work and Aquinas Institute of Theology will be shared. The shared practicum can be any of the two concentration-level social work practicum. The focus of this shared practicum experience must be in the area of social work and ministry. The dual practicum will be enrolled in and monitored through the School of Social Work. Addenda to the students Learning Agreement and Evaluation have been jointly developed and approved by the School of Social Work and Aquinas Institute of Theology. The addenda integrate both ministry and social work concepts and are to be completed by the student and Field Instructor as a part of the ministry-focused practicum experience.

The goals of the Joint Practicum are:

- 1) To foster the student's professional identity as a minister through:
  - a. Sharing collaborative responsibility for ministry ministerial or social service professionals and with other staff or volunteer colleagues;
  - b. Relating pastorally and professionally to clients;
  - c. Balancing the demands of professional ministry with those of private life.
- 2) To foster personal accountability and integration as a minister through:
  - a. Dialogue and communication with staff members;
  - b. Careful and formal supervision;
  - c. Visitation from the Aquinas Institute Director of Field Education.
- 3) To foster pastoral leadership through:
  - a. Broad orientation and experience of the work of an agency or social service site;
  - b. Exercising leadership in the work of an agency;
  - c. Ecumenical and neighborhood collaboration;
  - d. Taking creative initiative in response to perceived needs.
- 4) To discern a religious and ministerial vocation through:
  - a. Doing ministry;
  - b. Integrating study and personal prayer with ministry;
  - c. Receiving and responding to feedback;
  - d. Finding happiness and meaning in life and ministry.

#### **E. Master of Social Work/Master of Public Administration (MSW/MPA)**

For the two concentration practica, students in the MSW/MPA program will enroll for practicum in the social work program and the MPA internship. Students will complete the academic and reporting requirements for both degrees during these semesters, including an integrative paper required for the MPA internship.

Students in this dual program register for SWRK 5832/5842 and SWRK 5833/5843, which is cross-listed with the MPA internship course numbers. The MPA program will utilize the final evaluations of completion of the two social work practica as meeting the internship requirement for the MPA. Students make copies and provide to the Director of the MPA Program.

Supervision for the fieldwork will occur in both programs at the University and in the agency. For the University MPA supervision, students should consult the Director of the MPA program regarding their practica experience. For the social work program, students have a Faculty Liaison to provide oversight for the practicum experience.

#### **F. Master of Social Work/Juris Doctorate (SLU School of Law)**

SLU Law School offers legal internships but there is not the opportunity for students to function as both a social worker and attorney, so practica are separate.

## VII. General practicum policies and procedures in the MSW program

### A. Eligibility for Practicum

MSW students must meet the course prerequisites (as described below) and not be on admission, academic expectations, or professional competence probation in order to enroll in practicum courses. Students who believe they will be getting off probation at the end of a semester can request and plan a practicum, but will not be able to complete it unless they are officially removed from probationary status. Field Education faculty are stewards of the profession of social work with an ethical obligation to clients, to colleagues, practice settings, and the profession. As such, Faculty Liaisons and the Director of Field Education may engage in discussions to determine the readiness of a student for practicum, with consideration of students' academic preparedness and their overall standing with the University. Students in ABA concentration or dual degree programs must meet the qualifications above and also have started one of the primary ABA courses (e.g. Principles and Concepts in Applied Behavior Analysis)

### B. Hours Required for Practicum

Practica in all advanced practice concentrations (except Applied Behavior Analysis-ABA; see next paragraph for specific ABA requirements) require a time commitment of 300 clock hours. The student is required to complete a minimum of 10 hours/week at their practicum site. The minimum duration of a practicum is 11 weeks. The maximum number of hours that a student can accrue is 30/week, unless the student is completing two practica within the same semester. The maximum time allowed for the completion of a practicum is 20 weeks. (Please see Practicum Enrollment Options below).

\* Students in the Applied Behavioral Analysis concentration (MSW ABA) are required to complete 300 clock hours in the MSW Foundation Practicum and 350 clock hours for Practicum I, II, and III, and 225 hours for Practicum IV Concentration, for a total of 1275 for **Concentration** Practicum I-IV. The student is required to complete a minimum of 10 hours/week at their practicum site. The minimum duration of a practicum is 11 weeks.

The maximum time allowed for the completion of a practicum is 20 weeks. The maximum number of hours that a student can accrue is 30 per week. The student must be engaged in the practicum at least three weeks per month.

Students must be supervised at least weekly for at least 10% of the total hours they spend in practicum. Total supervision must be at least 1275 hours<sup>6</sup> (*minimum*) across the four semesters in order to meet BCBA® requirements. Other parameters include supervision occurring six times monthly, and at least one direct

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<sup>6</sup> BACB® requires 1500 experience hours. After four practica, students will have earned 1275 hours. Students may work more than this requirement in between semesters to reduce how many hours they have to work post-graduation before sitting for the BACB® certification exam but should talk with their field liaison about any parameters with this modification.



observation supervision experience. Review of all requirements can be found in the ABA Field Manual and is reviewed in seminar classes.

### **C. Counting of Hours While “On Call”**

When the practicum involves the student to be “on call,” and carry a cell phone, the student may only count the time that they are actually engaged in client work and paperwork associated with the client interaction. Students should keep careful records of their time spent on-task while on beeper call. Students should always have a supervisor or staff member available for consultation while “on call.”

### **D. Total Practicum Hours**

Students in the Clinical and Community & Organization concentrations are required to complete a total of 900 clock hours of practica. Students in the Applied Behavioral Analysis concentration must complete 1275 clock hours of practica. A student may receive advanced standing for the professional foundation practicum based on prior undergraduate achievement in a CSWE-accredited social work program. Students receiving advanced standing credit for their BSSW practicum complete two practica (600 hours),

rather than three (900 hours) with the exception of students in the Applied Behavioral Analysis program, who will complete 1275 hours. Note: after four semesters of practica, students will receive 1275 hours of the 1500 BACB ® required experience hours. Students may work additional hours within their semesters, or work up to 225 hours additional following graduation, to complete these remaining hours.

### **E. Two-Semester Concentration Practica**

Students are required to take 3 practica, 300 hours each. It is recommended that they use at least 2 sites and/or 2 different Field Instructors. Please plan with your Liaisons to ensure the best possible learning experience. Advanced standing students will complete 2 practica, 600 hours total, at one site. Students completing a specialization are required to take their two-semester concentration practica at one site. Students in Applied Behavior Analysis will take four concentration practica for 350 hours each semester (Practicum I, II, III) or 225 hours each semester (Practicum IV) in addition to the foundation practica. For at least the semesters that students receive MSW supervision, practicum students must remain at the same site, but following this, students may consider completing hours at different sites, which is strongly encouraged.

A block practicum (i.e., two practica in the same semester) can also satisfy this requirement. Students are not regularly allowed to stay in the same site for three semesters. One exception to this rule is school social work settings that require a commitment over 720 hours because students are required to work an entire school year. Students are allowed to complete three practica at these settings.

### **F. Recording Practicum Hours**

Students must record their hours and learning activities at practicum in Tevera (soon to be rebranded as

"Experiential Learning Cloud"). Each semester, students will submit their practicum and supervision hours to their Field Instructor for approval via Tevera (soon to be rebranded as "Experiential Learning Cloud") and at the end of each semester will attest to their final hours through the Tevera (soon to be rebranded as "Experiential Learning Cloud") platform. ABA students should be mindful to monitor restricted vs. unrestricted activities as well as monitoring of group vs. individual supervision (group supervision is limited to 50% of total ABA supervision experience) Time spent in activities that count toward the total required hours are those that generally would count as employment activities. Examples of activities for which students would not be able to count their hours include meals taken out of agency, traveling to and from the practicum site, and after-hour social events associated with the practicum. Practicum hours may be counted for time conducting research or working on projects that are performed off-site, but must be limited to 30 hours or less of the 300 hours required for one practicum. In addition, any off-site work must have products or an outcome related to a learning objective (See "Off-Site Practicum Activities" section below) and be approved by the Field Instructor in advance. **If the student has not confirmed their practicum site with the Faculty Liaison, the students should not be completing any practicum-related activities. Note that any hours completed before a practicum site has been confirmed will not be counted. Students in ABA concentration must also have a SLU Supervision Contract completed and signed before counting hours.**

### **G. Academic Credits**

For successful completion of SWRK 5841 (MSW Generalist/Foundation Practicum) and SWRK 5833/5843 (2nd Concentration Practicum), students will be awarded two credit hours, as an additional one credit hour is designated for completion of the concurrent Integrative Seminar (i.e., either SWRK 5819 Foundation Integrative Practice Seminar with SWRK 5841 MSW Foundation Practicum or SWRK 5820 Concentration Integrative Practice Seminar with SWRK 5832 1<sup>st</sup> Com/Org Concentration Practicum and SWRK 5843 2<sup>nd</sup> Clinical Concentration Practicum).

Three credit hours are granted for the successful completion of SWRK 5833 (2<sup>nd</sup> Com/Org Concentration Practicum) and SWRK 5842 (1<sup>st</sup> Clinical Concentration Practicum). Students may opt for a fourth practicum, SWRK 5834/5844. Elective practica also receive three credits. ABA concentration students will notice their practicum hours are designated as 2 credit hours (SWRK 5822, 5823, 5824) or 1 credit hour (ABA 5116). There is a corresponding seminar for Practicum I and IV, each for 1 credit hour.

### **H. Practicum Enrollment Options**

It is highly recommended that students enroll in SWRK 5841 Generalist Foundation Practicum I after completing the following generalist foundation courses: SWRK 5750 Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups, SWRK 5751 Social Work with Communities and Organizations, SWRK 5702 Social Policy, and SWRK 725 Human Behavior and the Social Environment. This provides strong integration for being concurrently enrolled in advanced practice courses. It is required that the generalist foundation practicum be completed before the first 18 credit hours in the program are completed.

A **concurrent practicum** consists of one practicum during the semester completed in no less than 10 weeks and no more than 20 weeks. This flexibility in the duration of the practicum equates to approximately 15-30 hours/week in the Fall, Spring, or Summer.

**Students may begin the practicum two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester<sup>7</sup> and extend the practicum two weeks following the end of the semester** for a total of 20 weeks. Arrangements that deviate from this policy must be arranged prior to the start of the practicum by the Faculty Liaison.

A **block practicum** consists of two concentration-level practica completed during the semester in no less than 10 weeks and no more than 20 weeks. This may be completed in approximately 32 hours/week in the Fall or Spring semesters or 40 hours/week in the Summer semester. Students may begin the practicum two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester and extend the practicum two weeks following the end of the semester for a total of 20 weeks. Arrangements that deviate from this policy must be arranged prior to the start of the practicum by the Faculty Liaison. MSW Foundation and Concentration practica may not be completed within the same semester.

### **I. Practicum Orientation**

Students will have two orientations to Field Education. The first will be a part of the day-long, new student orientation. The second, which will be more in-depth, will occur in the first foundation course, SWRK 5750 (Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families and Groups). A special orientation will be required for advanced standing students to attend. Additional practicum information also occurs during the SWRK 5819 Foundation Integrative Seminar. Further orientation to the Applied Behavior Analysis concentration also occurs within the first class of the SWRK 5820 Concentration Integrative Seminar.

### **J. Practicum Planning**

Each practicum must be requested on the Field Education page of the School of Social Work site, using the "Request for Practicum" link. Each practicum must also be confirmed, via the "Confirmation of Practicum" link provided by the Faculty Liaison in the **preceding** full semester prior to beginning a practicum. Deadlines for confirmations will be established by the Office of Field Education. During the orientation process, students will be provided with information regarding access to the School of Social Work website.. Students will be required to update their résumés, develop a cover letter, and review interviewing skills in pursuing a practicum. Faculty Liaisons, along with the Director of Field Education, have the discretion to determine the readiness of a student for Practicum. If a student has not confirmed their practicum site with the Faculty Liaison, hours may not be counted.

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<sup>7</sup> Students in ABA concentrations may start two weeks early for every semester except for the first experience, which may only begin following the launch of their first behavior analytic-focused class. For any semester, regardless of early start date, a new supervision contract must be reviewed and signed.

### **K. Evening and/or Weekend Practica**

Students who need evening and weekend practica hours due to employment or other responsibilities benefit from starting the practicum planning process as early as possible in the semester preceding the intended practicum. Some sites offer evening and weekend hours in addition to day hours for practicum learning opportunities. However, fewer agencies offer evening-only and /or weekend hours supervised by an eligible Field Instructor than those that offer day hours or a combination of day and evening/weekend hours. Students are encouraged to explore the extent to which their schedule can be flexible and to share their schedule constraints with their Faculty Liaison in the planning process.

MSW supervision must be available during this time, although the MSW supervisor does not need to be at the site every hour that the student completes hours. However, some staff must be available on site for student consultation when the student is completing hours.

### **L. Integrative Practice Seminars**

Students enrolled in SWRK 5841 Foundation Practicum, SWRK 5832 1<sup>st</sup> Com/Org Concentration Practicum, and SWRK 5843 2<sup>nd</sup> Clinical Concentration Practicum must enroll concurrently in the respective Integrative Seminar. The seminars meet four times throughout the semester for three hours each session, resulting in a total of 12 hours/1 credit hour. ABA Concentration students enrolled in SWRK 5822 must enroll concurrently in the respective Integrative Seminar, which meets five total times for three hours each meeting.

The purpose of the seminar courses is to provide an opportunity for students to integrate theoretical constructs and information gained in the classroom with the application of social work practice. In addition, the seminars are designed to:

- 1) Provide additional integration of coursework and daily practice;
- 2) Enhance student's knowledge and skill base through peer sharing;
- 3) Provide a supportive opportunity for students to debrief on practice challenges.

### **M. Request for Extension of Due Date for Learning Agreement**

The Learning Agreement(s) is/are due three (3) weeks from the start of the semester according to a deadline established by the Office of Field Education, regardless of the start date for a practicum, no later than the third Friday after starting the practicum. If more time is needed, a "Request for Extension of Due Date for Learning Agreement" form must be completed and submitted to the Faculty Liaison. Students who fail to complete and turn in the form risk losing credit for hours completed at the practicum after the third week. **The forms are located on the SSW Field Education page under 'Forms'.**

### **N. Problems in Practicum/Termination of Practicum**

Students and/or Field Instructors are to contact their Faculty Liaison should a problem or serious concern

arise in the course of the practicum. Depending on the situation, the Faculty Liaison may arrange a special meeting and/or develop an additional plan or agreement, if necessary. Such a situation may occur as a result of agency or field instructor related challenges, such as insufficient resources and/or experiences to provide for an adequate learning experience; agency restructuring; field instructor leaving agency or not able to provide field instruction; or an unresolvable “lack of fit” between the student and field instructor.

Additionally, a termination will result from a student being asked to leave the agency or receiving an “Unsatisfactory” in the first of a two-semester practica commitment based on the final evaluation average falling below a “3” and/or performance or professional competence issues. Students are not to leave their practicum until they have discussed the situation with their Faculty Liaison. The Faculty Field Liaison will work with and gather information from the student and field instructor in order to determine the course of action. The courses of action may include placement of the student in a new field agency or with a new field instructor. If the situation involves issues of performance, professional competence, or ethical violations, then the termination will result in an “Unsatisfactory” grade for the practicum and may also be referred to the School of Social Work’s Dean or Associate Dean for further review to determine if additional action is warranted. In this case, the student would have to repeat the practicum and the 300 practicum hours required as well as the corresponding integrative seminar course. If the termination is due to factors not related to the student, then the student and Faculty Liaison will determine the number of hours that can be counted at the next practicum. This determination would also require the agreement of the new site and field instructor.

#### **O. MSW Practicum at Private Practice**

Sites that may be identified as private practice are approved on a case-by-case basis and need to demonstrate that they serve a diverse populations including at-risk, low-income, and those challenged by a full range of mental health issues. Sites would likely be approved if the practice offers pro bono or sliding scale fee structure. In addition, these sites also need to be using a variety of therapeutic or practice methods to provide services to low-income populations. Students must always be identified as students in these settings. Private insurance may not be billed for student time<sup>8</sup>. Under Illinois state law, Medicaid may be billed for student services while under supervision.

#### **P. Extended Leave from a Practicum**

Students experiencing significant health or personal challenges and feel they cannot complete their practicum as planned, should consult with their Faculty Liaison to handle the situation in a professional manner. Students may not “take a break” from their practicum without Faculty Liaison approval. Students

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<sup>8</sup> With approval from the Office of Field Education and their Faculty Liaison, students may commence practicum up to two weeks prior to the start of the academic semester, with the understanding their Learning Agreement will also be due the third Friday following their practicum start date. An early start is not guaranteed, as it is dependent on multiple factors. Students in ABA concentration experiences should meet with their field liaison to discuss variations to this rule depending on activities and place of employment status.

experiencing personal issues that prevent them from completing their courses and practicum should also contact the MSW Program Director. An official “extended leave” form must be completed. Faculty Liaisons, along with the Director of Field Education, have the discretion to determine the readiness of a student to return to practicum.

#### **Q. Grading**

Grades for the practica courses include Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. Practica grades do not figure into the cumulative GPA. However, an “unsatisfactory” would count as an F per the grading policies in the MSW Program. The Field Instructor completes the final evaluation to include the ratings of practice behaviors and professional behaviors. The Field Instructor recommends a grade of “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” The Faculty Liaison has the final authority for the grade and is responsible for entering it in the Banner system once the final evaluation and time log are reviewed. An average score of less than 3.00 on a student’s final practicum evaluation results in an “unsatisfactory” for all MSW supervision. Dual and ABA concentration students must meet the requirements or/also of the ABA final evaluation, which is articulated in both the supervision contract and ABA Learning agreement.

If a student is unable to complete practicum hours during the regular semester hours due to extenuating circumstances, the Faculty Liaison has the discretion to approve an extended period of time for the student to complete practicum. This request must also be approved by the site’s Field Instructor and discussed with the Faculty Liaison before the semester ends. If the Faculty Liaison approves extended time, a grade of “In Progress” (IP) will be submitted when grades are due. The “IP” grade will be changed to “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” upon completion of the practicum per the process stated above.

#### **R. Practicum Start Date**

Students should arrange a practicum start date with their practicum site. Students may begin the practicum as early as two weeks prior to the start of a semester; students’ start dates must be confirmed with the student’s Faculty Liaison, regardless of whether they’re starting early or starting at the beginning of the semester. Students must also be aware that an early start means their Learning Agreement due date also moves up; their new Learning Agreement due date is the third Friday following their practicum start date. Students in the Applied Behavior Analysis program must have sat through their first class in their first semester. After that, students may start practicum earlier.

#### **S. Appropriate Activities**

While in practicum, students should be engaged in activities commensurate with their social work program and level of training and should avoid activities expressly prohibited by their programs. Questions regarding appropriate practicum activities can be directed to the Faculty Liaison.

#### **T. Prohibited Activities**

The distribution of medication of any kind is prohibited in practicum. If students are in a setting at which

social workers routinely distribute medication and they are asked to distribute, the Faculty Liaison should be contacted.

## U. Activities Undertaken with Caution

### 1. Physical Restraint

In the event that a student's practicum placement is within a setting and with a population where physical restraint may be needed, practicum students may assist in limited instances and only if:

- the practicum student is the only person available to assist
- the client is in immediate risk for harm
- the practicum student is **fully trained** in the formal, person-centered behavior management/de-escalation program utilized by the organization.

**Training in verbal de-escalation and approved physical restraint techniques is provided at the expense of the organization/agency/practicum site and must include real-time practice; virtual training will not fulfill this training requirement.** Training outside of those provided by the practicum site will not count as a substitute; the student must maintain any certifications in this training for the duration of the practicum experience. In the event of a certification lapse, practicum students are prohibited from assisting with physical restraint.

Additionally, practicum students are prohibited from assisting with physical restraining clients until they have obtained certification as listed above. **Until they are trained, students should not be in 1:1 situations alone with clients but may work with clients in the physical space where other employees are present (i.e.: shadowing, in classrooms, office spaces, etc.).**

If students are asked to assist with the physical restraint of a client when they are not fully trained or when their certification has lapsed, they should refrain from doing so, **and the Faculty Liaison must be notified. In the event the Faculty Liaison is not available, the student should then contact the Director of Field Education.**

### 2. Transporting Clients

If transporting clients is a common practice in their duties as a practicum student, **students should make their Faculty Liaison aware.** Students **must** be provided with properly installed car seats and booster seats by the practicum site when transporting clients for whom child passenger safety laws apply. **Students should not transport clients for whom unexpired SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ADMINISTRATION**

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**carsseats and boosters are necessary by state law but are not provided by the practicum site. If students are asked to do so, they should notify their Faculty Liaison. In the event the Faculty Liaison is not available, the student should then contact the Director of Field Education.**

Students required to transport clients for practicum activities should clarify liability issues with their personal auto insurer and their site. Students must have at least the current amount of automobile insurance required by state law. If an accident occurs in a student vehicle, the student's insurance would be the primary insurance, and the student would be responsible for the deductible. The University provides secondary insurance.

#### **V. Agency Reimbursement for Student Services**

Students shall follow agency policy regarding the collection of fees and accepting gifts. While in practicum, students may not personally keep any fees charged for their services. All revenue must be turned over to the practicum agency. Students cannot take Missouri Medicaid or private insurance clients, but can work with clients who pay on a sliding fee scale or for whom the practice receives a non-Medicaid grant for services. Illinois agencies may select to bill Illinois Medicaid for MSW student-provided services while under supervision.

#### **W. Agency Policies**

Students are required to comply with the rules and policies of the practicum site, insofar as they pertain to the student's activities while at the practicum site.

#### **X. Off-Site Practicum Activities**

Students may have up to 30 hours of off-site hours related to work for their practicum. Unless off-site duties are common practice, these hours must be approved by the student's Field Instructor **beforehand**. Appropriate off-site activities include library or internet searches, writing or designing work, or data collection/analyses. These hours must be recorded as off-site on the time log and approved by the Field Instructor. This differs from fully remote or virtual practicum placements, discussed in section SS, the Virtual/Remote Practicum Policy.

In addition, students may count activities such as attending related practicum meetings, conferences, lobby days, special lectures or trainings as practicum hours as long as the Field Instructor approves. Students are encouraged to attend coalition or community-based events for a stronger learning experience.



## Y. Learning Agreement Deadline

Learning Agreements are the central focus for students in developing practice behaviors and developing competence. These are important as they are the basis for the practicum final evaluation, record your experiences, and focus your activities to provide the integration with the curriculum. Students are encouraged to write in full sentences, proofread, and to be sure that the activity is appropriate for the designated practice behavior. The Faculty Liaison must receive Learning Agreements in Tevera (soon to be rebranded as "Experiential Learning Cloud") by the Friday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of each semester or the third week of practicum, whichever comes first. Hours may not be counted past the due date unless a Learning Agreement or an Extension form has been completed. ABA concentration students also have a Supervision Contract that must be completed prior to accruing any hours (with a Learning Agreement due 3 weeks later). Learning Agreements must be completed for both supervision experiences (in other words, if the student has an MSW and ABA supervisor, there should be two learning agreements completed).

## Z. Criminal Records

Students should inform the Director of Field Education of any information regarding felony convictions and/or other information that may impact the student's ability to secure and complete a practicum. The School of Social Work does not require or conduct criminal background checks on students. If the program is aware of criminal convictions or other pertinent information, the student will be asked to sign a release of information authorizing the program to verify the criminal history, discuss this information with approved practicum sites and provide verification of the record to the agency at which the student is confirmed to complete their practicum experience.

Conviction of a criminal offense does not necessitate barring an individual from becoming a social worker or from making a major contribution to society. Applicants for admission to the School of Social Work will be evaluated on the basis of their overall qualifications. Students should be advised, however, that a criminal conviction could prevent them from completing practicum in some agency settings.

## AA. Criminal Background Check

Practicum sites may require criminal background checks on students before they are allowed to begin their practicum. In particular, The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations requires any student completing a practicum or internship at a healthcare facility (to possibly include mental health agencies, long term care facilities, and other non-hospital settings) to have a criminal background check prior to acceptance and starting their hours. Depending on the type, number, and other factors, completion of a criminal background check can require as long as six weeks. For many agencies, **students will not be allowed to start until they have this on file at the agency.** If not done in advance of the intended start date, a significant delay could occur.

The criminal background check may be conducted through the Human Resource Department of the practicum site, as the department may have these procedures in place for prospective employees and

volunteers. The cost of background checks conducted through agencies for students may either be paid by the agency or the student may be responsible for the cost. If the agency is unable or unwilling to conduct the check, the student will be responsible for securing and paying for the criminal background check.

### Drug Test

Some practicum sites require drug testing. For a fee, drug testing can be obtained at the Student Health Services, Marchetti Towers (East). For more information, call (314) 977-2323.

### **BB. Verification of Health Records**

Students are responsible for any verification of health records, proof of immunizations or a Tuberculosis test that is required by a practicum site. Since students are required to submit this document to SLU Student Health Services, they can obtain a copy from them as well as obtain any new testing required.

### **CC. Lobbying Activities**

Students who engage in formal lobbying activities as a part of the practicum experience should discuss with the Field Instructor and their Faculty Liaison the issue of registering as a lobbyist with the appropriate governmental entity. If the student and Field Instructor determine that registration is appropriate, the student must register as a lobbyist with the practicum agency (not Saint Louis University). It is the responsibility of the student and the agency to comply with all laws and regulations relevant to lobbying.

### **DD. Sharing Sensitive Information**

The Office of Field Education and the Faculty Liaisons will not share any sensitive information without the student signing a release of information. The Faculty Liaison may share relevant or helpful information to a Field Instructor or practicum agency such as student name and that they will be contacting for an interview, level and/or concentration, and semester desired. Generally Faculty Liaisons encourage and assist students in being able to share any sensitive information themselves directly to Field Instructors. Faculty at the school are bound by FERPA (Federal Educational confidentiality guidelines) so cannot respond to all questions posed by outside field persons (including family members). Faculty can share information with a student's adviser. Question

### **EE. Safety and Security of Student in Practicum**

Safety of students in the field is a priority for the Office of Field Education. While the University does not wish students to be protected from the realities of professional practice, immersing students in the realities of practice can also expose them to safety and security risks. The University and practicum agencies must partner to reduce risks to students in practicum. Many practicum students have safety and security concerns as they enter the field practicum. If not addressed, concerns about personal safety can significantly impact learning opportunities in the practicum. Field Instructors and practicum sites, when applicable, should:

- 1) Discuss safety and security matters with students at the placement interview or at the outset of the

practicum. Information about the prevalence of or potential for violence while conducting practicum activities should be relayed to the student.

- 2) Explain and enforce agency safety protocols with students, including building and office security, emergency procedures, management of violent clients and home visit safety procedures (NOTE: students are expected to follow agency rules regarding the necessity of home visits and home visit protocol).
- 3) Provide a tour of the surrounding neighborhood or areas in which the student may work and address concerns students may have regarding work in the community.
- 4) Allow students to observe staff engaged in the work for which the student is preparing.
- 5) Allow students to be observed while engaged in learning activities.
- 6) Link students with agency-provided security resources (i.e., safety training, cellular telephones, beepers).

The following types of activities warrant special concern and, therefore, should be discussed with the Faculty Liaison and the student prior to the assignment:

- 1) Transportation of clients in the student's private vehicle;
- 2) Transportation of a client with a recent history of violent behavior;
- 3) Treatment of a client with a history of violence toward the staff;
- 4) Work in the agency at times when or in areas where other staff is not present.

Any incident or injury involving the student should be reported immediately to the Faculty Liaison.

#### **FF. Paid Practicum**

While agencies are not required to financially compensate students for practicum, the Office of Field Education encourages organizations and agencies to provide funds when possible. It is important for the Faculty Liaison to know of these arrangements as the educational experience is still primary before an employment status.

Possible funding sources for practicum include:

- 1) Agency general revenue or grant funds—Some agencies have included stipend funds for practica in grant proposal budgets. Other agencies have allocated stipend funds for students in their annual budgets or used personnel funds if the student fills in for a staff member on leave. If an agency relies on student labor to fulfill specific duties and would like to have students each semester, offering a stipend can be a very effective incentive in recruitment efforts.
- 2) Government funding—Within government agencies, a variety of governmental funding options may be made available for training stipends. For example, students working within the Veterans Administration, the Missouri Division of Family Services, AmeriCorps and Vista programs have received stipends from government funding sources. Other state and local agencies may elect to use discretionary funds.

- 3) University-secured funding—The University or School of Social Work at times obtains funding through grants that can provide a student stipend in practica. As these opportunities are available, they are posted in the E-newsletter.
- 4) Practicum at Place-of-Employment—If a potential practicum exists at a student's place of employment and would entail new and appropriate learning for the student, practicum credit may be earned at the agency with specific arrangements. An additional possibility for a paid practicum exists if the student works at a practicum site. Some students are able to successfully negotiate the completion of practicum activities while on work time within a social service agency. Place-of-Employment practica need to be individually negotiated with the Office of Field Education.

### **GG. Place-of-Employment Practica**

Students employed in a social service setting may have the option to complete up to two semesters of practicum at their place of employment. In order to broaden the learning experience, a practicum completed at a student's place of employment requires:

- 1) The practicum roles be:
  - (a) different from regular employment for **up to 20 hours per week with employer approval**;
  - (b) new learning;
  - (c) appropriate to the student's level of social work training.

Additionally, by allowing a Place-of-Employment practicum, the employer and Field Instructor must agree to assist with ensuring the job responsibilities are integrated into new learning opportunities. Documentation of this work must be completed weekly, along with documentation of separate paid work time activities and how new learning occurred.

- 1) A Field Instructor that:
  - a) meets all of the usual requirements for a Field Instructor;
  - b) a person other than the student's employment supervisor.
- 2) Students will discuss possible place-of-employment opportunities with the Faculty Liaison and initiate the completion of the "Place-of-Employment" form. The completed form is agreed upon and signed by the student, Field Instructor, employment supervision, Faculty Liaison, and Director of Field Education. Students will negotiate an outcome from the experience (e.g., project, log, etc.) with the Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison.
  - a. Place of employment practicum will require multiple check-ins and/or documentation for working hours where practicum was completed.
- 3) By completing a Place of Employment practicum, both student and Field Instructor acknowledge and accept risks associated with doing so, particularly the implications of termination of employment or practicum due to performance. When a termination of employment occurs and it is a Place of Employment practicum experience, the student must follow the procedure outlined in

this manual in Section N, entitled “ Problems in Practicum/Termination of Practicum”

The practicum arrangement must be approved by both the Faculty Liaison and the Director of Field Education.

### **HH. Liability Coverage**

The practicum agency may have established policies regarding liability coverage for student travel and practice. As these policies vary within the community, students are strongly encouraged to address and clarify these issues prior to the acceptance of a practicum. Saint Louis University provides up to \$1,000,000 in professional malpractice insurance coverage for each occurrence. Students may also elect to purchase individual malpractice coverage at their own expense through the National Association of Social Workers Insurance Trust (800/638-8799 ext. 387) or another insurance carrier. Students may contact any Faculty Liaison for more information about individual coverage options. The University can provide verification to the agency of such coverage.

The University does not provide automobile liability coverage. **Students who will be using their personal vehicle for agency business should negotiate automobile coverage with the agency at the time of the interview.**

### **II. Reimbursement to Agency**

Students are responsible for reimbursing the practicum agency should any loss, damage or breakage of equipment be caused by the student’s misuse of equipment.

### **JJ. Distance/International Practicum**

MSW students are encouraged to consider practicum experiences that are out of the greater St. Louis area, away from their home community and/or outside the United States. Students interested in an international practicum are strongly encouraged to begin to work on this possibility **two semesters in advance** of the planned semester, as international practicum arrangements involve more time to plan than domestic practica. The assigned Faculty Liaison will work with interested students to generate possible sites of interest. Students are strongly encouraged to consider many factors in their decision to complete practica abroad, such as language skills, knowledge of culture, health and safety issues and professional goals. The School has developed sites in several countries, and will work closely with students to match opportunities with student interest, skills, knowledge and professional goals. Faculty Liaisons will also work closely with students to prepare for a semester abroad, and may make recommendations about courses, readings, and other independent work prior to the international practica.

Students interested in completing a practicum away from the St. Louis area or away from their home community must ensure the following:

- 1) The student has successfully completed the Foundation practicum in a setting that is within three hours driving distance from Saint Louis University to ensure an site visit completed in person by their assigned Faculty Liaison;
- 2) The proposed practicum site and Field Instructor meet the usual requirements as a practicum site and Field Instructor in their home community (specified earlier);
- 3) All other usual requirements for a concentration practicum are fulfilled;
- 4) Arrangements have been made with the Faculty Liaison and the International Student Center (when appropriate) to complete all of the required documents for the student, practicum site and the Field Instructor;
- 5) Upon completion of the international practicum, when possible, the student will arrange a de-briefing meeting with the student and Faculty Liaison.

#### **KK. Ethics Statement**

All students in practicum must sign a statement that they understand they must comply with the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) during their practicum. The Ethics Statement will be discussed and signed during the student's first foundation and concentration level Integrative Seminars. The *Code of Ethics* is available on the School of Social Work website. Students in the ABA concentration will also be asked to review and agree to comply with the [BACB's Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#). Further, the Office of Field Education expects all students to adhere to Saint Louis University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#), which can be found in its entirety on the Office of the Provost's website and in the [Saint Louis University Student Handbook](#).

#### **LL. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)**

All students are **required** to complete a HIPAA training prior to beginning their first practicum. This requirement can be fulfilled in three ways:

- 1) submission through the Field Education Office of written documentation, signed, on letterhead, that a HIPAA training has previously been completed within the past year;
- 2) completion of a university sponsored HIPAA training; or
- 3) completion of a University-sponsored on-line HIPAA training.

**Students are not allowed to begin practicum until this requirement is complete.** For more information, students may contact the Office of Field Education for more information at (314) 977-2724.

#### **MM. Harassment Policy**

Students are not to experience any harassment in the course of practicum. However, if it should occur, the student should contact the Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison immediately. Faculty Liaisons will follow the University's Harassment policy [https://slu.policystat.com/policy/token\\_access/27bd408e-1fae-4d78-824f-87ffd2ea2019/](https://slu.policystat.com/policy/token_access/27bd408e-1fae-4d78-824f-87ffd2ea2019/) in handling any reported harassment issues that occur in practicum. In addition, the student should contact the Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison immediately in the event of harassment so agency

policy can be followed as well.

#### **NN. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 extends and implements civil rights protections for disabled individuals on the basis of race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, veteran status or disability. Students requiring an accommodation related to a disability should contact the University Office of Disability Services to document the disability. The student is encouraged to inform the agency of the accommodations needed in the interviewing phase of practicum selection. In addition, the Faculty Liaison, as professor of record, will receive a copy of the accommodations. Students cannot request accommodations in the practicum agency without having registered with the SLU office of Disability Services.

#### **OO. Academic Credit for Life or Previous Work Experience**

In accordance with Council on Social Work Education policy, academic credit for life experience, volunteer experience, and/or previous work experience cannot be granted in lieu of the field practicum courses.

#### **PP. Mandated Reporting**

As emerging social work professionals, our expectation is that students adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics* and report incidents of suspected neglect or abuse; however, we recommend students discuss these situations with their Field Instructors to gain full appreciation and knowledge of the reporting process. It is also recommended that students familiarize themselves with individual State Laws (where they are completing practicum and/or where they intend to practice after graduation) that determine who is a mandated reporter: [http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/manda.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm) and [https://dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/guidelines\\_can\\_reports.pdf](https://dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/guidelines_can_reports.pdf).

If a student suspects any form of child or elder abuse or neglect, they should inform their Field Instructor immediately. The school prefers that the Field Instructor in conjunction with the student make the mandated reporter call. This will be important as the student may have left the practicum before the investigation is completed.

#### **QQ. Conflict of Interest**

Students may not complete practicum in settings in which they have a family member who is a staff member (including owner of the agency), board member, current volunteer, or any other significant dual relationship. For further discussion, see Faculty Liaison.

#### **RR. Grievance Policy**

A “grievance” is defined as a formal inquiry or complaint requesting a review related to a school policy or procedure or a situation where the student feels that they were treated unfairly or unprofessionally by a faculty or staff member. Students are first encouraged to meet with and try to resolve any course related

issues or conflicts with the specific faculty or staff member and any overall program policies with the Director of the MSW program. Any appeals related to academic integrity must follow the procedures under the University Academic Integrity Policy.

Any student enrolled in a School of Social Work (SSW) degree program (SW/ABA/CCJ/PhD) may submit a formal written grievance to the appropriate Program Director (PD). The PD will review the grievance and convene a meeting with the student within 10 business days. The student may bring a person for support, but the support person may not speak for the student or ask questions during the meeting. Recording of the meeting will not be allowed. Within an additional five business days, the PD will provide a written response to the student.

If the student wants to appeal the Program Director's decision, the student may submit a written appeal to the SSW Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA) within 5 business days from receipt of the PD's decision. The ADAA will review the written appeal and may convene a meeting with the student and other parties as needed within 10 business days. The ADAA will provide a written response to the student within 5 business days. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean of the School of Social Work within 5 business days from receipt of the ADAA's decision. The matter will be reviewed by the Dean for adherence to process(es), and the student will be informed of the findings within 10 business days. The decision of the Dean of the SSW is final.

## **SS. Fully Remote/Virtual Practicum Policy**

### **Purpose:**

To ensure the quality, ethical integrity, and educational value of virtual practicum placements, this policy establishes the minimum requirements for approval and oversight of remote or partially remote social work field sites.

### **Eligibility Criteria for Virtual Practicum Sites:**

To be considered for a virtual or hybrid practicum placement, a host site must meet the following minimum requirements:

### **Virtual Engagement Threshold:**

At least 50% of student responsibilities must be completed virtually. Fully virtual sites are eligible.

### **HIPAA Compliance:**

The organization must be able to demonstrate compliance with all relevant HIPAA regulations in how they deliver services and maintain client confidentiality. This includes secure software platforms, data storage, communication practices, and documentation.

### **Crisis Management Support:**



The site must have a designated on-call staff member available during business hours to assist the student in managing client crises.

**Organizational Integration:**

The student must be included in regular staff meetings to encourage integration into the organizational culture and team dynamics, in addition to weekly one-on-one supervision with their assigned Field Instructor.

**Client Contact Protocols:**

Students are not permitted to engage in independent, remote client-facing work until:

- The Field Instructor has directly observed the student engaging with the client population over multiple sessions, and
- The Field Instructor has confirmed the student is adequately prepared for autonomous virtual service delivery.

**Technology and Connectivity Requirements:**

The student must have access to a fixed, stable internet connection and meet all technological expectations as outlined in SLU's [Distance Learning Checklist](#).

**Site Vetting and Approval Process:**

All virtual or hybrid practicum sites must be vetted and approved by the Director of Field Education or their designee prior to placement. Approval is contingent upon verification that the site can:

- Maintain privacy and confidentiality standards for remote service delivery, including secure software and devices.
- Provide meaningful learning opportunities aligned with all 9 CSWE Social Work Competencies and sufficient tasks to meet the required field hours.
- Establish a proactive emergency response plan that details how the student will be supported in client emergencies or high-risk situations.
- Offer a clear and structured onboarding process for the student, including:
  - Training on HIPAA-compliant platforms and documentation procedures.
  - Expectations around the use of personal or agency-issued devices for client communications (e.g., secure phones, laptops).
  - Any relevant protocols related to remote communication, data management, and supervision practices.

**Ongoing Monitoring and Compliance:**

- The Office of Field Education retains the right to conduct periodic check-ins and request documentation to verify compliance with this policy.
- Should a site fail to meet or maintain these standards, SLU reserves the right to suspend or terminate the student placement.

## **Acknowledgment:**

Students and site supervisors will be required to review and sign a Field Practicum Agreement specific to virtual placements, acknowledging understanding and acceptance of the outlined requirements.

## **VIII. Field education resource materials**

### **A. Field Education Canvas page**

The following information and materials are available:

- 1) Practicum Opportunities—announcements of new and current practicum opportunities.
- 2) Practicum Due Dates.
- 3) General Practicum Announcements.

### **B. Field Education page on the School of Social Work site**

Information available on the above site:

- 4) Office of Field Education Contact information
- 5) practicum requirements, policies and related information.
- 6) link to the Field Education Collaborative searchable practicum site database.

### **C. Information Through Email**

Students will have a great deal of communication with their Faculty Liaison and practicum Field Instructors through their SLU email accounts. It is the responsibility of students to check their SLU email account regularly for communications and respond in a timely manner.

## **IX. Office of field education resources and functions**

### **A. Field Education Curriculum Committee**

The Field Education Curriculum Committee is composed of full-time and adjunct Field Education Liaisons. The committee oversees and approves policy related to Field Education, consults with the appropriate curriculum committees, notifies and if appropriate, seeks approval from, the School Assembly of policy changes relevant to the curriculum.

### **B. Practicum Competencies and Behavioral Indicators**

The responsibility for authoring and approval of modifications to field education learning objectives is shared

between committees charged with overseeing curriculum and the Office of Field Education. Input for and approval of modifications must be gained from both prior to the implementation of the objectives. For the Office of Field Education, the Field Education Committee provides input and approval for any changes to practica.

## **X. Supervision and evaluation suggestions**

Supervision is a vital part of a successful practicum learning experience. Students can suggest the following to their Field Instructors as a way to plan for a strong practicum learning experience.

### **A. Orientation and Introductions**

A formal or informal orientation should include an introduction to:

- 1) setting – physical facilities, parking, schedule, personnel, dress code, etc.
- 2) policies and procedures – documentation, service delivery, reimbursement, communications, etc.
- 3) agency and community resources
- 4) introductions to staff, volunteers, professionals and support staff.

While orientation usually occurs most intensively during the first one or two weeks of placement, some types of orientation can be spread over the semester, such as sessions on the nature of specific presenting problems, background on pertinent client issues and other programs with which the student is not intimately involved.

### **B. Regularly scheduled, private supervisory conferences for one hour per week**

Individual supervision sessions should be carried out as regularly scheduled sessions. Some flexibility to change the time is, at times, necessary; however, it is helpful to have a prearranged time to which the student and Field Instructor can be held accountable.

### **C. Supervision available as needed**

Frequent, impromptu supervision during the initial phases of the field placement is especially critical to the success of the field placement for many students. If the Field Instructor is not personally available, another staff member can be designated to respond to questions that must be answered immediately.

### **D. Clear supervision and work expectations**

Students, Field Instructors and agencies benefit from clear supervision and work expectations. While some Field Instructors expect students to prepare for and bring an agenda to the supervision session, others prefer to structure the time for the student. The expectations for the quality of work vary widely among Field Instructors as well. Students benefit from very clear expectations that are communicated at the beginning of their practicum and reiterated if and when expectations change.

#### **E. Immersion into work as early as possible in the placement**

The student should move from reading about the agency and observing others to actually practicing social work as quickly as possible. For example, starting with assigning a piece of a larger assignment to the student that can be completed along with another staff member is a helpful beginning experience.

#### **F. Exposure to relevant and varied learning experiences**

The competencies and practice behaviors for a student's practicum, explicated in the Learning Agreement, depend upon the degree sought, concentration and level of practicum. However, all students benefit from both breadth and depth of learning experiences. The Faculty Liaison may also be a helpful resource as to possible practicum learning activities. Students should be engaged in work activities consonant with professional social work and should not be involved in work unrelated to practicum competencies and practice behaviors. For example, students should not be primarily observing, filing or engaged in other clerical duties that do not require a professional degree and are unrelated to their learning objectives.

#### **G. Documentation**

The student should be responsible for some recording in official agency records and utilize computers, when possible. The content, style and frequency will vary with each setting. Students benefit from this exposure, as documentation is required in virtually all areas of social work practice.

#### **H. Feedback**

Evaluative feedback to the student should be balanced and address positive points and areas in which further growth is needed. Students benefit from immediate, balanced feedback as well as ongoing verbal and written feedback throughout the practicum. Field Instructors are encouraged to use a variety of evaluative strategies, which may include (but are not limited to): direct observation, audio/video recording, process recording, third party reports and written materials.

#### **I. Coordination and evaluation**

The student, Field Instructor and Task Instructor (if applicable) should be involved in the learning agreement, site visit and evaluation processes. The student, Field Instructor and Task Instructor (if applicable) should maintain a copy of the Learning Agreement and Evaluation for their records. The student should also receive a copy of any other written performance evaluations that may be completed by the agency. Evaluative feedback should be discussed with the student to enable clarification and mutual agreement.

#### **J. Relevant reading**

Time can be allotted during field placement for reading materials that relate to work in the agency (i.e., activity on an individual case, group/community issues, legislative issues affecting clients, etc.). The Field Instructor may need to direct the student to very specific sources of material, such as journal articles or literature belonging to other staff.

### **K. Community events**

Students are encouraged by faculty to explore the possibility of attending workshops and special events in the community that are related to field placement as part of their practicum. This must be negotiated between the student and the agency and can be included as practicum hours.

### **L. Addressing problematic behavior or performance issues of the student**

Behavior and/or performance problems that interfere with practicum activities do occasionally occur with students. If problems do occur, field instructors are strongly encouraged to take the following steps:

- 1) Gather and document pertinent information to present to the
  - a) student concerning the problematic behavior or performance issue that interferes with achieving the learning objectives.
- 2) Present the information to the student as soon as possible.
- 3) If possible, provide the student with specific suggested actions or steps that can lead to increased professional performance.
- 4) Allow the student adequate time to attempt to rectify the situation. Provide honest, balanced feedback to the student on the progress of changes.
- 5) If the problem persists, document the continuation of the problem. Indicate, in writing, to the student that the continuation of the behavior or performance issue is problematic and the consequences that will result if changes do not occur. Contact the Faculty Liaison and send a copy of the documentation.

Students and Field Instructors are encouraged to talk with the Faculty Liaison throughout the practicum. As a general rule, the Faculty Liaison will not initiate a discussion with the Field Instructor about a problem a student is facing until the student has first discussed the issue with the Field Instructor and feels the problem is still unresolved.