

**UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Online MSW HANDBOOK
2025-2026**





Jeannette Rankin Hall, University of Montana

The University of Montana

School of Social Work

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www.health.umt.edu/socialwork



2025-2026

MSW ONLINE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Updated Summer 2025

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Welcome by the Chair of the School of Social Work



Dear MSW Students,

Welcome to the MSW Program at the University of Montana! We are honored you have chosen us for your educational experience and look forward to accompanying you through this journey. I hope you will see what I see as you join our School and that is our dedication to supporting students through the challenges and joys of social work, and our commitment to preparing you to address some of the most pressing social justice issues of our time.

Over the next two-three years, our committed and experienced faculty will partner with you to develop the knowledge and skills you will translate to a practice dedicated to centering the needs and strengths of those we serve. Our School believes in a teaching/learning framework and as such we look forward to learning from the vast knowledge and experience you and your colleagues bring to this educational space. We hope to facilitate a community of practice where we can learn from one another and experience the power that can come from collective efforts to resist and transform the systems our clients are impacted by.

Finally, we hope that as you move through our program you will witness our School's steadfast commitment to anti-racism, decolonizing and anti-oppressive practice. We look forward to engaging in discussion on these topics and working with you to actualize these commitments into practice!

Again, welcome!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Reese".

Sarah Reese, PhD, LCSW
Associate Professor and Chair
School of Social Work

School of Social Work Mission Statement

The Master of Social Work program prepares trauma-informed, anti-racist social workers who embody the profession's commitment to social, racial, environmental, and economic justice. The program educates students to be collaborative and integrated practitioners, advocates, community leaders, and researchers. Guided by a person-in-environment perspective, graduates of UM's Master of Social Work program are prepared to disrupt systems of oppression, promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, and partner in community-based efforts within rural, Indigenous, and global contexts.

University of Montana School of Social Work Anti-Racism Principles

The School of Social Work is committed to living our professional values as detailed by the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics. As social workers we therefore promote social justice through critical inquiry and targeted actions that disrupt systems of oppression. In keeping with these efforts, we have developed a set of anti-racism principles to guide the core functions of our School. We recognize this document to be organic and open to change based upon our evolving understanding of these issues as informed by the voices of Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Finally, we recognize the important and impactful ways that oppressions overlap and interact with each other. Therefore, our anti-racism practice will take an intersectional approach to systems change (i.e. we will consider how racism, sexism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, ableism, ageism, classism, colonization and systems of patriarchy interact and use that understanding to create practices, policies and procedures that eliminate those conditions).

The School of Social Work will use our position, resources and relationships towards efforts that seek to dismantle systemic racism. To do so, we will:

- **Develop, improve and evaluate comprehensive plans to recruit staff and students who mirror the demographics of those we serve.** School will:
 - Evaluate marketing, recruitment and retention practices to determine the extent to which these efforts result in representation of faculty and staff that mirror the demographics of the rural and Indigenous communities we serve.
 - Evaluate marketing, recruitment and retention practices to determine the extent to which these efforts result in representation of students that mirror the demographics of the rural and Indigenous communities we serve.
- **Infuse anti-racism/anti-oppressive pedagogy into our curriculum and curriculum delivery.** Our School will:
 - Evaluate the extent to which MSW and BSW curriculum includes content on historic and contemporary racism, decolonizing and anti-racist practices. Faculty will work to adopt and expand anti-racism pedagogy across all programs.
 - Create classroom environments where white supremacy, white privilege, and other forms of hierarchy can be identified and challenged while maintaining a classroom environment where BIPOC students feel safe and academically challenged.
 - Evaluate the extent to which BIPOC students feel they belong and have the opportunity to

succeed in our program. We will use information gained through this process to create actionable plans that promote equitable and inclusive spaces.

- **Actively work to build our anti-racism literacy.** Our School will:
- Build the breadth and depth of knowledge on systemic racism among faculty and staff by participating in yearly anti-racist training and ongoing workshops with particular attention paid to understanding the history of racism in the United States, colonization, white supremacy, contemporary dynamics of race in our country, intersectionality and the role the social work profession has played in systems of oppression. Training content will build over time to ensure continual growth of knowledge.
- Create regular opportunities for faculty to consult on how to respond and disrupt micro-aggressions and moves to innocence that occur in the classroom where the responsibility of that response is on the instructor and not BIPOC students.
- **Ensure all formal and informal School policies and procedures are anchored in anti-racist practice.** Our School will:
 - Review School policies (internal operations, student handbooks and informal practices) to determine opportunity to infuse language that results in anti-racist practices.
 - Evaluate School finances to determine opportunities to use/repurpose funds for anti-racism initiatives (e.g. marketing to increase BIPOC faculty and student representation, retention efforts focused on supporting BIPOC students, anti-racism materials for curriculum development).
 - Create measures and systems of accountability to ensure our anti-racism principles are meaningfully adopted into practice.
 - Center the voices of students who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color to inform evaluation and accountability processes.
 - Institutionalize restorative justice processes as an option for acknowledging harm caused in the classroom as a result of microaggressions, conflict, and other forms of misconduct. Restorative justice provides an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to come together to explore harm and needs, obligations, and necessary engagement. To the extent possible we will embody restorative justice in all of our practices.
- **Build relationships with the campus and greater Missoula community to support anti-racist initiatives.** Our School will:
 - Ensure all practicum placements are committed to anti-racism, anti-oppression and LGBTQ affirming practices.
 - Develop meaningful connections with BIPOC community organizations both on and off campus in order to support their work in the community. We recognize and honor that this support would be defined by the organization.
 - Publicly denounce instances of racism, hate, discrimination and bias that may occur in the community and across the nation.

* Throughout this document we use the term Black, Indigenous, People of Color and the acronym BIPOC. We want to recognize that in using this term, we are combining a number of populations that are distinct, have rich cultures and unique histories and therefore cannot fully

honor the vast complexities of the experience of racism for individual groups. When possible, it's always best to be specific in our use of language that is informed by the person or groups we are referring to. [This resource contributed to our understanding on this topic.](#)

Notice of Student Handbook Changes

The University of Montana School of Social Work reserves the right to implement changes to policies and procedures outlined in this Student Handbook at any time. Students may be notified of these changes by email or other means when necessary.

COVID-19 Information

The COVID-19 situation is constantly changing. Here are some resources from the University of Montana's Executive Leadership:

- <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus/healthy-fall-2020/default.php>
- <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus/mask-policy.php>

Program Assessment and Accreditation

The School of Social Work takes its mission of preparing students for BSW and MSW practice very seriously. We are committed to a values-based process of continual self-assessment, soliciting the participation of various constituencies and using assessment findings to improve the program continually.

We employ a range of procedures to ensure an effective, inclusive, comprehensive, varied, and instructive process. The School's assessment plans are based on the following principles:

- Programs continually evaluate themselves relative to their mission and goals.
- Programs continually evaluate themselves relative to the Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors necessary for the profession and required by schools accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
- Program assessment is grounded in and guided by the core values of social work.
- The results of the ongoing evaluative process are instructive in terms of program needs, strengths, and improvement.
- Program assessment identifies both what is effective and what could be improved.
- Programs continually identify constituency and workforce roles and issues that graduates are expected to fulfill and address.
- Programs stay abreast of continually shifting and evolving social needs, trends, and issues.
- Students are included as partners in the process of program assessment and continuous improvement.
- Professional social work practice and schools of social work are accountable to clients, agencies, communities, and society, and program assessment works toward ensuring that accountability.
- Program assessment is a model for students about the importance of critical reflection, evaluation, and continuous improvement in all areas of professional practice.
- Program assessment is important within an institutional context and is coordinated with institutional accreditation processes and assessment plans and measures.
- Program assessment reflects a commitment to professional leadership.

The School of Social Work is committed to evaluating itself through high-quality research methodologies that are:

- Varied in terms of the participants and subjects, process, frequency, and purpose.
- Balanced in terms of qualitative and quantitative measures.
- Intentionally designed to utilize mixed methodologies.
- Purposeful in terms of timing and repetition.
- Committed to the participation and involvement of students in terms of input and feedback.
- Committed to the participation and involvement of a variety of constituencies in providing

input and feedback.

- Overlapping and integration are done so that outcomes are measured in multiple ways over time.
- Consistent with social work best research practices.

Personnel

Dean's Suite Skaggs Building (SB) 340

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| Matt Fete, Dean, College of Health | SB 344 |
| Jennifer Geist-Quigley, Director of Finance & Operations | SB 340 |
| Donna Beall, Director of Student Services | SB 335 |
| Erika Claxton, Administrative Associate for Student Affairs | SB 341B |
| Jonathan Neff, Director of IT | SB 213 |

Chair & Directors Jeannette Rankin Hall

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| Sarah Reese, MSW, DSW | Department Chair | JRH 008 |
| Amanda Cahill, MSW, LCSW | MSW Director | JRH 026 |
| Laura Guay, MSW | BSW Director | JRH 010 |
| Katharina Werner, MSW, LCSW | Director of Field Education | JRH 023 |
| Logan Cook, MSW, LCSW, LAC | MSW In-Person Program Lead | JRH 115 |

Faculty

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Jen Barile, MSW | JRH 115 |
| Co Carew, MSW, Ph.D. | JRH 110 |
| Deanna Cooper, MSW, LCSW | |
| Govind Dhaske, Ph.D. | |
| Sarah Fielding, MSW, LCSW | JRH 115 |
| Kimberly Garner, MSW | |
| Katie Karas, MSW, LCSW | JRH 021 |
| David Kilmnick, Ph.D. | |
| Hannah Knipp, MSW, Ph.D. | JRH 011 |
| Jessica Liddell, MSW, MPH, Ph.D. | JRH 012 |
| Jen Molloy, MSW, Ph.D. | JRH 116 |
| Phyllis Ngai, Ph.D. | Eck Hall |
| Mary-Ann Sontag, LCSW, Ph.D. | |
| Ashley Trautman, MSW, JD | JRH 112 |
| Deja Williams, MSW/JD | |
| Biyun Xiang, MSW, Ph.D. | JRH 109 |

Adjunct Faculty

NOTE: Adjunct Faculty will vary from semester to semester.

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Adrienne Bombelles | Haley Gilman | Elizabeth Hubble |
| Melissa Clater | Devon Govoni | Zachary Reimer |
| Mary Collins | Emily Harris-Shears | Jennifer Smith |
| Krystal Diel | Torrye Hart | Elise Watts |
| Darcey Fairchild | Michelle Heald | David Wiltfong |
| Sarah Gillett | Mindi Hogan | Meghan Yeomans |

Staff

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------|
| Kinsey Webb | Program Manager, MSW Online | JRH 004 |
| Neil Carson | Operations & Finance Manager | JRH 004 |
| Heidi Holzer | BSW Academic Advisor | JRH 013 |
| Tomas Hernandez | Field Ed. & MSW Program Analyst | JRH 009 |

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Campus Security Report and Alcohol and Drug Guidelines

The health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors are of paramount concern to the University of Montana. The University publishes an annual report outlining on-campus security and safety information and crime statistics. The report provides important information for security awareness and crime prevention programs, emergency procedures, and crime reporting, as well as law enforcement and safety services on campus.

Additionally, the booklet contains the University's policy on sexual assault and information about support services for victims of sexual assault. The booklet also includes information about the University's drug and alcohol policy, programs and support services for substance abuse, and risk management guidelines for University-related events.

The booklet is available by writing or calling the Office of Campus Security (406) 243-6131 or the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (406) 243-5225, the University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.

Student Complaint Procedures

Under the terms of the faculty-administration contract at the University of Montana, there is a formal procedure for students who have a complaint against a faculty member or an administrator. The handbook for resolving complaints against faculty and administration is available from the ASUM office and outlines the steps to pursue grievances. The ASUM Student Resolution Officer is available to answer questions about procedures and to serve student concerns. Time restrictions are important in the process, so students should review procedures immediately if they feel they may have a complaint.

- ASUM Main Phone: 406-243-2451

Due Process and Right to Grade Appeal

The School of Social Work extends the right of due process to all students. Students appealing a course grade should follow the University of Montana Process. This is outlined on the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost website under Student Concerns:

<http://www.umt.edu/provost/students/concerns/>

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Consistent with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and University policy, every person who is or has been a student at this University, and the parents of students under 18 who are not taking postsecondary courses, have the following rights:

1. Upon completion of the appropriate request form and submission thereof to the person responsible for the custody and maintenance of the records, a student has the right to inspect and review within 45 days from the date of initial request that portion of any official record which directly relates to the requesting student and to have a copy thereof upon payment of the cost of the copy. An "official record" is any record intended to be used for "school use" or to

be available to parties outside the school or school system, specifically including but not necessarily limited to identifying data, academic work completed, level of achievement (grades, standardized achievement test scores), attendance data, scores on standardized intelligence, aptitude, and psychological tests, interest inventory results, health data, family background information, teacher or counselor ratings and observations, and verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns. The right of inspection and review shall not extend to psychiatric, medical, or counseling records which are intended for personal diagnostic or treatment purposes only. Neither does the right extend retroactively to items of record previously obtained with assurances that confidentiality would be maintained. With regard to such confidential items, the student has the option of both waiving the right of inspection and review and having those items retained as a part of the record, or of requesting that such confidential items be removed from the student's record and returned to the source or destroyed.

2. The right to a hearing before the Student Court to delete any portion of any record which is inaccurate, misleading or inappropriate. Discrepancies should first be brought to the attention of those responsible for maintaining the records so they may have an opportunity to cure any defects. To the extent defects are not cured, upon request a hearing may be initiated by a written request from the student delivered to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. The matter before the Student Court will be the question of the accuracy or appropriateness of the record itself and will not be extended to questions of the judgment of those who contributed to the record. The court will consider (1) whether the record accurately reflects matters intended to be contained here. (2) whether the record is misleading because in its present form it would lead a reasonable person to an incorrect conclusion, or (3) whether matters within the record are inappropriate because the record does not usually or should not reasonably contain such matters as those in question. Upon appropriate determination of the court, any such matters may be ordered deleted from the record.
3. The right to have education records or personally identifiable information from education records kept confidential and not released to third parties without the written consent of the student, except for release to the following:
 - a. University personnel for legitimate purposes and to the extent required in the ordinary course of the performance of their duties.
 - b. Authorized representatives of (a) the Comptroller General of the United States, (b) the Secretary, (c) an administrative head of an education agency, or (d) state educational authorities having access to student or other records which may be necessary in connection with the audit and evaluation of federally supported education programs, or in connection with the enforcement of the federal legal requirements which relate to such programs. Provided, that, except when collection of personally identifiable data is specifically authorized by federal law any data collected by such officials with respect to individual students shall not include information (including Social Security numbers) which would permit the personal identification of such students and their parents after the data so obtained has been collected.
 - c. In compliance with judicial order or any lawfully issued subpoena upon condition that

the student is notified of compliance.

- d. In connection with a student's application for or receipt of financial aid.
4. The right to refuse to permit the designation of any or all categories of personally identifiable information as "directory information" which is not subject to the above restrictions. the University of Montana-Missoula has defined the following as directory information: student's name, addresses including e-mail, telephone number, date of birth, dates of attendance, date of graduation and degree received, school or college, majors, class, student identification photo, and academic awards or honors. Any student wishing to exercise this right must inform the University Registrar in writing within two weeks after the start of classes of any personally identifiable information which is not to be designated as directory information with respect to that student in that academic year.
5. The right to have available for inspection by the student a written form signed by any representative of the Comptroller General of the United States, the Secretary, or any administrative head of an education agency who requested and was granted access to the records which states the legitimate educational or other interest that each such person had in requesting access to that particular record.
6. The right to have personal student records transferred to third parties only on condition that such parties will not permit any other party to have access to such information without the written consent of the student. All student records transferred to third parties shall have printed or stamped thereon: "No other person may have access to this information without written consent of the student."

Equal Opportunity

The University of Montana-Missoula is committed to a program of equal opportunity for education, employment and participation in university activities without regard to race, color, sex, age, religious creed, political ideas, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, national origin or ancestry, or sexual orientation.

Statement of Law

Equal opportunity laws and orders applicable to the University of Montana-Missoula include, but are not limited to, Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, Executive Order 11246, Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, Montana Fair Practices Act of 1974, The Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Montana Nondiscrimination by State and Local Government Act of 1975. It is illegal in the State of Montana to discriminate against anyone because of race, religion, color, political ideas, age, marital status, sex, mental or physical disability, national origin or ancestry in employment, training, public accommodations, financing, education and government services. With the exception of marital status, this also applies to housing.

Discrimination Grievance Procedure

*Note: Complaints must be filed within 60 days of the alleged discrimination if filing with the University Discrimination Grievance Officer and within 180 days if filing with the Montana Human Rights Bureau.

The University of Montana-Missoula has established a discrimination grievance procedure for employees, students, and applicants for employment or admission who claim to have been unlawfully discriminated against because of any University regulation, policy, practice or the official action of any University employee.

The University is prohibited from retaliating against an individual who has made charges, testified, assisted or participated in any way in any proceeding, investigation or hearing in regard to the violations or alleged violations of laws or orders requiring equal educational and/or employment opportunity.

For more information, or if you believe you have been discriminated against, please visit the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action [website](#). Students may also contact the Montana Human Rights Bureau by visiting their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MTHumanRights/>.

Access to Accommodations

The University of Montana and School of Social Work faculty and staff are committed to providing equal opportunity and access to the educational experience through the provision of reasonable accommodations and student support services. We recognize that students with or without a documented disability may have trouble participating or effectively demonstrating learning in a course. The university provides and coordinates support services to maximize students' educational potential and develop their independence to the fullest extent possible. All disability related information is confidential, and it is the student's decision to share this information with individual faculty members.

Overview of Process: Students that think they may have a disability adversely affecting their academic performance must meet with a representative of the [Office for Disability Equity \(ODE\)](#) office on campus and register with them. After being granted an official letter of accommodations by ODE, students decide if they want to share the letter with professors. When students select to notify faculty, it then is their responsibility to email the letter to individual professors and/or share a paper copy. It is not enough to simply share the letter of accommodations with each professor, and it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for specific accommodations with each professor for each course. Students are also responsible for renewing their eligibility each semester. The ODE office is located in Aber Hall, 1st Floor, and can be reached at ode@umontana.edu or 406-243-2243. Students can also visit the [Accessibility website](#) for a complete list of resources.

University of Montana Non-Discrimination and Title IX Statement

The University of Montana is committed to providing a learning and working environment that promotes respect, dignity, and equity for all individuals. In accordance with federal and state law, the University does not discriminate—and prohibits discrimination—on the basis of race, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, creed, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, lactation or related medical conditions), gender, (including gender identity, gender expression, and gender transition), sexual orientation, physical or mental disability (including having a history of a disability or being regarded as having a disability), marital or family status, genetic characteristics or information, age,

veteran or military status, political ideas, or any other legally protected classification in its educational programs and activities, including admission and employment.

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations, the University of Montana does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that it operates. This requirement extends to admission and employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator.

The University of Montana has designated a Title IX Coordinator and Director of Equal Opportunity to coordinate its compliance with Title IX and other non-discrimination laws and policies. Their contact information is:

Title IX Coordinator and Director of Equal Opportunity

Office of Conflict, Resolution, & Policy

University Hall 004

University of Montana

Missoula, MT 59812

Phone: (406) 243-5710

Email: conflict@umontana.edu

Website: umt.edu/eo

[Submit a report online](#)

Individuals may also contact the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) with inquiries, questions, or complaints at:

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20202-1100

Phone: 800-421-3481

TDD: 800-877-8339

Email: OCR@ed.gov

Website: <https://www.ed.gov/ocr>

Any person may report discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), or retaliation—by using the contact information listed above, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator or the Office of Conflict, Resolution, & Policy receiving the report. Reports may be submitted at any time, including during non-business hours.

The University has adopted and published grievance procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and sexual harassment, including formal complaints under Title IX. Information about how to file a report or formal complaint, and how the University will respond, is available from the Office of Conflict Resolution and Policy on the [Equal Opportunity and Title IX website](#), including:

[Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy and Procedures](#)

[Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) (anticipated issuance in August 2025)

This non-discrimination statement is prominently displayed on the University of Montana's website and included in relevant publications, including handbooks and catalogs distributed to students, employees, applicants, and unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the University.

Resources, Services, and Organizations

There are several resources available to students. The table below provides links for some of these resources. For a full listing of resources available to students, refer to the [MY UMT for Students website](#).

[American Indian Student Services](#)

[ASUM Legal Services](#)

[Experiential Learning and Career Services](#)

[Financial Aid](#)

[Global Engagement Office](#)

[Mansfield Library](#)

[Mental Health Services](#)

[NASW- Student Membership](#)

[Office for Disability Equity](#)

[Office of Student Success](#)

[Office of the Registrar](#)

[Payne Family Native American Center](#)

[Student Advocacy Resource Center \(SARC\)](#)

[Student Technology at UM](#)

[Veteran Services Office](#)

[Writing and Public Speaking Center](#)

Master of Social Work Program

Master of Social Work Program Director Welcome



Dear MSW Students:

We are thrilled to welcome you to the MSW program at The University of Montana! Social work offers countless possibilities to create meaningful change and make a difference. Over the next two to three years, you will have countless opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills. You will become a part of a profession seeking a more just and equitable world. You and your colleagues bring diverse talents and backgrounds as you embark on this journey together. Members of your class have degrees in a wide range of disciplines, and you will be some of each other's greatest teachers.

You will join a committed group of faculty who possess a wealth of social work practice experience and who have made significant contributions to the social work profession. The faculty is proud of the MSW Program's advanced integrated practice framework, where the teaching/learning process is symbiotic.

What follows is the School of Social Work's MSW Student Handbook. It is designed to serve as a resource you can use during your course of study to answer questions that relate to the program's overall philosophy, required courses, and academic and non-academic program policies. The student handbook also includes the MSW Practicum Manual that addresses policies and procedures specific to your field placement. Please use this handbook as a guide and seek ongoing input from your advisor to clarify any questions and concerns you might have. The faculty and staff are committed to your education and to the social work profession. We will do everything we can to assist in your professional development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Cahill".

Amanda Cahill, MSW
Clinical Assistant Professor / MSW Program Director

Program Background

The University of Montana has a long history of providing quality social work education for the state and region. The Department of Social Work (now School of Social Work) was formally established in 1971, and the BSW program was accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 1974. The program has gained recognition for its pioneering work in competency-based education. The MSW program was approved in 2001, and the first class entered in fall 2002. The Program moved from CSWE accreditation candidacy to full accreditation in 2005. Accreditation was reaffirmed in 2009 and again in 2017.

In line with the institutional history, the faculty and administration are committed to providing a top quality MSW program that responds to needs in the state and region and provides leadership for the future of social work. After conducting a statewide needs assessment, the faculty conceptualized a framework for social work education that would respond to existing needs, incorporate best practices, and translate social work's social justice commitment into practice. We sought to develop a program that would not only meet accreditation requirements but also contribute to the making of a new kind of practitioner – one well prepared to face the social welfare challenges in the Rocky Mountain West and the intersection of local and global issues therein. The MSW program is designed to shape both professionals and a mode of social work practice that meet the challenges facing poor, marginalized groups and an overburdened state social service delivery system. Thus, the MSW program is committed to producing advanced-level professional social workers committed to *advanced integrated practice*. This, we contend, is the model best suited for meeting 21st century challenges to the profession and addressing the complex social welfare concerns of residents of Montana and the Rocky Mountain West. Through our MSW program, we want to shape practitioners who, in addition to being committed to the values of the profession, grounded in theoretical knowledge, and in possession of well-honed practice skills, are also resourceful practitioners, creating new possibilities for social work thought and action.

Integrated Practice

The social worker committed to *advanced integrated practice*:

- Engages in ongoing critical self-reflection and examination of the values and assumptions that shape social work theory, practices, policies, and programs.
- Brings historical, cultural, and political perspectives and a critical understanding of difference and oppression to bear in understanding the person-in-environment, social problems, interventions, and possibilities for social justice-oriented action.
- Integrates the skills of direct practice and community work and creatively bridges multiple levels of intervention.
- Continually brings knowledge and skills of research, policy analysis, and advocacy to bear in practice, regardless of setting, problem area, or specific job description.
- Assumes a leadership role in the profession and community to promote broad-based participation in efforts to empower individuals and groups, strengthen programs, and advocate policies and practice that promote social justice locally and globally.

Program Overview

The University of Montana MSW Online Program offers a three-year graduate study program leading to a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. During the next two years you will complete 60 course credits (51 required and 9 elective credits). The curriculum is designed to meet CSWE's accreditation standards and the profession's professional competencies and practice behaviors (see Appendix A, B, and C). Each year of the online program will primarily consist of required courses with the opportunity to participate in one elective per year.

It is important to know that your MSW program operates on a cohort model. This is best to serve your learning needs and your professional growth. This means that certain courses are only offered once per year. This is important to understand as you consider changes or delays to individual courses. Doing so may delay your graduation time and create gaps in your schedule. This can also have financial implications depending on your financial aid package. For this reason, you must discuss any planned leaves of absence or time off with your advisor as soon as possible so that you can work together to create a new plan of study.

Please Note: The UM Graduate Catalog is the sole source of information on approved curricula. Students will be held to the degree requirements found in the Graduate Catalog based on their admissions/catalog term.

Generalist Year Course Planning

Accredited graduate social work programs provide a first-year curriculum that is grounded in the liberal arts and a generalist social work perspective. The generalist year courses in human behavior, social welfare policy history, practice, and research (listed below) promote development of core social work competencies and prepare you to identify with the social work profession; apply ethical principles and critical thinking in practice; incorporate diversity in practice; advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; build on strengths and resiliency; engage in research- informed practice; respond to contexts that shape practice and use a range of prevention and intervention methods in your practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Near the end of your Generalist Year, typically at the end of SW 525, you will be asked to complete the Generalist Exam. The Council on Social Work Education states in the 2022 EPAS that "assessment is an integral component of competency-based education and continuous programmatic improvement" (p. 36). This assessment is intended to be one measure of first year student learning outcomes relative to the nine social work competencies and associated knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. The results of this assessment will be used to understand how well our teaching methods and curriculum are preparing students to practice social work from a social justice lens. This is also one way to prepare students for licensure exams should they choose to pursue that path. Your score will not impact your grade. Results will be presented in the aggregate and publicly available, name not attached.

Completion of the assessment is required to receive a final grade in SW 525. If you have not completed the assessment by the final day of the semester, you will receive an Incomplete. Once the assessment is completed, your grade will be updated. Please see full Incomplete Grades Policy.

GENERALIST YEAR: SCHEDULE OF REQUIRED COURSES

SW 500 Orientation

1 cr.

Activities introducing MSW students to program philosophy, the social work profession's history, theories, and value base, and campus and community resources.

SW 505 Foundations of Social Work Practice

2 cr.

Introduction to profession's history, theories, values, policies, and practices. Students are introduced to the integrated model of social work practice. Prerequisite for all MSW coursework

SW 510 Human Behavior and Social Environment I

3 cr.

Introduction to and critical consideration of social work perspectives on human behavior as influenced by the social environment. Particular attention is paid to biological implications, psychological theory, diverse human experiences, power relations, and processes of oppression. Prerequisite for SW 511

SW 530 History of Social Policy, Justice and Change

3 cr.

Introduction to social welfare policy and services; examination of relationship between the history of social welfare policy and emergence of the social work profession; exploration of history of struggles for human rights and social and economic justice in US context. Introduction to frameworks for policy analysis.

SW 511 Human Behavior and Social Environment II

3 cr.

Advanced HBSE course focused on difference and diversity, histories and intersectionality of forms and mechanisms of discrimination, oppression, and frameworks for thought and practice that encourage critical self-reflection, recognize diversity, and promote human rights and social and economic justice.

SW 532 Indian Child Welfare Act

1 cr.

Dedicated to building understanding of the Indian Child Welfare Act and its application to social work practice.

SW 515 Practice with Individuals and Families in a Community Context 3 cr.

Practice-oriented course building on students' developing knowledge of social work theory; the processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and the application to practice with individuals and families. Corequisite: Seminar and Practicum

SW 576 Generalist Integrative Seminar I

1 cr.

Seminar accompanying first semester foundation practicum in which students apply critical thinking skills, integrate theory and practice, develop identities as professional social workers, engage in self-reflection, and make use of supervision and peer consultation. Corequisite: Practicum

SW 586 Generalist Practicum I

2 cr.

First semester foundation field practicum experience in a supervised setting designed to provide opportunities to integrate classroom learning and field experiences. Students actively engage in contexts of practice and practice skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Corequisite: Seminar

SW 520 Social Work Research Methods

3 cr.

Introduction to principles, methodologies, technologies, ethics, and statistical approaches of human service research. Emphasis on beginning capabilities in evaluation of social work practice and skill development regarding use of research to inform practice.

SW 525 Practice with Groups and Communities

4 cr.

Practice-oriented course addressing theories, frameworks, principles, and skills of group and community work. Dynamics of group work and examination of modalities such as mutual aid, psycho-educational, and social action groups are addressed.

SW 577 Generalist Integrative Seminar II

1 cr.

Seminar accompanying second semester foundation practicum in which students apply critical thinking skills, integrate theory and practice, develop identities as professional social workers, engage in self-reflection, and make use of supervision and peer consultation.

SW 587 Generalist Practicum II

2 cr.

Second semester foundation field practicum experience in a supervised setting designed to provide opportunities to integrate classroom learning and field experiences. Students actively engage in contexts of practice and practice skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

Electives Options (students take 3 electives, 3 credits each)

- SW 551 Couples & Family Therapy
 - SW 553 Social Work Addictions
 - SW 556 Healing with Expressive Arts Therapy
 - SW 475 Grief and Loss (Death, Dying, Grief)
 - SW 591 ST: Trauma-Informed Systems of Care
 - SW 591 ST: Reproductive Justice
1. SW 591 ST: Core Components & Skills for Trauma-Informed Practice
 2. SW 552 Differential Diagnosis in Clinical Social Work Practice (formerly Psychopathology)

****Additional electives will be announced as they are developed.**

Specialization Year Course Planning

For online MSW students, years 2 and 3 serve as your Specialization years. The University of Montana MSW program offers a specialization curriculum in *advanced integrated practice*. The specialization courses develop an in-depth focus on integrated practice, expand breadth through required courses in the areas of research, policy, practice, and elective courses, and increase the depth of

theoretical knowledge and skills as you develop and demonstrate competencies of the practice behaviors required for specialization integrated practice.

The specialization courses also provide opportunities to develop and apply leadership, collaboration, policy analysis, advocacy, program evaluation, and clinical practice skills and to further examine the implications of practice in Montana's rural communities and the surrounding region. In sum, the specialization is a process for becoming an advanced-level social work professional committed to integrated practice.

Please note that because the Specialization Year curriculum builds on Generalist Year content, students are expected to complete all Generalist Year courses prior to enrolling in Specialization Year courses.

Micro-Practice Emphasis

Micro practice emphasizes the development of clinical skills and a repertoire of theoretical knowledge relevant to direct practice with individuals, small groups, couples, and families. Students concentrating in micro practice will complete specialization practicum hours in settings that provide opportunities for direct clinical practice, such as community, school-based, and residential mental health programs, child and family services, hospice care, and medical settings. Students choose elective courses that further their development of knowledge and skills for clinical practice. Possible electives include:

- SW 551 Couples & Family Therapy
 - SW 553 Social Work Addictions
 - SW 556 Healing with Expressive Arts Therapy
 - SW 475 Grief and Loss (Death, Dying, Grief)
3. SW 552 Differential Diagnosis in Clinical Social Work Practice (formerly Psychopathology)

**Additional electives will be announced as they are developed.

Macro-Practice Emphasis

Macro practice emphasizes the development of skills and a repertoire of theoretical knowledge relevant to community, organizational, and political practice (e.g., program planning and development, neighborhood development, organizational administration and management, community organizing, and legislative advocacy). Students concentrating in macro practice will complete specialization practicum hours in settings that provide opportunities to develop skills in planning, development, advocacy, and social action, such as local and regional development corporations, social action and rights-based organizations, and action-research centers. Students choose electives that further develop their community-building, organization, and advocacy skills.

- SW 591 ST: Trauma-Informed Systems of Care
 - SW 591 ST: Reproductive Justice
4. SW 591 ST: Core Components & Skills for Trauma-Informed Practice

**Additional elective courses are of interest to all students. You will be informed of new elective courses as they are added.

SPECIALIZATION YEAR SCHEDULE OF REQUIRED COURSES

SW 521 Advanced Research and Program Evaluation 3 cr.

Students apply transtheoretical models of change, action research, and participatory approaches to program evaluation in organizational or community contexts. Students develop advanced knowledge of research ethics and skills in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.

Prerequisite: SW 520

SW 535 Advanced Integrated Practice 4 cr.

Students hone advanced skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels; present case studies analyzing theoretically informed, evidenced-based interventions, ethical dilemmas, and social justice possibilities; engage as teachers and learners in exploring innovations in practice; and demonstrate research and communication skills through dissemination of practice-related scholarship. Corequisite: Practicum

SW 578 Advanced Integrative Seminar I 1 cr.

Critical analysis of how predominant social work theories and professional values and skills are being incorporated into the practicum. Corequisite: Practicum

SW 588 Specialization Practicum I 3 cr.

Advanced supervised field work in public and private agencies and institutions. Corequisite: Seminar

SW 531 Methods of Social Policy Analysis 3 cr.

Students engage in policy practice to advance human rights and social and economic justice and apply skills of collaboration, leadership, and advocacy for effective policy action.

SW 545 Practice of Organizational Leadership 3 cr.

Advanced training in professional leadership and how to effectively conceive, plan, design, implement, manage, assess, and change contemporary organizations. Corequisite: Practicum

SW 579 Advanced Integrative Seminar II 1 cr.

Critical analysis of how predominant social work theories and professional values and skills are being incorporated into the practicum. Corequisite: Practicum

SW 589 Specialization Practicum II 3 cr.

Advanced supervised field work in public and private agencies and institutions. Corequisite: Seminar

SW 599 Professional Portfolio 1 cr.

The portfolio is a compilation of products (papers, videos, power point presentations, workshop materials, etc.) that demonstrate students' mastery of core competencies. Students work in consultation with faculty advisor to select and refine portfolio components, draft narrative, and

prepare presentation. Portfolio is presented in spring semester. The portfolio is presented in the final semester or arranged with an advisor.

Sample Schedules

Below are example schedules. Students, faculty, and advisors determine actual schedules. A module/block lasts 8 weeks during the Fall and Spring semesters and 7 weeks during the Summer semesters.

Fall Term Start Schedules

| Year 1: Fall Term Start | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
| Fall Module A | SW 500 Orientation |
| | SW 505 Foundations of Social Work Practice |
| Fall Module B | SW 510 Human Behavior and Social Environment I |
| Spring Module A | SW 530 History of Social Policy, Justice and Change |
| Spring Module B | SW 511 Human Behavior and Social Environment II |
| Summer Module A | Elective 1 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |
| Summer Module B | SW 520 Social Work Research Methods |

| Year 2: Fall Term Start | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
| Fall Module A | SW 515 Practice with Individuals and Families |
| | SW 576 Generalist Integrative Seminar I |
| | SW 586 Generalist Practicum I |
| Fall Module B | SW 532 Indian Child Welfare Act |
| | SW 576 Generalist Integrative Seminar I (cont.) |
| | SW 586 Generalist Practicum I (cont.) |
| Spring Module A | SW 525 Practice with Groups and Communities |
| | SW 577 Generalist Integrative Seminar II |
| | SW 587 Generalist Practicum II |
| Spring Module B | SW 525 Practice with Groups and Communities (cont.) |
| | SW 577 Generalist Integrative Seminar II (cont.) |
| | SW 587 Generalist Practicum II (cont.) |
| Summer Module A | SW 521 Advanced Research |
| Summer Module B | Elective 2 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |

Year 3: Fall Term Start

| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
|---------------------|--|
| Fall Module A | SW 535 Advanced Integrated Practice |
| | SW 578 Advanced Integrative Seminar I |
| | SW 588 Specialization Practicum I |
| Fall Module B | SW 535 Advanced Integrated Practice (cont.) |
| | SW 578 Advanced Integrative Seminar I (cont.) |
| | SW 588 Specialization Practicum I (cont.) |
| Spring Module A | SW 545 Practice of Organizational Leadership |
| | SW 579 Advanced Integrative Seminar II |
| | SW 589 Specialization Practicum II |
| Spring Module B | SW 579 Advanced Integrative Seminar II (cont.) |
| | SW 589 Specialization Practicum II (cont.) |
| Summer Module A | SW 531 Methods of Social Policy Analysis |
| | SW 599 Professional Portfolio |
| Summer Module B | Elective 3 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |
| | SW 599 Professional Portfolio |

Spring Term Start Schedules

| Year 1: Spring Term Start | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
| Spring Module A | SW 500 Orientation |
| | SW 505 Foundations of Social Work Practice |
| Spring Module B | SW 510 Human Behavior and Social Environment I |
| Summer Module A | SW 530 History of Social Policy, Justice and Change |
| Summer Module B | SW 511 Human Behavior and Social Environment II |
| Fall Module A | SW 515 Practice with Individuals and Families |
| | SW 576 Generalist Integrative Seminar I |
| | SW 586 Generalist Practicum I |
| Fall Module B | SW 532 Indian Child Welfare Act |
| | SW 576 Generalist Integrative Seminar I (cont.) |
| | SW 586 Generalist Practicum I (cont.) |

| Year 2: Spring Term Start | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
| Spring Module A | SW 525 Practice with Groups and Communities |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| | SW 577 Generalist Integrative Seminar II |
| | SW 587 Generalist Practicum II |
| Spring Module B | SW 525 Practice with Groups and Communities (cont.) |
| | SW 577 Generalist Integrative Seminar II (cont.) |
| | SW 587 Generalist Practicum II (cont.) |
| Summer Module A | SW 520 Social Work Research Methods |
| Summer Module B | Elective 1 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |
| Fall Module A | SW 535 Advanced Integrated Practice |
| | SW 578 Advanced Integrative Seminar I |
| | SW 588 Specialization Practicum I |
| Fall Module B | SW 535 Advanced Integrated Practice (cont.) |
| | SW 578 Advanced Integrative Seminar I (cont.) |
| | SW 588 Specialization Practicum I (cont.) |

| Year 3: Spring Term Start | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
| Spring Module A | SW 545 Practice of Organizational Leadership |
| | SW 579 Advanced Integrative Seminar II |
| | SW 589 Specialization Practicum II |
| Spring Module B | SW 579 Advanced Integrative Seminar II (cont.) |
| | SW 589 Specialization Practicum II (cont.) |
| Summer Module A | Elective 2 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |
| Summer Module B | Elective 3 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |
| Fall Module A | SW 521 Advanced Research |
| | SW 599 Professional Portfolio |
| Fall Module B | SW 531 Methods of Social Policy Analysis |
| | SW 599 Professional Portfolio |

Summer Term Start Schedules

| Year 1: Summer Term Start | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
| Summer Module A | SW 500 Orientation |
| | SW 505 Foundations of Social Work Practice |
| Summer Module B | SW 510 Human Behavior and Social Environment I |
| Fall Module A | SW 530 History of Social Policy, Justice and Change |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Fall Module B | SW 511 Human Behavior and Social Environment II |
| Spring Module A | Elective 1 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |
| Spring Module B | SW 520 Social Work Research Methods |

| Year 2: Summer Term Start | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
| Summer Module A | Elective 2 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |
| Summer Module B | Elective 3 TBD/ Student's Choice of Elective |
| Fall Module A | SW 515 Practice with Individuals and Families |
| | SW 576 Generalist Integrative Seminar I |
| | SW 586 Generalist Practicum I |
| Fall Module B | SW 532 Indian Child Welfare Act |
| | SW 576 Generalist Integrative Seminar I (cont.) |
| | SW 586 Generalist Practicum I (cont.) |
| Spring Module A | SW 525 Practice with Groups and Communities |
| | SW 577 Generalist Integrative Seminar II |
| | SW 587 Generalist Practicum II |
| Spring Module B | SW 525 Practice with Groups and Communities (cont.) |
| | SW 577 Generalist Integrative Seminar II (cont.) |
| | SW 587 Generalist Practicum II (cont.) |

| Year 3: Summer Term Start | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Module/Block | Course Number and Title |
| Summer Module A | SW 531 Methods of Social Policy Analysis |
| Summer Module B | SW 521 Advanced Research |
| Fall Module A | SW 535 Advanced Integrated Practice |
| | SW 578 Advanced Integrative Seminar I |
| | SW 588 Specialization Practicum I |
| Fall Module B | SW 535 Advanced Integrated Practice (cont.) |
| | SW 578 Advanced Integrative Seminar I (cont.) |
| | SW 588 Specialization Practicum I (cont.) |
| Spring Module A | SW 545 Practice of Organizational Leadership |
| | SW 579 Advanced Integrative Seminar II |
| | SW 589 Specialization Practicum II |
| | SW 599 Professional Portfolio |
| Spring Module B | SW 579 Advanced Integrative Seminar II (cont.) |

| | |
|--|--|
| | SW 589 Specialization Practicum II (cont.) |
| | SW 599 Professional Portfolio |

The University of Montana uses Degree Works to track academic progress. Please continuously check Degree Works (found at umt.edu). If the information reflected is incorrect, contact your advisor with the necessary changes.

Online Master of Social Work Specific Policies

Advising Practices

The MSW program provides a strong advising program to ensure students' academic success, monitor progress and potential concerns, provide professional guidance, and achieve program goals and objectives.

In collaboration with our partnering Online Program Management company, the MSW online program option has developed procedures to support student success. This includes as-needed advising by the MSW Program Director or as requested by the student. As needed, advising or support includes career planning, mentoring, and advocacy. Program plans and class schedules are determined by the program prior to the start of courses. Students in the online program follow this path unless otherwise needed. For those students who need additional support, students are connected with the MSW Online Program Student Support faculty person. The student and faculty member in the Student Support role connect in instances when students need individual program plans.

As students near the end of their degree plan, they are assigned a faculty advisor who serves as the Chair of their portfolio committee. In this capacity, faculty advisors play a significant role as mentors as students articulate and demonstrate their competence as advanced integrated practitioners.

Students are informed via email when they are registered for their final term.

Coursework Information and Policies

All online students, whether in the fall, spring, or summer start, begin their generalist practicum courses in the fall and finish in the spring. For example, a student starting the online MSW program in the fall of one year will begin official practicum hours in the fall of the following year. Students will begin practicum following their successful completion of Orientation (SW 500), Generalist of Social Work Practice (SW 505), HBSE I (SW 510), HBSE II (SW 511), History of Social Policy (SW 530), Social Work Research Methods (SW 520) and an elective course. In the event a student is not able to progress through the program as outlined, at a minimum, students must complete SW 500 and SW 505 before beginning practicum. The completion of these courses ensures that each student possesses the requisite knowledge of the profession's history, knowledge, value base, ethical framework, and basic understanding of integrated practice prior to beginning practicum.

During their second and third years, students are concurrently enrolled in each of the program's practice courses, practicum, and integrative seminars to ensure that practice course concepts and skills

are simultaneously applied and integrated while affording opportunities for critical analysis and reflection. Students also complete the required advanced policy and research courses (SW 531 and SW 521) during the second and third years. Students must take these courses in their proper sequence, completing SW 530 prior to enrollment in 531 and completing 520 prior to enrollment in 521. All Generalist courses, including Generalist year Practicum and Seminar must be completed before enrollment in Specialization courses.

Receiving an I (incomplete) or N (ongoing) grade in any of the pre-requisite courses may prohibit students from moving into the advanced course until they successfully complete the first course. Additionally, SW Practice Courses must be taken along with the Practicum. Additional information on Incomplete or Ongoing grades can be found on page 48 under “Incomplete Grades” and “Additional Policies for Incomplete Grades”.

Professional Conduct Policies

Cognitive Functioning

Students must be able to participate fully in classes and practicum, process new information, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They must be able to use and maintain a range of professional records, documents, and record-keeping systems. Students must be free of significant deficits in memory, attention, impulse control, or judgment that interfere with obligations of professional practice.

Communication Skills

Students must demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, colleagues, faculty, staff, clients, and other professionals. Students must demonstrate the ability to express their ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to others. Students are expected to develop and demonstrate interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional helping relationships. Students are expected to have sufficient skills in spoken and written English to understand and utilize the content present in the program.

Self-Awareness

Students are expected to develop a critical awareness of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences and the ways they impact thinking, behavior, and relationships. Students must demonstrate the capacity to separate their own values from those of clients, an appreciation for the personal values systems of others, and respect for differences among people. Students must be willing to examine their own behavior and make changes accordingly if it interferes with their capacity to work effectively with peers, clients, and other professionals.

Appropriate Personal and Professional Conduct

Students are expected to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity, and emotional stability required for professional practice. They are expected to form professional relationships and set appropriate, culturally sensitive, professional boundaries with clients, colleagues, faculty, and other students. Students are expected to demonstrate the emotional and mental capacities to cope with the stress inherent in social work. Students must not allow personal problems, psychological distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to

interfere with their professional responsibilities and relationships. Students are expected to seek and use appropriate help for personal, emotional, or medical problems that interfere with professional or academic performance, compromise judgment, or place at risk the best interests of those to whom one has professional responsibility. Disruptive behavior toward colleagues, clients, faculty, staff, or fellow students will not be tolerated. For example: "Students are expected to follow classroom guidelines regarding confidentiality related to in-class conversations" (see Appendix D).

Professional Commitment

Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession as outlined in the Code of Ethics. They must develop and demonstrate the ability to apply ethical principles and processes for ethical decision-making in practice. Students are expected to engage in practice that promotes social justice and challenges discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, class, marital status, political belief, religion, or ability. Students are expected to protect the rights and honor the integrity and worth of all persons.

Empathy

Students must seek to comprehend another individual's way of life and values. Students must be able to communicate this empathy and support to the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.

Ability to Receive and Utilize Feedback

Students must demonstrate the ability to receive feedback from faculty and agency supervisors and utilize feedback to enhance professional development. At times this means changing behavior or patterns that can impede professional conduct. Students are expected to develop and demonstrate skills in providing feedback to others.

Knowledge Base for Social Work Practice

The professional activities of social work must be grounded in relevant theoretical knowledge and research. This includes knowledge and skills of engagement, assessment and co-learning, planning and intervention, critical reflection, evaluation, and transition. Students are expected to develop and demonstrate knowledge and skills appropriate to BSW or MSW practice.

Presence

Students must demonstrate their presence in the program through attendance and participation in their course work.

Use of APA Style of Citation

All social work papers and reports are to use the American Psychological Association (APA) editorial styles for citing sources used (i.e., quotations and ideas drawn from books and articles). Individual teachers may vary in their requirements concerning overall format, title pages, etc. The University Bookstore sells the APA Manual of Style. **Online Resources:**

- [Academic Writer Tutorial](#)
- [Purdue Owl](#)

Policies Regarding Academic Standards

1. Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 to remain in the MSW program and in the Graduate School. Students who do not attain a 3.0 average will be placed on academic probation and must meet with their advisor to discuss corrective action, which must be approved in writing by the MSW Director and be subject to the final approval by the Graduate School's Dean.
2. If a student's cumulative grade point average drops below a 3.0 the student will have one semester to increase it to the required level. If the student fails to increase his or her grade point average to 3.0 the student will be terminated from the program.
3. A student who receives a grade of "C-" or less in any course is required to repeat that course with a grade of "C" or better.
4. A student who receives a grade of "F/ NCR" grade is automatically suspended from the program pending an academic review meeting with the MSW Program Director. The review may result in suspension from the program for failure to meet minimum academic standards or in a corrective action plan in which student is required to repeat the course and address academic concerns. The student may not enroll in more advanced coursework until the course has been repeated with a grade of "C" or better. Please note, students who do not respond to requests for meetings as detailed by this section will be considered as accepting of the outlined process and outcome as recommended by faculty.
5. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA in coursework to be admitted to both generalist year and specialization year practicum. Provisional admission may be granted pending a Student Support and Accountability Plan and meeting with Field Director and MSW Director.
6. Students who fail to maintain an equivalent grade of "C" or better in the practicum may be suspended from the program.
 - Students who are dismissed for academic reasons have the right to a hearing for the purpose of presenting information in support of possible reinstatement.
5. A student who has twice enrolled but not passed any one core or elective course, may be dismissed from the program. A second failing grade (F) after initial automatic suspension, academic review, and Student Support and Accountability Plan will result in dismissal and will require reapplication to the program. Two non-passing grades (C-, D, D-) may result in suspension. See Suspension & Dismissal Policies, and SSAP Policies for further processes.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism in any form (coursework and/or research) will be considered a serious offense. Plagiarism has been traditionally defined as "representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own or the student's own previous work as if it were the student's own original work" ([University of Montana Student Code of Conduct](#), p. 4). In this program, plagiarism also includes use of an Artificial Intelligence content generator (such as ChatGPT) to complete coursework without proper attribution or authorization. While we don't yet know the full impact of generative AI, and while we acknowledge that there could be some ways it can support learning, we disagree with any use that allows students

to sidestep the careful work of developing skills in critical personal reflection, clinical reasoning, and professional capacity. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please contact your instructor to discuss the issue.

Suspension or Dismissal from the Master of Social Work Degree Program

Suspension or Dismissal for Academic Reasons: A student may be suspended or dismissed from the program for the following reasons:

- Academic misconduct such as cheating, lying, or plagiarism (See [UM Student Conduct Code](#)).
- Failure to meet or maintain academic standards as established by The University of Montana and the School of Social Work. (This is automatic and may take place without a review or further procedure.)
- Falsifying academic records or other forms of scholastic dishonesty.

Suspension or Dismissal for Non-academic Reasons: A student may be suspended or dismissed from the program for non-academic reasons. A student may be suspended or dismissed from the social work program if she or he engages in unethical behavior or is demonstrably deficient in the preceding list of abilities and attributes. Students enrolled in the program must demonstrate through their classroom and practicum performance an understanding of and a commitment to social work values, principles, and ethics and competency in fundamental skills. Students are required to act in accordance with the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics. Students violating the Code of Ethics will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include low performance evaluation, removal from the practicum, or dismissal from the program. In some cases, violation of the Code of Ethics may place the student liable in civil or criminal action. Students may also be suspended or dismissed from the program if a personal, emotional, mental, or behavioral problem that is exhibited in any area of the student's life appears to place social work clients, colleagues, or other students at risk of physical or psychological harm. Judgments regarding such issues will be made by the faculty of the School with recommendations for corrective action made to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Any of the following behaviors may result in disciplinary review and possible recommendation for suspension or dismissal from the MSW program:

- Behavior judged to be in violation of the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Behavior judged to be in violation of the UMSSW Essential Skills and Functions (signed by student via Sonia practicum software before entering generalist year practicum)
- Consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior.
- Demonstrable deficiency in the required personal and professional abilities and attributes.
- Disruptive behavior toward students, colleagues, faculty, staff, clients, or community members (on campus in field placement, or in the community).
- Documented evidence of conviction of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice, that occurs during the course of study, or that occurred prior to admission to the program and became known after admission.
- Drug/alcohol or other forms of addictive behavior that result in significant impairment.

- Failure to address personal, emotional, medical, or legal problems that interfere with professional judgment, performance, and responsibilities.
- Failure to respond to requests and/or communication from the School for more than 1 month.
- Violations of the UM Student Conduct Code.

The student will be subject to review by the faculty or representative group thereof for recommendations regarding possible corrective action.

Policies for Review of Student Performance

RATIONALE

All students must demonstrate capacity to meet academic requirements and professional behavior while progressing toward their degree, which includes courses, classroom environment, practicum/field experiences, and in the community and social media spaces. In the social work programs, faculty have the responsibility for determining whether students have developed the required level of mastery to enter the profession.

Students are responsible for knowing and complying with all regulations, policies, and procedures required by the University of Montana, the University of Montana Graduate School, the UM School of SW, the CSWE, Academic Professional Standards, and social work professional codes of ethics. Information can be found on the university website, and in student program handbooks. In no case will a regulation be waived, or an exception granted because of lack of awareness of the policy or due to the assertion that staff, faculty, or their faculty advisor did not inform the student.

If a student's behavior or performance is deemed to be in violation of the expected standards of academic and/or non-academic conduct, the following process will occur:

- The student will be notified of the specific concerns.
- A representative body of the social work faculty (generally including the Chair, BSW or MSW Program Director, student's advisor, and other members of the faculty as appropriate), will meet to discuss the concerns and possible courses of action.

When the faculty member also serves as Lead or Director, the academic review process will defer to the Chair.

The student will have the right to address the faculty, with a personal representative of the student's choice present. The possible faculty recommendations include the following:

- i. No action.
 - ii. A plan and timeline for corrective action by the student.
- Recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School for suspension or dismissal from the social work program. The student will be informed in writing of the faculty recommendations.
 - The student has the right to appeal the decisions of the faculty. To do so, the student should present a formal letter to the Dean of the Graduate School concerning relevant details that were misrepresented, or contingent circumstances within 10 days. The Dean of the Graduate

School will then render a decision on this matter. See [Graduate School Policy B8.000 Academic Probation and Suspension](#).

Please note, students who do not respond to requests for meetings as detailed by this section will be considered as accepting of the outlined process and outcomes as recommended by faculty.

Student Support and Accountability Plan Policy

Note: See SSAP template in Appendix O

A Student Support and Accountability Plan (SSAP) shall be initiated for students who are below academic performance standards and/or are not meeting all required non-academic performance standards. The purpose of the SSAP is to address CSWE Accreditation competency-based expectations, reiterate University of Montana's School of Social Work's expectations, and allow the student the opportunity to demonstrate an ability to meet program requirements.

Selected examples of when an SSAP will be implemented:

- Cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0
- Student receives a "C-" or below and is required to retake a course
- Behavior is in violation of the UMSSW Essential Skills and Functions
- Pattern of unprofessional behavior toward students, colleagues, faculty, staff, clients, or community members (on campus, in field placement, or in the community)
- Failure to address personal, emotional, medical, or legal challenges that interfere with professional judgment, performance, and responsibilities

Student Support and Accountability Plans require signature by the student, MSW Director, Advisor, Program Coordinator, and Chair. Student Support and Accountability Plans will be reviewed to discuss progress towards completion at the conclusion of each semester (Fall, Spring, Summer). Failure to sign SSAP will result in an immediate pause in program progression until a resolution can be reached.

Failure to meet agreed upon milestones within the SSAP by the end of the following term may result in suspension or dismissal from the program.

If a student is on an SSAP, failure to engage, submit assignments, or communicate effectively with instructors within the first 8 days of 8-week courses (7-week in Summer), will result in you being asked to withdraw from the MSW Online program.

Additional Program Policies

The program has also developed the following policies and procedures that students are expected to follow in completing their program course work and practicum placement. These policies and procedures include:

Participation & Attendance

Regular attendance in all courses is required. The specific attendance policy for each course will be established by the course instructor. Students can find The University of Montana Attendance/Absence Policy on the Registrar's [website](#).

Failure to log into Canvas within the first eight (8) days of a course will result in being asked to withdraw from the program.

Failure to engage, submit assignments, or communicate effectively with instructors within the first 15 days will result in being asked to withdraw, suspension, or dismissal from the program. This applies to 7/8-week block courses and full-semester courses. See SSAP Policy, and Withdrawal Policy for complete information.

Students accepted into the Online MSW program are expected to complete their degree in the Online program. Admittance into the Grounded MSW program is required for participation in the Grounded MSW program. See Appendix E for full policies related to MSW modality transfers.

Registration

Please contact your faculty advisor at the School of Social Work for guidance before registering for classes each semester. Their assistance is necessary for registration.

The Graduate School's continuous registration policy requires students to register for every term unless they have an approved leave of absence. Students must register for a minimum of 3 credits to remain in good standing with the Graduate School. For more information about the continuous registration policy, please visit the Graduate School policy webpage on [Degree Standards](#).

Deferral

Students who have been accepted into the MSW program may make a request to defer admission by up to one year. Students may only defer admission once. Approval of a deferral request is not guaranteed, and deferrals beyond one year will not be approved. To request a deferral, students must send a complete, formal request via email to the Program Manager, stating the general reason for deferral, and the term they wish to return for. The request must be completed prior to the first instructional day of the *original semester*. If a request to defer occurs after the first day of courses, the student must also submit the [Semester Withdrawal Form](#) to the Registrar's Office. Deferral requests after the 8th instructional day may not be considered. If the student has not participated in their course by the 15th instructional day, they will be administratively dropped from the MSW program and

reapplication is required. Late deferral requests may have academic and financial repercussions including but not limited to W/WP/WF on transcripts, no refund, and potential Financial Aid payback requirements. It is the student's responsibility to contact Financial Aid and the Registrar's Office to resolve these and for more information.

In order to re-activate admission for the new semester, the student must submit an [Application for Readmission](#) to the department for approval and signature. Acceptance into the new semester is not guaranteed and is subject to departmental review. Students who do not return at their agreed upon start date will be withdrawn from the program and a reapplication will be required.

The following reasons will be considered for deferral:

- Military Service
- Religious
- Cultural enrichment opportunities
- Research, internship, or work opportunities
- Medical
- Bereavement

Deferrals will not be considered for:

- Attendance at another university
- Pending application to another university

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence (LOA) is a period during which students maintain their status but are not entitled to The University of Montana's services provided by the payment of tuition or fees.

A leave of absence can be requested any time during the academic year for the following semester or year. A leave of absence may begin during a semester on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is requested after the 8th instructional day of the current term, there may be academic and financial repercussions including but not limited to W/WP/WF on transcripts, no refund, and potential Financial Aid payback requirements. It is the student's responsibility to contact Financial Aid and the Registrar's Office to resolve these and/or obtain more information. The length of an LOA cannot exceed one year. If a student requests an LOA during the 4th week of a course, the full block will be counted towards the one-year maximum leave.

Students desiring an LOA must discuss the request with their advisor, the MSW Director, or a faculty-student support person. A meeting must be scheduled prior to leave approval; the student is responsible for scheduling this meeting. The [Graduate School Request for Leave of Absence Form](#) (See Appendix F) must be completed and approved by the Chair of the School of Social Work and the Dean of the Graduate School. A date of return will be agreed upon in advance and documented in the LOA form. Students must submit the Readmission Form to the School of Social Work prior to their return. A

student who fails to return on the agreed-upon date will be withdrawn from The University of Montana, and reapplication will be required. Students on leave are fully responsible for returning on the agreed-upon date and communicating with their advisor about the necessary steps needed to return. Students attempting to return without taking these steps will be charged a \$20 readmission fee.

LOA Steps:

- Contact advisor and MSW Director regarding LOA needs.
- Student is responsible for connecting with Financial Aid (406-243-5373) to discuss any financial implications.
- Schedule a meeting with the advisor and MSW director to discuss the LOA and return plan.
- Complete the LOA form and return it to the School of Social Work.
- The student is required to stay in communication with the School to ensure important information regarding practicum and the plan to return can be communicated. This includes periodically checking the University email.
- Prior to return, complete the Readmission Form and submit it to the School of Social Work.

A leave of absence does not waive the mandatory five-year requirement for completion of the degree. Students must complete the MSW program in five calendar years (15 active semesters) from the time of acceptance.

In accordance with the Graduate School policy, the School of Social Work allows up-to a one- year leave of absence with no penalty with approval of the Graduate School. The form requesting a leave of absence is available on the Graduate School website. Because a leave of absence presumes the student is off-campus and not engaged in university activities, no university resources (except those available to the general public) are available during the leave of absence. Approvable LOA reasons include:

- Parental need
- Major illness
- Personal need

Leaves of absence will not be approved for the purpose of working on jobs, research, thesis, dissertations, or to establish residency.

Students needing an LOA are solely responsible for any additional time needed to complete a degree and all financial aid repercussions.

Time Limits

All requirements for the degree must be completed within five years from the student's entry into the program. No graduate course offered for the degree may be more than six years old at the time degree requirements are completed with the exception of any courses accepted in transfer.

Course Exemptions, Waivers or Substitutions

In those cases where it appears that students possess the requisite knowledge and skills that are included in first year (generalist) coursework they are eligible to petition for a course exemption, waiver, or substitution. The requirements for course exemptions, waivers, or substitutions are described below:

- **Exemptions** – Exemptions are granted to those students who have successfully completed graduate-level coursework taken as a graduate or non-degree seeking graduate student (with grade B or better) that clearly duplicates foundation course content. Students receiving an exemption are not required to register for additional credits to replace those for the course(s) from which they are exempt. The credits awarded for the previous coursework will be counted. As a result, the student will have a reduction in the number of credits required for the degree. Eligible students include those identified by the MSW Director during review of application materials as having completed the requisite course content and students who believe they have completed similar course content and request to be considered for an exemption. For example, a student who completed a graduate-level research methods course may be eligible for exemption from SW 520. The student would be required to complete 57 rather than 60 credits for the MSW degree. Students requesting a consideration for an exemption must submit:
 1. a copy of the previously completed course syllabus;
 2. copies of completed course assignments, upon request from the MSW Program Director; and
 3. an official copy of transcripts indicating a grade of B or better in the course.

If these documents indicate that similar course content has been successfully completed through prior coursework the MSW Director can grant an exemption.

- **Waivers** – When students can complete course work in the subject area of a required foundation course and can demonstrate mastery of the course content, they can request a waiver for the corresponding course(s). For example, a student who has completed an advanced undergraduate social research methods class may be eligible for a waiver for SW 520. Requests for a course waiver must be submitted to the course instructor at least two weeks prior to the start of the term in which the course is being offered. The request must include:
 1. a copy of the previously completed course syllabus;
 2. copies of completed course assignments; and
 3. an official copy of transcripts indicating a grade of B or better.

Following review of the documents and interview with the student, the instructor will make a recommendation to the MSW Program Director as to whether or not the student making the request is eligible to waive the course. The instructor may require the student to take an equivalency examination to demonstrate mastery of core course concepts. If the instructor determines that similar coursework has been successfully completed (grade B or better) and that the student has mastered the core concepts, a course waiver is issued. If the student

successfully passes the examination, a course waiver is issued. The waiver exempts the student from enrolling in the foundation course but it does not grant course credits. As a result, the student must enroll in an alternative course to complete the 60 credits required for the MSW program.

- **Substitutions** – A substitution refers to using one course in lieu of another for a required generalist or specialization year course. Requests for substitutions must be made to the MSW Director one month prior to the course’s start date. Students making a substitution request must have a legitimate reason for making the substitution and must submit a copy of the syllabus of the course being proposed for substitution.

Elective Courses

Students take a minimum of six elective course credits during their course of study. Students are encouraged to choose elective courses that compliment an area of emphasis as outlined in this handbook (i.e. interpersonal practice, community and organizational practice, or social and political change) or ones that fit best with their personal learning goals. Depending on the term of initial enrollment, students can typically enroll in elective courses starting in the first year (fall and summer initial enrollment) or year two (spring initial enrollment). Students can take a *maximum* of six credits at the 400 level if the course is an approved graduate course option (designated UG) and completed for graduate credit. Courses below the 400 level cannot be taken for graduate level credit.

In-progress Grades

The grade of “N” denotes a course is in progress and is a temporary grade assigned to students for their first semester of specialization practicum. The temporary grade is replaced with a permanent grade based on the score earned on the final practicum evaluation received at the end of the practicum year.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of Incomplete (I) is a temporary grade assigned to students who have not completed course work due to extraordinary circumstances beyond the student’s control. Students requesting an incomplete must request the grade with the instructor and determine the materials to be submitted with a completion deadline listed. Please note, students must complete any incomplete courses prior to the start of the next term. At the time the student turns in incomplete course work, the course instructor will complete a Change of Grade form. It is the responsibility of the course instructor to turn in the Change of Grade form to the School of Social Work for processing. Students are responsible for discussing any changes with the Financial Aid office to ensure they understand how incompletes or course withdrawals will affect financial aid packages.

More than 2 incomplete grades will result in an Academic Review meeting with Program Lead and/or MSW Director or Chair.

Additional information on Incomplete or Ongoing grades can be found on page 43 under Coursework Information and Policies.

Additional Policies for Incomplete Grades from UM Catalog

It is assumed that students have the responsibility for completing the requirements of the courses in which they are enrolled within the time framework of the semester. A grade of Incomplete (I) may be given when, in the opinion of the instructor, there is a reasonable probability that students can complete the course without retaking it. If an Incomplete is granted, the student should not re-register for the course as that is considered a course repeat.

The incomplete is not an option to be exercised at the discretion of a student. In all cases it is given at the discretion of the instructor within the following guidelines:

1. A mark of incomplete may be assigned students when:
 - The student has regularly attended and completed passing work for most of the semester, and
 - For reasons beyond the student's control and which are acceptable to the instructor, the student has been unable to complete the requirements of the course on time. Negligence and indifference are not acceptable reasons.
2. The instructor sets the conditions (including the deadline; maximum/default is one calendar year) for the completion of the course work.
3. When a student has met the conditions for making up the incomplete, the instructor will assign a grade based upon an evaluation of the total work done by the student in the course.
4. An incomplete which is not made up within one calendar year automatically will revert to the alternate grade which was assigned by the instructor at the time the incomplete was submitted.
5. Faculty are required to report both the alternate grade and the deadline for all incomplete work submission; this information is collected at the point of grade submission.
6. An incomplete remains on the permanent record and is accompanied by the final grade, for example, IA, IB, IC, etc.

Life Experience

The School of Social Work will not grant course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

Transfer Credit

A maximum of thirty (30) semester credits may be taken for graduate credit through another accredited MSW Program with the following provisions:

1. The actual number of credits accepted, up to the maximum of 30, is to be determined by the MSW Director and subject to final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.
2. A maximum of nine (9) general graduate credits can be transferred in.
3. The credits for required social work classes must be from a CSWE- accredited School of Social Work.
4. A GPA of 3.0 or better must be earned in courses to be considered for transfer.

5. Credits are transferable, grades are not.
6. All courses submitted for transfer credit at the time of application must be completed prior to the student's enrollment into the program, and decisions on acceptance of transfer credit must be made at the time the plan of study is approved.
7. Official transcripts of the courses taken at other institutions must be filed with the School of Social Work and the Graduate School.
 - The applicant must make available upon request course descriptions, material summarizing content, and samples of the applicant's course work.
6. Completion of partial practicum hours of any given practicum year will not be accepted.
7. Transfer credits from other institutions will not be accepted for current students on academic suspension.

Auditing Courses

Auditing courses is currently unavailable to students in the Online MSW program.

Withdrawal from Courses

To withdraw from a course, the student must inform their advisor and complete the appropriate form from the Registrar's Office. A grade of "W" will be assigned for students who withdraw after the 8th instructional day of 8-week session. Withdrawal after the 24th instructional day will result in WF/WP on the transcript, except when extenuating circumstances are involved. Students who wish to withdraw without academic penalty after the deadline must present their case in writing before the end of the course to the Associate Dean of the College of Health. The Registrar will no longer accept retroactive withdrawals. Please visit the [Financial Aid Office website](#) for information on student loan implications.

Withdrawal from Master of Social Work Degree Program

Withdrawal from the program can take many forms. A student may officially withdraw, be dismissed, take a leave of absence, or be administratively withdrawn. Withdrawal from the program implies withdrawal from all courses, and the Graduate School's regulations concerning grades are applicable.

Mere non-attendance does not constitute official withdrawal from the program. **It is necessary to inform the School of Social Work** of your intention to withdraw, and this request will be forwarded to the Graduate School. Unauthorized withdrawal from the program or nonattendance (failure to register and attend fall & spring semesters) will result in administrative withdrawal.

Notification of this plan must be communicated via email to the MSW Director and the Chair of the School of Social Work. Students are responsible for any financial aid repercussions and are strongly encouraged to discuss any LOA, incomplete grade, or withdrawal plans with the Financial Aid office directly in addition to the SSW faculty/Director.

Tuition, Fees and Registration

The UM Office of Business Services provides up-to-date information on graduate student tuition and fees. Check their [website](#) for more information.

Financial Aid

FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES: Graduate financial aid packages typically include a combination of need-based subsidized and unsubsidized student loans. A student using the FAFSA automatically applies for all federal and institutional loans with one application. Students who desire work study, and who are not on assistantships, are also considered with the FAFSA application.

Please see the Graduate School [website](#) for further information on financial assistance.

FAST Fund: Grants of up to \$300 are available to students via an application process for use in emergency situations. See <https://montanafaculty.org/emergency-student-fund/for-students> for details. Please note these grants are not always available and are dependent upon current budgets.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS: A limited number of paid GA positions may be available for Online MSW students for 15-20 hours/week. Information will be disseminated when available. Students must be in good standing and have successfully completed at least one term in the Online MSW program. Opportunities are subject to change. Contact the MSW Director for more information.

Student Participation in MSW Program Governance

The School of Social Work encourages the active participation of MSW students in the formulation and modification of policies and in activities affecting academic and student affairs through participation in advisory and decision-making bodies such as the MSW Program Committee, Student Evaluation Committee, Faculty Evaluation Committee,

Search Committee, MSW Orientation Committee, and MSW Graduation Committee. Requests for nomination for membership and participation in these committees, along with descriptions of the committee and member responsibilities, are sent by email to all MSW students at the start of fall semester.

The MSW Program Committee addresses policy and program issues on an ongoing basis. The Committee is convened by the MSW In-person Program Lead on a monthly basis to address curricular matters, program development and renewal, and specific student initiatives. The Committee is made up of the MSW In-person Program Lead, two faculty members, and a student member who also serves as staff to the committee. The MSW In-person Program Lead sends out a call for participation to the students in the fall, and appointments to this and other committees are made in consultation with the faculty. Student members of the committee bring student concerns to the group and participate as full members of the committee. The committee reports regularly to the full faculty regarding policies and procedures that might be modified to improve the program.

Faculty and Student Evaluation Committees: The performance of School of Social Work faculty members is evaluated on an annual basis. Evaluations are conducted by an elected Faculty Evaluation Committee, which also includes one MSW student member. The student member participates in all meetings and deliberations of the committee but does not have voting rights on the committee, per the UM Collective Bargaining Agreement. A Student Evaluation Committee (composed of both BSW and MSW students) reviews course evaluation data for each faculty member and submits its findings to the Faculty Evaluation Committee. Students review, summarize, and write comments on each faculty member's individual performance record, including faculty member requests for normal salary increases, merit increases, promotions, or tenure.

UM Graduate Student Council: One MSW student is also chosen by his or her peers to represent the MSW students on the campus-wide Graduate Students' Council. The Council represents the interests of all graduate students university wide.

The Social Justice Action Network (SJAN) was founded in 2005 as an activist organization with student, faculty, and community membership to address local, statewide, national and international issues of social work and social justice. SJAN has developed a mission statement and approved a constitution and by-laws to become an officially recognized organization through the Associated Students of The University of Montana. SJAN is not currently active, however, students are welcome to reactivate it.

Additional Opportunities for Participation: Whenever the School undertakes a search for new faculty members, one MSW student serves as a member of the Search Committee. Committees comprised of students and faculty are formed each year to plan the fall orientation for incoming first-year MSW students and for graduation activities. Students have taken leadership in the community-building process of new-student orientation. Students are encouraged to develop and sustain collective, organized efforts that support their interests. The School of Social Work faculty are willing to serve as organizational allies in these endeavors.

Field Education

Director of Field Education Welcome



Welcome Social Work Students,

On behalf of the University of Montana School of Social Work (UMSSW), we welcome you to your field education experience. The practicum is often referred to as the signature pedagogy of social work education, and as such, it will offer you the following opportunities:

- Integrate classroom experience with actual social work practice
- Develop core competencies and behaviors in a field education setting
- Develop professional self-awareness and accountability
- Practice social work skills and theories
- Exercise ethical decision-making in the context of social work values and the [NASW Code of Ethics](#)

MSW students will be in an agency setting for approximately 15-20 hours per week for two consecutive semesters and complete 900 hours of practicum over two academic years. You will have an Agency Field Instructor (AFI) at your practicum site who will serve as your mentor and supervisor. In addition, you will have a UMSSW field liaison who will facilitate your weekly seminar course and serve as the first line of support for all practicum needs.

This manual is designed to provide you with the essential information for making your practicum a successful experience. Please read it thoroughly and pay particular attention to the Essential Skills and Functions and the Problem-Solving Phases (see Appendix K). Additionally, I would like to highlight an online resource, [Field Placement Anxiety](#), which you might find helpful as you deal with potential field placement anxiety and practicum-related stressors.

If you have any questions or concerns as you enter and embrace this process, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am here to assist you in finding a productive practicum that will offer you a rich learning experience and prepare you for advanced integrated social work practice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Werner".

Katharina Werner, LCSW, MSW
Director of Field Education/ Clinical Associate Professor

Mission, Goals, Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors

CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement Regarding Field Practicum

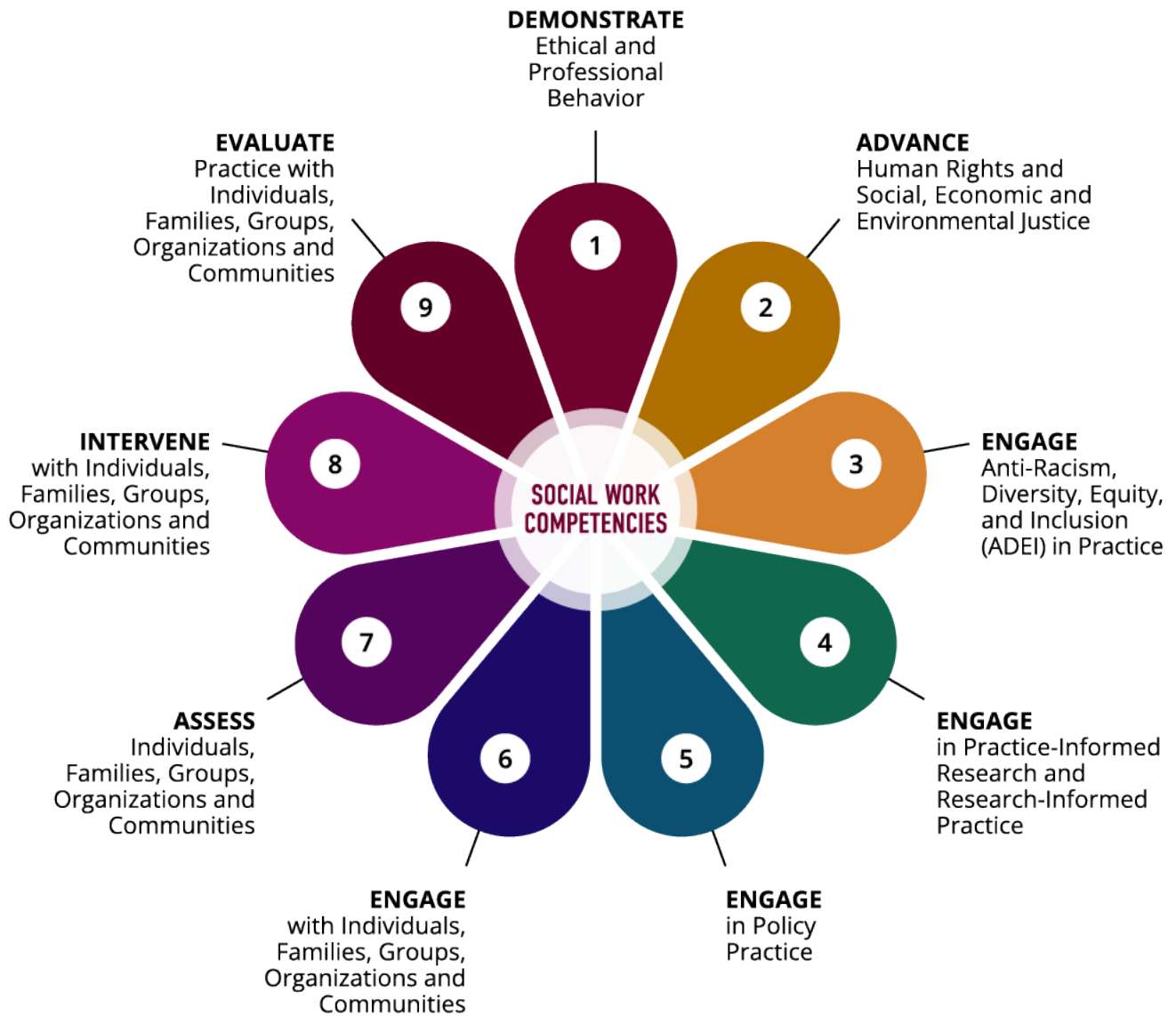
Educational Policy 2.2—Signature Pedagogy: Field Education

Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline—to think, to perform, and to act ethically and with integrity. Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies. Field education may integrate forms of technology as a component of the program.

Council on Social Work Education – 2022 Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards The Nine Social Work Competencies

The following competencies, dimensions, and behaviors inform the learning in practicum for students in their generalist year (year 1). Students in their specialization year (year 2) will focus on a set of ten competencies and advanced behaviors developed by the UMSSW with a focus on practice in rural and indigenous communities through an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens.

“The nine social work competencies are listed in this section. Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that make up the competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, and the descriptions that precede them represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors. Master’s programs extend and enhance the nine social work competencies, and any additional competencies added by the program, for each area of specialized practice. By extending and enhancing the competencies, programs provide master’s-level students with the four dimensions (i.e., knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes) relevant to each area of specialized practice. A specialized competency description is developed to incorporate the four dimensions and specialized behaviors for each competency and any additional competencies added by the program. “(CSWE, 2022 EPAS)



Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions

influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- b. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- b. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means

that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- b. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- b. identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects well-being, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis,

implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- b. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- b. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and

- b. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- b. incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- b. critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Competency 10: Apply Forms of Leadership to Support Collaborative, Interdisciplinary, or Transdisciplinary Relationships and Active Community Participation in Addressing the Intersection of Local and Global Issues Impacting your Community and Greater Geographic Region

Behaviors – Social Workers:

- a. Apply understanding of the relationships among local, state, federal, and Indigenous governments to inform effective advocacy for the rights and wellbeing of residents of one's community; and
- b. utilize inclusive, collaborative approaches to leadership to bring diverse community and organizational stakeholders into processes of organizational change; and

- c. Facilitate and/or engage in critical dialogue around diversity, equity and inclusion; and
- d. Apply knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed organizations to assess and improve organizational practice.

Student Placement Software - SONIA

The University of Montana School of Social Work utilizes a practicum software program called Sonia. This program will be used by all practicum parties, including students, their agency field instructors, and field liaison (field education program faculty). Students will use Sonia to identify practicum placement options, complete required practicum forms (i.e. the Practicum Proposal Form, learning agreement, etc.) and document hours. Students will receive a Welcome email in the spring prior to starting their summer bridge courses with information on how to log in. Students will also receive email communication throughout the spring and summer and all academic year with instructions for forms/tasks that need to be completed through Sonia. If students have technical issues with Sonia, they should email um.sw.fieldoffice@umontana.edu.

Master of Social Work Practicum Policies and Procedures

Since professional social workers wear many hats, students have the opportunity to do a variety of placements with a wide range of learning opportunities. Social work practicum placements occur in settings that allow for direct service with individuals, families, and groups; for example:

- child welfare programs,
- behavioral health agencies,
- domestic/sexual violence programs,
- homelessness programs,
- substance abuse programs,
- correctional settings etc.

As well as in community organizing and policy focused contexts; for example: city or county government and social service programs, legislative offices, voter mobilization programs, civic engagement agencies, etc.

Some placements are more clinically focused while others are more macro-level/ advocacy focused. As long as students are able to engage in the CSWE Competencies, they are likely able to get a rich learning experience.

Private Practice Placements

While social workers may choose to work in a private practice setting after obtaining their MSW degree and social work clinical licensure, these settings are generally not available for social work practicum placements. One of the requirements of a practicum agency is that they pay particular attention to the needs of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and/or living in poverty and that they provide learning opportunities to engage in social, racial, and economic justice work in an agency-based setting. MSW placements must also provide access to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate on

a multi system levels (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities). Select private psychotherapy settings may be suitable for field education placements and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the UMSSW Field Education Program. **It is important to note that private practice placements will only be considered for MSW students going into their specialization year practicum. These placements are not available to BSW or first year MSW students since their field education focuses on generalist and not clinical practice.** All students wanting to engage in more advanced direct practice with a focus on building foundational clinical skills should consider the following agencies and practice contexts: behavioral health centers, community health centers, mental health support teams, addiction treatment centers, substance use and recovery agencies, residential and outpatient services, prerelease centers, domestic and sexual violence programs, etc.

To meet the goals of the field education learning experience, private practices that wish to be approved must meet the following criteria:

- Compatibility with the educational objectives of social work and its accrediting body, CSWE which embody the values and ethics of the social work profession, including its emphasis on antiracism, diversity, equity and inclusion and the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Demonstrated commitment to serving vulnerable, oppressed, marginalized, and/or diverse populations by accepting varied payment options such as Medicaid, sliding-scales, etc.
- Serve a need in the community; address a social issue/problem affecting the community.
- Engage with multiple external points of contact within the larger social service delivery system (e.g., schools, courts, human and social services, etc.).
- Articulate a defined mission and agency policies and procedures.
- Utilize a structured intake process.
- Employ at least two practitioners, one of them qualified to serve as MSW agency field instructor, i.e., Must have earned a MSW degree from a CSWE accredited school of social work, completed two years of post MSW practice experience and hold appropriate licensure. It is necessary for field instructors to be licensed at the LCSW level when supervising a clinical practicum where students are providing therapeutic treatment.
- Since practicum is an applied training course, the agency staff must be capable of maintaining agency operations without reliance on practicum students. Pursuant to CSWE accreditation and the Internship "Test" of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) students cannot be used as employees (unless in an approved employment-based practicum setting).
- Openness and ability to provide opportunities to develop students' competencies in micro, mezzo, and macro social work. This means that students can access opportunities for individual, family, group, and macro experiences.
- Provide a structured learning environment where students progress on a continuum that begins with initial training/ onboarding, opportunities to shadow/observe social work practice and move towards more independent practice throughout placement period.

The Generalist Year Practicum

The generalist practicum (first year practicum; 450 hours concurrent with classroom courses) provides students with opportunities for developing self-awareness and applying generalist social work knowledge, values, ethics, and practice skills. The practicum also provides a setting where students can enhance their oral and written professional communication skills and receive educational supervision from an Agency Field Instructor (AFI). A student in the generalist practicum will learn to critically assess, implement and evaluate agency policies to enhance the social condition of the agency clientele.

Generalist practicum placements are integrated and foundational in nature and may be done at a wide range of agencies serving diverse populations. Students are offered an opportunity to experience a wide range of social work roles and functions, as well as the opportunity to work with many at-risk populations.

The Specialization Year Practicum

The specialization year practicum (second year practicum; 450 hours minimum to 500 hours maximum, concurrent with classroom courses) is designed to achieve curricular objectives for the specialization year and to help the student gain advanced knowledge and skills related to integrated practice. **The generalist placement and specialization placement should occur at different agencies to ensure diverse learning experiences. Students wanting to stay at the same agency for both practicum placements are required to complete a Continuation of Practicum application in Sonia and need approval from the Director of Field Education.**

Application and Admission

After submitting the application, students attend a mandatory field education orientation to learn about practicum process and requirements and to discuss available practicum agencies and opportunities that meet student's learning needs. The student will then arrange interviews with agencies and, after securing a site, complete the required practicum proposal paperwork. Once a practicum site is selected and approved, students submit a Practicum Proposal Form (PPF) via their Sonia account informing the Field Education Program about their proposed placement, including agency field instructor information and learning opportunities that align with the ten competencies. Students cannot accumulate practicum hours until the following forms are submitted to the practicum office:

- MSW Practicum Application
- Practicum Proposal Form
- Memorandum of Understanding - MOU (this form has to be completed by both the student and their Agency Field Instructor)
- Essential Skills & Functions Form
- Acknowledgment of Risk Form

Generalist Year

Students admitted to field practicum must meet the following criteria:

- Acceptance to the University of Montana Graduate School.
- Acceptance to the University of Montana MSW program.
- Enrollment in Foundation Integrative Seminar I (SW 576).
- Submission of completed application for practicum placement to Director of Field Education.
- Submission of interests and abilities assessment to Director of Field Education.
- Attendance of small group Orientation with Director of Field Education.
- Submission of resume and interviews with prospective agencies.
- Acceptance by agency, completion of all required paperwork, and approval by Director of Field Education to begin practicum.
- Completion of all required paperwork via Sonia.

Specialization Year

Students admitted to the specialization practicum must meet the following criteria:

- Successful completion of the generalist practicum.
- Be in good academic standing, with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- Successful completion of generalist year courses and foundation integrative seminars.
- Students with an I or N grade in generalist year practicum or seminar are not able to move into specialization year practicum or seminar.
- Students with any incomplete grades must have a plan in place, approved by their faculty advisor, for completion of the work before start of specialization year practicum and seminar.
- Completion of all required paperwork via Sonia.

Students develop a plan with members of the Field Education Program indicating their choice of specialization practicum site and the advanced practice learning opportunities. Students moving to a new site for their Specialization Year interview with prospective agencies. Students who plan to continue in their current practicum site must submit Continuation of Placement- details via their specialization year Practicum Proposal Form in Sonia. Students wanting to stay in the same placement should also work in consultation with their field liaison and AFI to ensure the specialization year provides new learning opportunities in line with specialization year objectives and tasks that are new and distinct from the student's first year responsibilities at the site while also ensuring that all competencies and behaviors are met. Specialization year placements that focus on the same/similar learning goals as Generalist Year practicum and do not align with competencies will not be approved. The Field Education Program must approve new specialization practicum placements.

MSW Practicum Placement Exceptions

All exceptions require pre-approval from the Director of Field Education as well as advanced planning regarding placement.

International Practicum Placements

The Online MSW program does not currently support international practicum placements but may be discussed and approved on a case-by-case basis. Students must plan several semesters ahead as these placements require considerable time to identify and coordinate. Students may need to demonstrate fluency in a foreign language. Interested students must meet with the Director of Field Education a minimum of two semesters prior to beginning practicum.

Practicum Selection and Placement

Outreach and Selection of Practicum Site

Students receive extensive information about the agency outreach and selection process in the Field Orientation Course in Canvas. The course offers information and resources that allow students to properly prepare for professional outreach and correspondence with potential practicum agencies. In addition, both the Director and Assistant Directors of Field Education are available to advise students on agency outreach, opportunities, and interviewing. The Field Education Team also offers regular Q&A sessions throughout the spring that allow students to ask questions about the outreach and placement process and receive additional support to secure a high-quality placement. Although students drive the outreach process and coordinate interviews with potential agencies, the Field Education Team is available. **Any new sites/ agencies that have never hosted a UMSSW practicum student need to be reviewed by a member of the Field Education Program to ensure alignment with practicum and agency requirements.**

After securing a site, students complete the Practicum Proposal Form (PPF) informing the Field Education Program of their proposed placement. Once the Field Program has officially approved the site, students must submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), an Essential Skills and Functions Form, and the Risk Acknowledgment (Appendices J, K, L) form prior to beginning practicum. Students cannot officially accumulate practicum hours until all the above forms are submitted via Sonia.

Virtual Practicum Fair

The Field Education Program hosts an annual Practicum & Career Fair, which will be offered virtually each spring. Although most organizations are based in Missoula and Montana, all students are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in other professional development workshops and networking opportunities. The Field Education Program is committed to developing this event to include agencies and practicum opportunities outside of the state of MT.

Practicum Position and Employment Based Practicum (EBP)

This is an option for students already employed in social or human services organizations that are supportive of their employee's educational pursuit.

Under this option, students use their **current employment position** as their practicum. Activities from the student's employment position must provide opportunities to integrate theory into practice and speak directly to the core competencies and practice behaviors. In other words, job responsibilities and tasks must relate to the core social work competencies. These criteria can also be met by having students take on additional, new and different opportunities and responsibilities, outside of the employment position. For example, students take on a completely new and different role within the

organization which is distinct from their employment position to ensure social work competencies and practice behaviors are being met.

If an employer supports the student to engage in a completely new role/program within the agency, we strongly encourage them to release the employee from some of their job responsibilities to complete their educational practicum hours (e.g., 20 hours are completed in the employee's regular role and 20 hours are completed in the new and separate practicum role). Students who are approved for this type of an EBP may be paid by their employer for their practicum hours (negotiated between student and employer). If an employer is able to support a student to use their current employed position as their practicum, the student will be paid for their practicum hours (see Appendix G).

Requirements for an EBP

Exceptions to EBP policy may be considered by the Director of Field Education on a case-by-case basis when it can be demonstrated that the proposed practicum can provide a unique educational experience in a new program, or with a new focus, and with a new agency field instructor.

The student's employer, the University of Montana School of Social Work, and the student will work together to assure that the following EBP conditions are met:

- The student must be in good academic standing and in good standing at their employing agency. **Students wanting to complete an EBP must have been employed a minimum of 3 months** before requesting an EBP because an unsuccessful probationary period is also likely to result in disruption of the student's field placement.
- Employment supervisor and MSW Agency Field Instructor (= practicum supervisor) must agree that the student's practicum performance will not influence their employment evaluation.
- The agency must be willing to allow the student/employee to attend classes and have an educationally focused field placement experience.
- The educational opportunities in the place of employment must permit achievement of the 10 social work competencies and skills compatible with the student's social work practice classes and course of study, i.e., Specialization (for Advanced Standing MSW)
- Agency field instructors for MSW students are required to have an MSW from an accredited social work program and two years of post-MSW work experience.
- The Agency Field Instructor and employment supervisor of a student may be the same person. In such cases, supervision time for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment (e.g., separate supervision times each week or 30 minutes focused on work and 30 minutes focused on practicum learning). Our goal is to ensure the role of the student as a learner while they are engaging in their paid employment position. In other words, the student's role as a student should be prioritized along with their learning and skill development.
- If the agency does not have a qualified social work field instructor on staff, they must arrange for an approved off-site BSW/MSW supervisor to provide the required supervision and designate an on-site task supervisor/ agency field instructor to provide daily oversight and support (e.g., some organizations have board members or volunteers that meet degree

requirements and can serve in the outside supervisor role). The Field Education Program is available to brainstorm options.

- Student can only count a **maximum of 25 hours per week** towards practicum hours.
- The agency must be willing to sign the UMSSW Practicum Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or an Affiliation Agreement and agree to the EBP specific requirements of either agreement. The MOU may not be altered or amended unless agreed to by all persons (student, employer, and field education program). Accordingly, if an agency alters the terms of placement without informing the UMSSW Field Education Program, the field faculty will suspend the EBP placement, which will not be resumed unless a revised agreement can be arranged in a timely manner. Any revised agreement must be written and signed by the Executive Director of the agency (or their designee), the student-employee, the faculty liaison, and filed with the Field Education Program.
- Students applying for an EBP must be able to demonstrate how their employment role either offers a new role with new and distinct learning opportunities OR how their current employment role relates to the core social work competencies. This information is submitted via the Practicum Proposal Form in Sonia. Once the PPF and EBP info is submitted to the Field Office, it will be reviewed, and a response will be given as soon as possible to indicate whether the placement has been approved. A site visit may be required as part of the application review process prior to determining approval.
- Employment Based Practicum is not the same as a paid internship (i.e., a practicum position receiving a small educational stipend or hourly pay for the 15 hours per week a student contributes to their practicum agency). Consequently, paid internships/ practicums do not fall under the same requirements as the EBP.

Application and Approval Process

1. EBP information is part of the general Practicum Proposal Form in Sonia. Students submit the PPF, including the EBP info, no later than 8/1.
2. The Field Education Program reviews the PPF and EBP info, follows up with additional questions or concerns, and, if necessary, arranges a meeting with the student, the work supervisor, and the proposed agency field instructor (if different than the work supervisor) to discuss the terms and structure of the placement and assure that all parties understand and approve the educational arrangement.

Termination of EBP

If a student in an Employment Based Practicum is terminated from their employment role, consequently leading to termination of their practicum, the same academic review process will apply as for non-EBP placements (refer to student handbook). Termination of employment may ultimately lead to a pause in practicum and a delay in a student's graduation timeline.

Remote Practicum Placements

The landscape of social work practice has evolved significantly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with an increasing number of agencies and organizations embracing fully remote service delivery. This shift has expanded opportunities for social workers and social work students to engage in virtual practice, including telehealth, case management, and advocacy, particularly benefiting individuals in rural and tribal communities where access to in-person services may be limited.

Recognizing these changes, this policy establishes guidelines for remote and virtual social work practicums, ensuring that students receive high-quality, ethically sound, and competency-based training in digital practice environments. By integrating virtual learning and supervision, this practicum framework supports the development of critical skills necessary for effective remote service delivery while maintaining the profession's core values of equity, accessibility, and client-centered care.

Purpose: This policy establishes the requirements, expectations, and support structures for students participating in remote or fully virtual social work practicum placements. While fully in-person placements are preferred, this policy reflects the flexibility needed to align with evolving service delivery models. The goal is to ensure that students are well-equipped for virtual learning environments and can successfully meet the competencies required for their practicum experience while upholding the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct.

Eligibility Criteria: To qualify for a remote or fully virtual practicum placement, students must meet the following criteria:

- **Independent Learning Skills:** Students must demonstrate the ability to work independently, manage their time effectively, and stay engaged in a self-directed learning environment.
- **Field Experience:** Students should have prior experience in social work or a related field, ensuring they possess foundational skills necessary for a virtual setting.
- **Technological Proficiency:** Students must be comfortable using technology for communication, documentation, and service delivery. Familiarity with video conferencing, case management software, and digital collaboration tools is required.
- **Reliable Internet Access:** Students must have consistent, high-speed internet access to ensure smooth participation in virtual meetings, supervision sessions, and online training.
- **Ethical and Professional Readiness:** Given the autonomous nature of remote work, students must demonstrate ethical decision-making skills, professionalism, and the ability to maintain client confidentiality in virtual environments.
- **Practicum Limitations:** Students may not have more than one completely virtual practicum. Requests for two remote practicum placements must be made to the Field Education Team and are decided on a case-by-case basis.

Practicum Placement Flexibility: Practicum placements and activities may be completed in various formats:

- Fully in-person
- Fully virtual
- Hybrid (a combination of in-person and virtual activities)

While the UM School of Social Work is not required to provide a virtual practicum option, some virtual placements may be available. In certain circumstances, the UMSSW Office of Field Education will assist students in vetting virtual placements for appropriateness and initiating community partnerships with new sites.

Expectations and Responsibilities: Students in remote practicum placements are expected to:

- Meet all educational objectives of social work and its accrediting body, CSWE, which embody the values and ethics of the social work profession, including its emphasis on antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion and the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Adhere to all professional social work standards and ethical guidelines, including confidentiality and appropriate use of technology.
- Communicate proactively with field instructors and supervisors, ensuring regular check-ins and timely reporting of any challenges.
- Utilize digital tools effectively for case management, client interactions, and supervision meetings.
- Participate in all required training sessions to enhance their competency in remote service delivery.
- Maintain an organized, professional workspace that ensures privacy and minimizes distractions.

Supervision and Support: Agency Field Instructors (AFIs) must provide regular virtual supervision, ensuring students receive guidance, feedback, and professional development opportunities. Due to the nature of virtual placements, additional assurances must be met:

- Thorough and clear onboarding process, including but not limited to a review of technology systems, agency services, expected ways to engage and serve clients, and documentation systems.
- Thorough and clear training program related to the services the student will be learning and practicing during practicum.
- Clear and weekly Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor (when appropriate) supervision plan.
- Clear process for documenting and approving student's practicum hours.
- Clear daily communication plan with the Field Instructor or Task Supervisor.
- Clear plan for ways the student may engage with agency personnel to be part of the agency community.
- Clearly defined process for emergency support if/when a need arises with a client.

Assessment and Evaluation: Student performance will be assessed based on their ability to meet all core competencies (as laid out in the learning agreement), demonstrate professional readiness, and effectively engage in remote practice. Evaluations will include feedback from field instructors, self-assessments, and reviews of documented work.

Conclusion: Remote and fully virtual practicum placements offer flexibility and valuable learning experiences but require students to be self-motivated, technologically proficient, and experienced in the field. This policy ensures that students are prepared for the demands of virtual social work practice while receiving the necessary support and supervision to succeed.

Remote Work & Virtual Practicum Readiness: Self-Assessment

Instructions: Reflect on each statement below and rate yourself on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Once you've completed the assessment, calculate your total score and review the results section to determine your fit.

1. Technological Skills

- I am comfortable using technology (e.g., video conferencing, online learning platforms, digital tools) for communication and collaboration.
- I have access to a reliable computer, high-speed internet, and a quiet, dedicated workspace.
- I can troubleshoot basic tech issues or seek help when needed.

2. Communication Skills

- I am confident in my ability to express myself clearly in written formats (e.g., emails, reports, case notes).
- I can actively participate in virtual discussions and engage meaningfully with clients and supervisors.
- I am comfortable initiating communication when I need guidance or support.

3. Time Management

- I can structure my day, prioritize tasks, and meet deadlines independently.
- I stay focused and productive even when working remotely, without direct supervision.
- I am capable of balancing my academic, practicum, and personal responsibilities effectively.

4. Emotional Readiness

- I can stay motivated and maintain a sense of connection in a remote environment.
- I recognize when I need support and know how to access resources for self-care or mental health.
- I feel confident building rapport with clients and colleagues in a virtual setting.

5. Alignment with Goals

- I see value in developing virtual social work skills to adapt to modern client needs and

professional settings.

- I believe a virtual practicum aligns with my long-term professional goals.

Scoring System:

Add up your scores for all statements (minimum: 15, maximum: 75).

- **60-75 points:** You are likely an excellent fit for remote work and virtual practicum placements! You exhibit strong readiness in key areas.
- **45-59 points:** You have some strengths but may need to work on certain areas (e.g., time management or emotional readiness) to fully thrive in a virtual setting.
- **Below 45 points:** A remote practicum may present significant challenges. Consider developing your skills and supports before committing to this type of placement.

Reflection Questions:

- What areas scored highest for you?
- What areas scored lowest, and how can you improve them?
- How can you access resources or support to address gaps in readiness?

Practicum Requirements and Policies

Practicum Hours

MSW Generalist Students

MSW Generalist students are required to complete a total of 450 practicum hours. The first practicum semester should run concurrently with Foundation Integrative Seminar I (SW 576) and the second semester of practicum with Foundation Integrative Seminar II (SW 577).

MSW Specialization Students

The first practicum semester should run concurrently with Advanced Seminar I (SW 578) and the second semester of practicum with Advanced Seminar II (SW 588).

Qualified Activities

- Tasks and responsibilities assigned by AFI (ideally direct service centered)
- Initial onboarding activities, ongoing trainings
- Individual/ group supervision hours (with AFI or MSW supervisor)
- Agency meetings (staff, clinical, program meetings etc.)
- Range of external learning activities, e.g., research, advocacy work, visiting other agencies, attending conferences or community meetings
- Synchronous seminar hours qualify only if student attends!
- Travel and on call hours DO NOT count towards practicum hours!

Tracking Practicum Hours

Students are responsible for tracking practicum hours in Sonia and in order for hours to qualify they must all be approved by the AFI. Hours entered in Sonia will be reviewed by the Director or Assistant Director of Field Education each semester. **Students are asked to submit timesheets once a week in bulk, i.e., 20 hours in one timesheet versus submitting individual hours. Students are not able to count more than 20 hours of practicum each week.**

Scheduling, Vacations, School Breaks, and Absences

Students are regarded as adult learners and professionals in their practicum and are required to engage in proactive and effective communication. This starts with discussing and arranging a feasible practicum schedule and consistent hours each week with their AFI. Students are required to maintain a significant presence in the practicum placement throughout the semester and complete the total number of required hours for the semester, i.e., students are asked to complete a minimum of 15 hours each week and follow a set schedule (e.g., two eight-hour days, three five-hour days).

Practicum agencies are encouraged but not required to work around the university's academic calendar. Students should consider agency and client needs when scheduling school breaks, vacations, and absences and engage in effective communication with their AFI (and if needed field faculty) to inform the agency of absences. It is important to set a schedule that meets student and agency needs at the beginning of the semester to avoid conflicts and possible misunderstandings. Students are also responsible for arranging practicum schedules to accommodate required university classes and final exams.

It may be necessary to work evening or weekend hours to maximize the learning opportunities or to meet the needs of the practicum agency. Occasionally hours may also extend beyond the required weekly hours in order to take advantage of learning opportunities.

If a student is ill or needs to be absent from the agency during scheduled practicum hours, it's the student's responsibility to notify the Practicum Agency Field Instructor to assure that agency staffing needs are met. If the absence lasts for more than two days, the student should also notify the faculty. During the practicum, students are responsible for informing the AFI and the Director of Field Education with up-to-date contact information.

Winter and Spring Break

Students are not obligated to continue their practicum hours during the winter or spring break, but they may do so if it fits their schedule, their learning objectives, and the needs of the practicum agency. Again, students need to coordinate with their AFI and communicate effectively.

Practicum Forms

Students are responsible for submitting the following documents via Sonia before they are allowed to start practicum and count hours:

- Practicum Application
- Practicum Proposal Form (including EBP info if required; including continuation info for

specialization year if required)

- Memorandum of Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities (MOU)
- Essential Skills and Functions Form
- Acknowledgment of Risk Form

Deadlines for Securing a Practicum and Submitting Forms

Students submit Practicum Proposal Form (PPF) on an ongoing basis throughout the spring and summer:

- **Second year practicum students (students going into their specialization year) must secure a practicum and submit PPFs no later than 7/1**
- **First year practicum students (students going into their generalist year) submit PPFs no later than 7/15**

After securing a site, students complete the Practicum Proposal Form to inform the Field Education Program of their proposed placement. Once the Field Program has officially approved the site, students must also submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), an Essential Skills and Functions Form, and the Acknowledgment of Risk form prior to beginning practicum. Students cannot accumulate practicum hours until the above forms are submitted via Sonia.

Students who do not secure a practicum by the above-outlined deadlines should **effectively communicate with the Field Education Team** about additional support and potential extensions to securing a placement. However, students will likely be required to withdraw from practicum and seminar courses and delay their practicum until the following fall semester.

The student's learning agreement must be completed and submitted via Sonia by the end of week four, unless otherwise communicated with the AFI and Field Faculty (e.g., in situations when a student started practicum several weeks into the fall semester, an extension to complete the learning agreement may be provided). **Both the learning agreement and mid-year and final evaluation have to be completed and submitted via Sonia by the student, AFI, and the Field Liaison to receive a final grade. Students missing Learning Agreement deadlines repeatedly will be asked to pause their practicum until the form has been completed and approved by all parties.**

No grade will be given for practicum without completed paperwork and students might be asked to pause their practicum until all forms are submitted, including:

- Learning Agreement
- End-of-Semester Evaluation
- Regularly entered and approved timesheets

Learning Agreement

The Learning Agreement is developed in collaboration with the student, Agency Field Instructor and Field Liaison if needed. The MSW Generalist Learning Agreement addresses generalist practice from an

integrated framework. The MSW Specialization Learning Agreement addresses advanced integrated practice. Students are to identify learning objectives and activities that will assist them in reaching the learning goals. **An example of the learning agreements can be found in the appendices and on the student's Sonia page in the right-hand document section.**

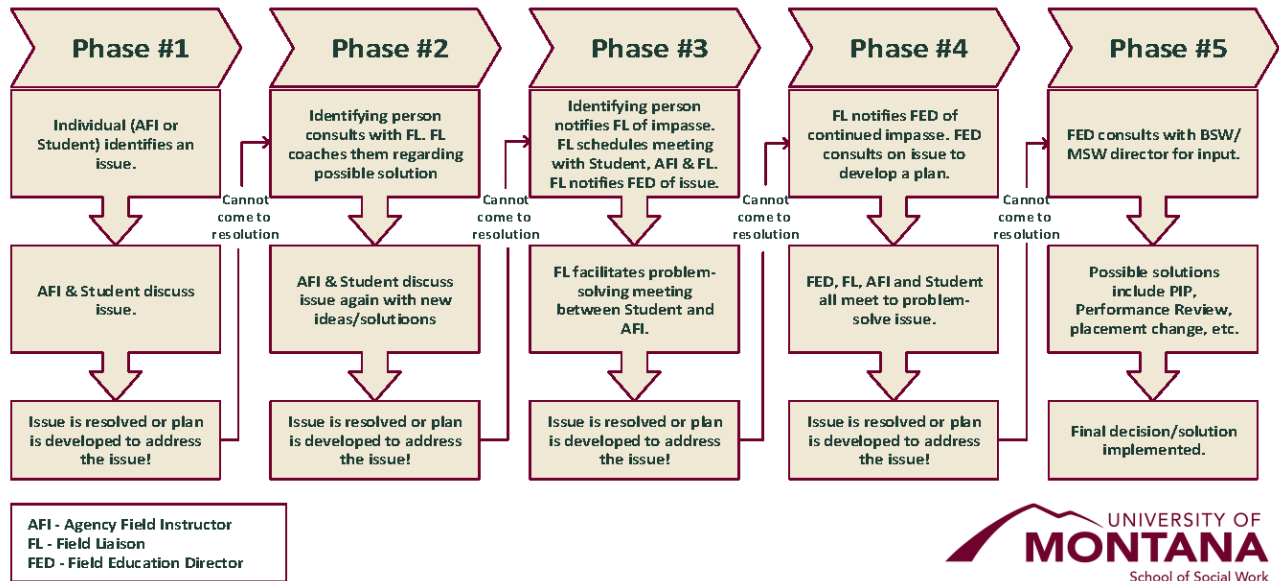
Changing Practicum Placements

Unless there is an educationally sound reason for a change in placements, students are required to follow through on their professional commitment to the practicum agency and its clients and stay the full academic year. Practicum change requests will generally not be considered throughout the first term in the placement unless there are ethical or safety concerns at the practicum agency. It takes time to settle into a placement at an organization and students are asked to be patient with the learning curve that comes with practicum. This includes 1-2 month of onboarding and shadowing which can feel slow to students but is a critical component of laying a strong foundation for more independent practice at the agency during the second half of practicum. Students are encouraged to utilize their seminar course, field liaison, and regular supervision with their AFI to bring up thoughts and concerns about how things are going, what they might be missing in the experience so far, and how their learning needs are met or what adjustments might have to be made. Your field liaison is a great person to provide additional support and help you brainstorm ways to appropriately and professionally address the situation at your practicum site. The first site visit, which should happen within the first 4-6 weeks at the placement, is a great opportunity to bring up what has been going well so far and what areas of the practicum experience might need some adjustment moving forward.

Students are encouraged to view potential problems at practicum, with AFIs, with coworkers etc. as a learning moment and utilize their support systems and other tools to work through issues. Changes in practicum settings will not be considered without prior attempts at resolving problems or concerns. The following flowchart outlines the steps students, Agency Field Instructors, and field liaisons should follow when working through a difficult issue:

Problem-Solving Phases in Field Education

We know challenges can arise during field placement experiences and members of the field triad (Student, Agency Field Instructor, Field Liaison) may need guidance to help develop a winning solution. The following flowchart outlines the steps Students, Agency Field Instructors, and Field Liaisons should follow when working through a difficult issue. Whether the issue is brought forward by the Student or Agency Field Instructor, all problem solving will start in Phase #1. While we know that some may require more dialogue and input, we always aim to resolve issues early and not reach the later phases of this process. If and when an issue cannot be resolved by working through the process, Phase #5 may involve a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), Performance Review, placement changes, and/or other serious actions regarding the student's placement.



Should concerns persist throughout the first half of practicum, and only **AFTER** all the above problem-solving phases have been completed, will the Field Education Team consider changes of placement for the following reasons:

- Administrative changes within the agency which negatively impact the learning experience
- Lack of fit between student and Agency Field Instructor
- Failure of the agency to meet the expected standards for ethical professional practice
- Failure of the agency to provide MSW-level learning experiences

Students are required to complete a “REQUEST TO CHANGE PLACEMENTS” form.

After submitting the request to change placements, students should continue their work with their Field Liaison in their current placement until a decision is reached, or unless they receive written permission from the Director or Assistant Director of Field Education to end their placement. The Field Education Program will assess completed hours and determine if and how many can count towards the 450 required hours. It's important to note that changing placements during the practicum may delay your practicum and graduation timeline.

Please be aware that students cannot terminate their placement without prior approval from the Director or Assistant Director of Field Education. Self-termination will lead to a performance review and may have consequences that could lead to termination in the program.

Termination of Practicum

An agency may terminate a student from practicum for any of the following reasons:

- Student's inability to follow work-related policies (i.e. timeliness, dress code, professional conduct).
- Legal or ethical concerns or violations.
- Student's inability to demonstrate knowledge and skills required by the practicum.
- Lack of fit between student and Agency Field Instructor.
- Poor academic performance of practicum student.
- Lack of professional readiness.

Academic Review and Special Advising Process

An academic review process will be held when a student is terminated from practicum due to academic status or misconduct. The Department Chair of the School of Social Work, the BSW or MSW Program Director, or Director of Field Education may request an academic review.

- A request may be made to the Department Chair in verbal or written form.
- The Department Chair will set a time for the review and determine who should be present.
- The student's faculty advisor is invited to attend the meeting as a support-person
- All participants are notified.
- A meeting is held during which all participants present their views.
- A final decision will be made by the Department Chair based on the feedback and recommendations of the participants.

The academic review process is guided by the BSW/MSW Student Handbook policies and University of Montana academic misconduct policies found in the Student Conduct Code [website](#).

Required Co-requisite Courses

Students complete two semesters in a generalist practicum and two semesters in a specialization practicum. Seminars are held every semester and run concurrently with the practicum.

The generalist practicum seminar (SW 576, 577) introduces the profession of social work and explores the practicum experience. Students receive guidance and feedback while integrating classroom material with the practicum. Students develop generalist social work skills and a foundation for social work values and ethics. Students receive assistance in writing the Learning Agreement.

The advanced integrated practicum seminar (SW 578, 579) prepares students to engage in practicum learning experiences as an integrated practitioner. Students will write their Learning Agreement with the integrated practice model as a focus. Students also develop an Individualized Learning Plan, which includes practicum activities that will fulfill specialization year learning objectives. In addition, students utilize the seminar for peer consultation on their portfolio development.

Grading for practicum seminar courses is by Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR). Students must receive a grade of CR in all seminar courses. **Students cannot move into specialization year seminar and/or practicum without having successfully completed generalist year seminar and/or practicum.**

Practicum Supervision & Roles and Responsibilities

Practicum supervision is an integral part of students' learning and development as professional social workers. Students receive weekly supervision from Agency Field Instructors and support and mentoring through their Field Liaisons (= Seminar Instructor) and other members of the Field Education Program as needed.

Director of Field Education

- Assume responsibility for the overall oversight of direction and coordination of the practicum.
- Oversee screening of student applicants and assess their personal and professional readiness for practicum.
- Oversee assistance of students and agencies in the placement process.
- Provide guidelines for and coordinate evaluation of the student.
- Provide orientation, training and ongoing support for Agency Field Instructors.
- Be available to students, agencies and field liaisons for consultation and facilitation of student/agency issues.
- Assign the grade for each student's practicum.
- Assume responsibility for removing a student from a placement should that become necessary.
- Conduct site visits as needed.

Assistant Director of Field Education

- Meet each semester with the student and the Agency Field Instructor together.
- Assume responsibility with the Agency Field Instructor for the end of semester evaluations of the student's performance.
- Assist in orienting new Agency Field Instructors to the School of Social Work curriculum and practicum program.
- Act as a resource person for students regarding questions, resources, and suggestions for learning opportunities.

Agency Field Instructor

- Per CSWE accreditation guidelines, AFIs must hold an MSW degree with at least 2 years of post-degree experience. All efforts must be made by the practicum agency to identify and provide MSW supervision on site. If the agency cannot meet this requirement, the UMSSW Field Education Program will support the student with additional outside supervision.
- Provide direct supervision to the student on a regular basis (ideally once a week for 30-60 minutes).
- Orient new students to agency structure and function, student responsibilities, policies and

procedures, and to commonly used community resources.

- Provide guidance to student in developing a Learning Agreement to structure the practicum experience.
- Structure assignments/practicum tasks to help the student learn a broad range of social work interventions common to generalist social work practice (BSW students) and advanced practice opportunities (MSW students).
- In consultation with the student, assign duties and responsibilities of increasing difficulty and challenge as appropriate.
- Provide suitable office space and support staff as available.
- Utilize the student as a learner who will assume numerous responsibilities of benefit to the agency rather than as someone to fill the needs of an understaffed agency.
- Follow policies and procedures outlined in the UM BSW or MSW practicum manual.
- Monitor student performance, providing feedback regularly to the student.
- Utilize practicum software program Sonia, to approve student timesheets, approve and provide comments if needed to the student's learning agreement, and evaluate the student at the end of each semester.
- Complete agency evaluation of the practicum experience at the end of the second semester.
- Provide students with disabilities with reasonable accommodations agreed upon by UM Office of Disability Equity and the Director of Field Education.
- Reimburse students for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the same manner as for agency employees.
- Participate in Agency Field Instructor Training and/or complete online Agency Field Supervisor training.

Field Liaison

- Meet each semester with the student and the Agency Field Instructor together.
- Assume responsibility with the Agency Field Instructor for the end of the semester evaluations of the student's performance.
- Assist students in completing the Learning Agreement to structure the practicum experience.
- Assist students in applying and integrating theory into practice.
- Act as a resource person for students regarding questions, resources, and suggestions for learning opportunities.

Outside MSW Supervisor

- Students placed in practicum agencies without an on-site MSW supervisor are assigned an Outside MSW Supervisor.
- Provides bi-weekly group supervision to the student.
- Works collaboratively with Field Liaison, AFI and Director of Field Education.

- Provides guidance to student in developing a Learning Agreement to structure the practicum experience.
- Follows procedures outlined in the UM School of Social Work MSW Manual.
- Monitors student performance by providing feedback regularly to the student.
- May attend end of semester evaluation.

Expectations of Practicum Students

Practicum students will be expected to:

- Act as adult learners and professionals and engage in effective communication throughout the field placement process and practicum experience.
- Read and understand the UM BSW and/or MSW Practicum manual.
- Complete all paperwork required for practicum, including the Practicum Plan, timesheets and learning agreements all accessed via the practicum software, Sonia.
- Coordinate and attend site visits with the Agency Field Instructor and Field Liaison at least three times over the two semesters.
- Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Adhere to UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles.
- Behave in a professional manner, taking responsibility as an adult learner to understand duties and carry out assignments.
- Make yourself reasonably available for weekly supervision meetings with the Agency Field Instructor.
- Prepare for supervisory meetings by reviewing your Learning Agreement, adhering to deadlines, completing work, and formulating questions about assignments.
- Be in attendance at the agency on days and times agreed upon by the student and the agency field instructor, and if unable to attend practicum will notify Agency Field Instructor as soon as possible.
- Work the required hours for completion of a practicum, submit practicum timesheets via Sonia, and abide by agency policies and procedures, including confidentiality.
- Provide proof of professional malpractice insurance and health insurance. While serving in this practicum, student understands that he/she is not an employee or a volunteer of the University of Montana or the Agency. As such, UM and Agency do not provide worker's compensation insurance coverage for students. Student understands that he/she is performing the practicum as part of the BSW or MSW educational program and agrees to maintain health insurance coverage throughout the practicum.
- Discuss with Agency Field Instructor, Field Liaison, and/or Field Education faculty any areas of disagreement, dissatisfaction or confusion in respect to any part of the practicum experience.
- Bring to the attention of the Field Liaison and/or Field Education of any questionable professional practices within the agency.

- Complete an evaluation of the practicum experience at the end of the semester.

Practicum Evaluation

The practicum program has in place three separate evaluation tools for:

1. assessing student performance in the field;
2. gathering agency feedback about the practicum process; and
3. collecting student feedback about the practicum experience.

Student Performance Evaluation

Evaluation of student performance in the practicum is completed at the end of each semester via Sonia. Evaluation forms are found by logging into Sonia and navigating to the Forms tab. Agency Field Instructors evaluate student performance based on the Learning Agreement with student progress measured against the accomplishment of each of the 46 practice behaviors. It is anticipated that by the completion of the practicum, students will have been exposed to all of the core competencies and behaviors. Students receive an N (in progress) grade at the end of the first semester of practicum. **A CR/NCR grade for both fall and spring is issued at the end of the second practicum semester based on the score received in the second evaluation.**

Unsatisfactory Practicum Performance

If the student's practicum performance is unsatisfactory, the student or the Agency Field Instructor should immediately notify the Director of Field Education, who will arrange a meeting with the Agency Field Instructor and the student. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the student pertinent feedback and criteria for improvement. Should the student's practicum performance remain unsatisfactory, the Director of Field Education will contact the BSW or MSW Director to engage in further problem solving.

End-of-Semester Evaluations

First End-of-Semester/ Mid-Term Student Performance Evaluation

The student, near the end of the semester, will arrange for and attend the End-of-Semester Evaluation meeting with the Agency Field Instructor and Field Education Faculty. **Both the student and the Agency Field Instructor** will complete the Mid-Term Evaluation prior to the scheduled meeting with the student and Director or Assistant Director of Field Education. The mid-term evaluation is qualitative and asks the student and AFI to reflect on several prompts, including areas of success, areas of growth, learning goals for semester 2, use of supervision, and other feedback.

End of Practicum/ Final Student Performance Evaluation

The student, at the end of the practicum, will arrange for and attend the Final Evaluation and site visit meeting with the Agency Field Instructor and Field Education Faculty. **The Agency Field Instructor** will complete the second semester evaluation prior to the scheduled meeting with the student and Field Education Faculty. The Agency Field Instructor will provide a numerical rating for each of the practice behaviors and provide comments regarding the student's performance. Practicum performance and

development in each of the competencies and practice behaviors is evaluated via a competency rating scale (1-5):

5: Demonstrates Competency – Student demonstrates competency and a beginning autonomy with this practice behavior in complex situations.

4: Emerging Competency – Student demonstrates beginning-level competency with this practice behavior but requires ongoing opportunities to demonstrate mastery.

3: Developing Competency with Assistance – Student demonstrates inconsistent competency with this practice behavior and thus requires assistance and/or coaching.

2: Minimal Competency – Student rarely demonstrates competency with this practice behavior.

1: No Competency – Student does not demonstrate competency with this practice behavior.

The evaluation form will compute the total score (a CR/NCR threshold). Agency Field Instructors will have the opportunity to make comments regarding the total score and grade associated with it.

The evaluation comments and scores by the Agency Field Instructor will be reviewed by Field Education Faculty along with progress and recommendations noted. The Director or Assistant Director of Field Education is responsible for recommending the final evaluation grade.

Evaluation Directions

Agency Field Instructors will need to meet with their student prior to completing the online evaluation. Since the evaluation mimics the student's learning agreement, it is important that students and agency field instructors consult on the student's progress in each of the practice behaviors. During the meeting the number of hours the student has completed will be reviewed as well to ensure they have been entered in Sonia. At the end of each semester, the student should have completed approximately 300 hours. Agency Field Instructors will receive information on how to complete the evaluations through Sonia each semester.

Practicum Grades

First semester practicum students receive a letter grade of N indicating the course is in progress, which will be changed when all practicum credits are completed.

Students with an Incomplete (I) grade in any pre- or co-requisite course in the fall semester will not be allowed to move forward with practicum hours in the spring, i.e. any pending incomplete grades on the fall semester may necessitate withdrawal from practicum, seminar and other co-requisite courses in the spring semester. Students must resolve the incomplete grade and receive approval from the Field Education Program prior to resuming practicum activities and hours.

A Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR) grade for both semesters of practicum will be issued at the end of the second practicum semester. Students will be rated on a 1 to 5 scale; no basis to judge, no competency, minimal competency, developing competency, emerging competency, and demonstrates competency. The evaluation ratings for all practice behaviors will be averaged for the final score that will determine the grade of Credit or No Credit. MSW Generalist students must receive a score of 70-100 to receive a

grade of Credit. MSW Specialization student must receive a score of 105-150 to receive a grade of Credit. Any score below these values will receive a grade of No Credit.

If at the end of the second practicum semester a student has not completed all practicum hours a grade of incomplete will be entered. Incompletes automatically turn into a letter grade of NCR after 12 months, thus students have up to one year from the end of the second semester of practicum to complete their hours. Extensions of hours past the regular term must be approved by the Director of Field Education first. MSW students wishing to return to complete their degree after a year or more, please refer to the Time Limits section on page 38 of the Master of Social Work Specific Policies in this handbook.

Agency Evaluation of Practicum Process

The Practicum Agency Field Instructor is strongly encouraged to complete the Evaluation of Practicum Process at the end of the practicum placement. A link to the evaluation, to be submitted online, will be emailed to Agency Field Instructors at the end of the second semester.

Student Evaluation of Practicum Experience

The student is strongly encouraged to complete the Student Evaluation of Practicum form at the end of the practicum placement. A link to the evaluation, to be submitted online, will be emailed to students at the end of the second semester.

Field Education Safety Policies & Procedures

The University of Montana School of Social Work (UMSSW) Field Education Program has adopted the following policies and procedures regarding the safety of social work students in practicum placements. This policy has been created to acknowledge that, at times, certain risks and potential dangers are inherent in professional social work practice. Students in field education settings must pay close attention to their overall safety and be aware of their environment. Dangerous situations and/or threatening behaviors are not always predictable, and direct or indirect incidents may be caused by various factors, including but not limited to stress, frustration, anger, fear, paranoia, chemical imbalance, influence of substances, etc. Professional social workers are tasked to rapidly assess such situations, determine what factors contribute to potentially dangerous behaviors, and then attempt a calm response to ensure a successful intervention and safe outcome.

All social work students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with these policies before starting their practicum placement and to review and discuss policies and procedures with their Agency Field Instructor (AFI) prior to starting direct service work.

I. POLICY

- a. The UMSSW is responsible for providing all students, agency field instructors, and field liaisons with general written information about safety in field education settings and practicum placements.
- b. The UMSSW expects each agency to be responsible for orienting practicum students to the safety policies and procedures of that agency and specific practice contexts. Such orientation

should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency building(s), with clients in general and clients prone to violent behavior (including family members or others living in shared residences), and risk reduction guidelines. Security of the personal belongings of the UMSSW practicum student while at the agency should also be covered. Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed at the beginning of the placement, with ample opportunity for questions and discussion as needed.

- c. UMSSW Students should not be required to engage or remain in assignments or placements where they feel physically at risk. The UMSSW urges all agencies to make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for their agency staff. In some situations, the agency may need to make even greater accommodations for a student. If a student's concerns about safety interfere in whole or in part with the learning process, the field liaison and/or Director of Field Education should be contacted by the agency field instructor to facilitate prompt exploration of the concerns and to seek a mutually satisfying resolution.

II. PROCEDURES

- a. If a student is personally threatened, harassed, or hurt in an incident, it is the student's responsibility to notify the agency field instructor immediately. The agency field instructor, main agency contact, or agency/program director should then contact the Director of Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and UMSSW should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being in the wake of the incident and on an ongoing basis.
- b. The Director of Field Education will document the incident in the Sonia placement software and the steps to address it. Then, the Director of Field Education will meet with the student and field liaison to assess the student's readiness to return to the field placement and discuss any other relevant issues. As needed, the Director of Field Education may alert the UMSSW Chair about incidents and concerns.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS IN THE PRACTICUM

- **Agency Protocol**

It is important for students to know the practicum agency's safety and security protocol for office and home visits with clients prior to the start of the placement. If the agency does not have safety and security policies and/or procedures, the agency field instructor and student should review and discuss any issues related to safety and security in the setting. The UMSSW Field Placement Safety Checklist is a valuable resource (see Appendix H).

UMSSW students are urged to bring their questions and concerns to their agency field instructor and address safety concerns or questions in regular supervision meetings. In addition to maintaining consistent communication about physical and emotional safety in their practicum with their agency field instructors, students are encouraged to discuss this topic with field liaisons and in their practicum seminar courses. The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, agency field instructors, and field liaisons as they consider the particular safety issues in their agency settings and practice context. Specific steps

taken by students or agency personnel will have to be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, environmental factors, etc.

a. **Security of Belongings**

All students in practicum are expected to have a secure place to keep coats, backpacks, handbags, cell phones, laptops, and other belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked and could be in a desk drawer or filing cabinet. Students should not leave bags and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed. Valuables should not be brought to placement sites. Items of value should not be left in cars and should be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle. Neither the practicum agency nor UMSSW can be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.

b. **Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients**

When working with clients, it is important to remember that the intervention and/or treatment process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. For some people, this can contribute to problems with impulse control and raise issues of safety for the client, the social worker, the practicum student, and others. Sometimes, students work with individuals who have difficulty with reality testing, dealing with overwhelming emotions, and controlling their anger. Some of them may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Other clients may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, in withdrawal from drugs or alcohol, or may have other medical or neurological disorders that impact their behavior. Again, we urge all UMSSW students to consult with their agency field instructor to prepare adequately for handling specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons.

c. **Safety Guidelines for Office Meetings**

If a student will be meeting with a client with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important for the student to discuss the situation promptly and fully with the agency field instructor. Based on the outcome of this discussion, there may be a decision that a student will not see the client or see the client under specific circumstances or controls. However, if it is decided that a student will see the client, several points should be considered. A client's mental status should be assessed. When considering the location of the meeting, think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person might sit. It may also be helpful to consider whether to include someone else in the meeting and what to wear. When discussing the appointment time, it can be helpful to consider whether or not many people are around at the time being considered for the meeting. It is also important to discuss the plan for backup and assistance if the client becomes agitated. A student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone without someone in the agency knowing about the client, the appointment time, and the appointment location. Students should keep agency field instructors and, if necessary, other supervisors/ colleagues informed about their schedules at the agencies at all times.

d. **Safety Guidelines for Travel by Car**

When a student travels by car to an agency or home visit, it is advisable to know where they are going and look at a map before driving to unfamiliar areas. In general, remember to be alert and to lock doors and close windows. The student should be mindful when transporting clients

alone and discuss agency protocol for client transport with their agency field instructor. Students should always tell someone where they are going and when they expect to be away from the office. The agency should have the student's cell phone number or other information when contacting them in an emergency.

e. **Safety Guidelines for Travel by Foot or Public Transportation**

When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students know where they are going and the route by which they will travel. Students are encouraged to carry the least number of valuables with them as possible. Money, license, keys, and other essentials might be carried in a pocket. If a handbag carried under the arm is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is helpful to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert and to walk with a purpose as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area.

f. **Safety Guidelines for Home Visits**

Becoming familiar with the client's file before the home visit is important. If there is a question of safety, students should plan accordingly with agency field instructors. It might be decided that meeting at a neutral place or going with another worker is the appropriate plan. Someone at the agency should always know the student's itinerary. It is helpful to stay alert and to think about what to wear, which room to meet in, and where to sit. If a student ever feels threatened at any point during the interview, they are encouraged to err on the side of caution and appropriately terminate the visit. If clients feel threatened by the student entering their dwelling, the student should cease and not force the issue. If a student hears a heated argument from inside the house or apartment, the student may decide to re-schedule the visit or call to assess the situation before entering the dwelling. A student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone without someone in the agency knowing about it. In general, a cell phone is very useful for students doing home visits.

g. **Safety Guidelines for Harassment**

An additional risk students in practicum settings may experience is harassment by a client, colleague, or supervisor. Harassment may include things like bullying, intimidation, insults, derogatory comments about one's ethnicity or religion, or unwanted sexual advances. Sexual harassment can include threats or demands for sexual interaction to maintain or increase a position or status, but sexual harassment also encompasses a wide range of unwanted attention that contributes to a hostile work environment (Moylan & Wood, 2016). Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment (2015, Facts, para. 2). Students should immediately report any concerns to their field liaison and/or Director of Field Education, who will offer additional support and promptly investigate any complaints about hostile environments, such as those caused by sexual harassment. Short and long-term remedies may include anything from working with the field placement site to reassign a client, ensuring that field sites have adequate sexual harassment policies and procedures, or even discontinuing partnerships with field sites that continue to place students in hostile environments because they have been unable to remedy sexual harassment (Moylan & Wood, 2016).

h. **Health Safety**

Students should be alerted to the existence of biohazards. To protect themselves from infectious diseases, all students must complete the Six Ways to Protect Yourself from COVID-19 course provided by the World Health Organization and have had the opportunity to read CDC recommendations on personal protective equipment prior to starting practicum.

IV. POST INCIDENT PROTOCOL

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened, harassed, or hurt, the agency field instructor, main agency contact, or agency/program director should contact the Director of Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being. The Director of Field Education will document the incident in the Sonia placement software and the steps taken to address it. Then, the Director of Field Education will meet with the student and field liaison. They will assess the student's readiness to return to the field and any other relevant issues.

*** The University of Montana School of Social Work thanks Simmons SSW for sharing their safety policy, which was used in developing the UMSSW safety policy.

Field Placement Safety Checklist

Please familiarize yourself with the "[Field Placement Safety Checklist](#)" to ensure you are well-prepared and informed. This checklist is designed to help you navigate various aspects of workplace safety, including understanding the organizational culture and office safety protocols and preparing for home and community client visits. Reviewing and understanding these guidelines will enhance your safety and confidence as you proceed in your fieldwork.

Appendices

Appendix A. Overview of Generalist Approach to Social Work

Overview of Generalist Approach to Social Work

The integrated practice model builds and expands upon the generalist practice model of social work. The concept of generalist practice has been well articulated by Brad Sheafor and Charles Horejsi in *Techniques and guidelines for social work practice* (2008), and it is summarized here. Sheafor and Horejsi identify four elements of the generalist perspective:

1. "A multidimensional orientation that emphasizes an interrelatedness of human problems, life situations, and social conditions."
2. "An approach to assessment and intervention that draws ideas from many different practice frameworks and considers all possible actions that might be relevant and helpful to the client."
3. "Selection of intervention strategies and worker roles are made primarily on the basis of the client's problem, goals, situation, and the size of the systems that are targeted for change."
4. "A knowledge, value, and skill base that is transferable between and among diverse contexts, locations, and problems." (87-88)

Central to a generalist practice is the ability to view social problems and human development from broad ecosystems, strengths, and diversity perspectives. These perspectives allow for the understanding of social issues as interconnected and interwoven. Thus, generalist social workers possess the ability to synthesize knowledge from a variety of fields in order to intervene at a variety of levels utilizing a variety of approaches. Generalists can also move between fields of practice, incorporate best practices into their professional repertoire, apply critical thinking skills to all phases of the change process, critique themselves and professional approaches, and see issues from a wide variety of perspectives.

Generalists draw on their broad knowledge and a common process for problem solving as well as on innovative and broad knowledge and skills to address each unique situation. They view client situations in context, recognizing the connections between the personal and the political, individual and societal, policy and practice, and research and practice. They build on client strengths, are solution oriented, and involve client systems as partners in the change process. Based on professional assessment skills, generalists decide which aspects of client situations are in need of intervention, why, and how. They see problems in social functioning as having their roots and their solutions at multiple levels, and as a result utilize interventions which build on this broad view. They operate from a core of professional social work values and ethics, and base all aspects of practice on the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Generalist social workers work within organizations and are impacted by social policies, and they see their responsibility to enhance both organizational and policy solutions to social problems. They are able to envision, plan, design, and implement programs and services to fill existing gaps. Their frame of reference is broad, comprehensive, open to difference, client-oriented, and solution-focused. The purpose of the generalist perspective is “to ensure that the social worker will approach every client and situation in a manner open to the use of various models, theories, and techniques and will consider several levels of intervention, from micro to macro” (Sheafor and Horejsi, p.88).

Recognizing the interplay between individual, family, organizational, community, societal, and global issues and systems, and in order to work effectively toward social justice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice and with social systems, generalist social workers are prepared to enhance the social functioning of individuals and families and intervene at group, community, and societal levels. Generalist practitioners need skills at all levels of practice, to move between them as necessary, and even to practice at multiple levels playing multiple roles simultaneously. The program’s conception of generalist practice fits with the conceptualization of generalist practice found in *Just practice: A social justice approach to social work* (Finn, 2020, p. 98): “The generalist approach addresses the interplay of persons and larger systems in the process of assessment and intervention. It recognizes the centrality of relationships in the helping process and sees the process of change as patterned, sequential, and unfolding over time.”

Finn, J. (2020). *Just Practice: A Social Justice Approach to Social Work* (4th Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Sheafor, B. & Horejsi, C. (2008) (7th ed.). *Techniques and guidelines for social work practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Appendix B. MSW Generalist Learning Agreement and Evaluation

University of Montana School of Social Work BSW_ MSW Generalist Year Learning Agreement

Learning Agreement Purpose Statement

The Learning Agreement outlines the framework for the student's educational journey at the practicum agency. With support from the Agency Field Instructor (AFI), students are tasked with crafting specific, personalized learning activities that align with competency areas. These activities should incorporate four key dimensions: knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. The formulation of these tasks is influenced by the opportunities the agency offers, the student's learning needs, interests, and aspirations, as well as the practice competencies mandated by the School of Social Work and the [2022 CSWE Educational and Policy Standards](#). The activities should be measurable, tailored to the site, and aimed at fostering the student's mastery of various professional competencies.

Students should complete their Learning Agreement through their Sonia account **by the fourth week of the semester**. The Agreement undergoes review by the AFI, the Field Liaison, and the student during the practicum's three site visits. It is an essential tool for evaluating practicum performance and progress throughout the academic year and is pivotal in determining the student's final practicum grade (credit/no credit). Progress towards individual competencies is evaluated mid-term and at the end of the term. Therefore, students are encouraged to consistently revise and update their Learning Agreement and activities to mirror any new learnings or opportunities.

Rating Scale:

5 – Demonstrates Competency: The student exhibits competence and initial independence in handling complex situations with this behavior.

4 – Emerging Competency : The student shows early-stage competence in this behavior but needs continued opportunities for mastery demonstration.

3 – Developing Competency with Assistance: The student displays inconsistent competence in this behavior, necessitating assistance or coaching.

2 – Minimal Competency: The student rarely demonstrates competence in this behavior.

1 – No Competency: The student does not exhibit competence in this behavior.

Attention

This document offers guidance and ideas to students as they develop their learning agreements. **It is NOT acceptable to copy and paste these examples into the learning agreement**, and the field education team will not approve them.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>a. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the NASW Code of Ethics with the supervisor • Discuss agency policies and how they fit with the NASW Code of Ethics • Apply the ethical decision-making model to work through a situation that presents an ethical dilemma; discuss in supervision. • Discuss with other agency professionals how they deal with ethical dilemmas. • Review and discuss additional ethical or governing policies that may impact service delivery at the agency (i.e., agency policies, HIPPA/FERPA guidelines, SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP, etc.) • Review and discuss UM's IRB process if applicable to the practicum context. |
| <p>b. Demonstrate professional behavior, appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress according to agency policy. • Discuss appropriate roles and boundaries of a practicum student with the supervisor and other agency staff. • Give a presentation at a staff meeting or community event (in person or virtual) • Use professional language (verbal/nonverbal) when dealing with clients and other professionals in the workplace. • Engage in effective communication, including notes, emails, letters, and other written correspondence, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication. • Maintain accurate, respectful, and professional written client records (as appropriate) • Inquire and be open to feedback from the supervisor or other staff about documentation, oral and written communication |
| <p>c. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the ethical and appropriate use of online technology at the agency and in practice with the client's supervisor and other agency staff. • Ensure proper training for online tools, telehealth models, and interventions. • Discuss technology etiquette at the agency with the supervisor • Research and familiarize yourself with potential challenges to the use of technology in social work practice |

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| <p>d. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend weekly supervision meetings and reflect on professional behavior • Prepare topics to discuss with the supervisor (areas for growth, personal and professional boundaries, ethical dilemmas, professional communication, clinical interventions, etc.) • Consult with supervisor regarding issues arising in practice • Integrate feedback into practice • Utilize seminars to consult with peers and field liaisons. |
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Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>a. Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with current political events and their impacts on social issues and clients. • Identify forms of oppression/ discrimination against clients/ populations and discuss them with the supervisor. • Identify economic barriers to social services and care; discuss with the supervisor. • Identify and discuss institutional and systemic barriers to a client’s progress with the supervisor. • Advocate for client access to agency, community, state, and national services. |
| <p>b. Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your elected officials to support/ oppose harmful policies and legislation. • Join and attend local, state, and national coalition meetings. • Attend a public hearing or organizational meeting focused on increasing social and economic justice. • Develop professional relationships with advocacy organizations serving the agency population. • VOTE! Engage in voter outreach and education • Identify and review key concepts of social empowerment strategies. • Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills by finding potential solutions and discussing the same with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in practicum seminar. |

Competency 3: Engage Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>a. Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand different forms of diversity and how they influence work with clients. • Discuss barriers to services faced by clients. • Review, understand, and apply anti-racist principles in a practicum setting. • Research and apply knowledge related to diversity to enhance client well-being. • Strive to be assigned a diverse caseload of clients. • Attending agency, local, and national workshops, or trainings. • Research and apply knowledge related to diversity to enhance client well-being. • Explore and utilize different perspectives and practice models when working with diverse clients. • Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias, and ensure equal and just treatment for all clients at the agency. • Use assessments that include sections of diversity/culture/spirituality as identified by the client. • Review evaluative tools utilized by the agency and evaluate with an ADEI lens. • Compare the agency's practice methods with ADEI methods discussed in various classes. • Discuss ways to engage and improve ADEI in practice with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in the practicum seminar. |
| <p>b. Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts in their own lived experiences.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize journaling, or some other method of reflection, to record personal beliefs or values regarding clients/staff who may be different than me (age, gender, race, religious affiliation, orientation, color, cultural background, marital status, family structure, class, physical ability, etc.). • Reflect on how personal beliefs/values impact interactions with various clients. • Discuss possible value conflicts/ biases/ blind spots with the supervisor, Field Liaison, and peers during seminar class. • Identify client differences using a strengths perspective. • Discuss and document ways you engage in cultural humility within your practice setting. • Outline and discuss the challenges and opportunities of practicing in rural and indigenous communities. |

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>a. Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and discuss evidence-based methods and evaluative tools utilized by the agency. • Discuss theories and perspectives utilized when working with clients and their effectiveness. • Research evidence-based policies informing agency practice and client population; discuss with the supervisor. • Read professional journal articles relevant to clients served by the agency. • Discuss with the supervisor effective forms of intervention utilized with the client population. • Interview treatment team members for varying perspectives on practice and various models/approaches used. • Discuss specific cases with the supervisor, including problem, proposed solution(s), proposed plan of action, and/or proposed measurable outcomes. |
| <p>b. Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the evaluation process used in the practicum. • Review research to learn various ways to evaluate practice in a particular context and suggest possibilities for change as appropriate. • Review professional literature related to best practices from various sources and perspectives. • Compare the agency's evidence-based methods with methods discussed in various classes. • Discuss questions with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in the practicum seminar. |

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>a. Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and discuss laws/ current bill proposals that affect agency and client populations; discuss with the supervisor. • Track legislative initiatives relevant to your agency's client population. • Research specific policies that directly affect the well-being of the client population. • Discuss the impact of policies on your clients and policy change ideas with the supervisor. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify relevant organizational and informational websites and online resources that provide social policy information relevant to your agency/ client population or serve as clearinghouses for legislative issues. • Research how one applies for social support services in your community, e.g., SSI/SSDI, SNAP benefits, TANF, etc. |
| b. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend and participate in community/ state advocacy events and/ or attend city council/ county commissioner meetings in your community. • Attend NASW MT or other advocacy and lobbying days and meet with legislators regarding policy issues. • Attend policy conferences and trainings to learn about relevant agency and population policies. • Write a letter to an elected official about a social policy affecting your client population. |

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| a. Apply knowledge of human behavior, person-in-environment, and interprofessional conceptual frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the developmental stages of the client population/integrate this into the assessment process. • Practice using systems theory/strengths perspective • Utilize specific interventions to increase understanding of the client in the environment. • Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar. • Engage with and interview clients/families to determine strengths and challenges. • Take notes and discuss personal/ ethical/ value dilemmas and blind spots with the supervisor and reflect on how they influence work with clients. • Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias, and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination. • Attend interprofessional events held on campus and discuss with AFI. |

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| <p>b. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills to build rapport/trust with clients. • Seek feedback from the supervisor about ways to build rapport and trust with clients. • Review literature on rapport-building/interpersonal skills and practice applying concepts in practice. • Engage in active listening with clients, colleagues, peers, and others. • Demonstrate the ability to empathize and use appropriate interpersonal skills with clients. • Research and apply knowledge related to diversity to enhance client well-being. • Observe the supervisor and others in their interactions with clients. • Identify areas of comfort and discomfort in client engagement and discuss them in supervision. • Engage with and interview clients/families to determine strengths and challenges. • Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias, and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination. |
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Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>a. Apply theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks when assessing clients and constituencies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the developmental stages of the client population/integrate this into the assessment process. • Become familiar with different assessment tools and the strengths/limitations of each tool. • Do a family genogram/Eco map after completing the assessment. • Practice using systems theory/strengths perspective • Utilize specific interventions to increase understanding of the client in the environment. • Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar. • Engage with and interview clients/families to determine strengths and challenges. • Observe client assessment and write/organize/interpret client data. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a written assessment of the client, including the client’s strengths and weaknesses. • Critically examine assessment tools and processes, and complete comprehensive, strengths-based, bio-psycho-social-spiritual or Just Practice assessments. • Discuss the potential for bias in the assessment process with the supervisor if utilizing the DSM. Work with clients to identify DSM diagnoses, goals for treatment, and interventions. |
| b. Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed upon plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss intervention strategies in the practicum seminar. • Collaborate with a client or client system and develop an appropriate intervention plan. • Monitor clients’ progress toward goals. • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including assessment and planning, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels. |

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| a. Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a mutually agreed upon focus of work and goals and objectives for clients. • Empower clients to identify and work on specific achievable goals. • Utilize appropriate interpersonal skills with clients. • Facilitate a support group or psycho-educational group. • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including intervention and termination, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels. • Analyze and/or acquire evidence-based methods being utilized within the agency. • Utilize specific interventions to increase understanding of the client in the environment. • Facilitate a support group or psycho-educational group • Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar. |

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| <p>b. Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect client to community resources. • Utilize specific interventions to increase understanding of the client in the environment. • Maintain communication/follow-up with client outcomes and potential success. • Determine commonly used resources for clients and the most effective referral process. • Attend and participate in community, state, and federal advocacy events (e.g., city council hearings and legislative lobby days). • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including intervention and termination, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels. |
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Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>a. Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review evaluation and data collection tools/ methods used at the agency. • Evaluate assessments/data collection and intervention practices during supervision. • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including evaluation and follow-up, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels. • Integrate research coursework into practicum learning. • Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar. • Apply a strength perspective in the evaluation process and review of outcomes. |
| <p>b. Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate assessment/data collection/intervention practices with the supervisor. • Review client files to determine progress toward goals. • Follow up with client after termination to determine client outcomes and potential success. |

Appendix C. MSW Specialization Learning Agreement and Evaluation

University of Montana School of Social Work MSW Specialization Year Learning Agreement

Learning Agreement Purpose Statement

The Learning Agreement outlines the framework for the student's educational journey at the practicum agency. With support from the Agency Field Instructor (AFI), students are tasked with crafting specific, personalized learning activities that align with competency areas. These activities should incorporate four key dimensions: knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. The formulation of these tasks is influenced by the opportunities the agency offers, the student's learning needs, interests, and aspirations, as well as the practice competencies mandated by the School of Social Work and the [2022 CSWE Educational and Policy Standards](#). The activities should be measurable, tailored to the site, and aimed at fostering the student's mastery of various professional competencies.

Students should complete their Learning Agreement through their Sonia account **by the fourth week of the semester**. The Agreement undergoes review by the AFI, the Field Liaison, and the student during the practicum's three site visits. It is an essential tool for evaluating practicum performance and progress throughout the academic year and is pivotal in determining the student's final practicum grade (credit/no credit). Progress towards individual competencies is evaluated mid-term and at the end of the term. Therefore, students are encouraged to consistently revise and update their Learning Agreement and activities to mirror any new learnings or opportunities.

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4 – Emerging Competency: The student shows early-stage competence in this behavior but needs continued opportunities for mastery demonstration.

3 – Developing Competency with Assistance: The student displays inconsistent competence in this behavior, necessitating assistance or coaching.

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Attention

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Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>e. Demonstrate professionalism in interprofessional, agency, and community practice contexts.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress according to agency policy. • Discuss appropriate roles and boundaries of a practicum student with the supervisor and other agency staff. • Present at a staff meeting or community event (in person or virtual). • Use professional language (verbal/nonverbal) when dealing with clients and other professionals in the workplace. • Engage in effective communication, including notes, emails, letters, and other written correspondence, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication. • Maintain accurate, respectful, and professional written client records (as appropriate). • Inquire and be open to feedback from the supervisor or other staff about documentation and oral and written communication. |
| <p>f. Utilize critical and anti-racist principles in assessing and evaluating complex ethical situations and decisions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles with the supervisor and assess how they apply to the practicum practice context. • Discuss agency policies and how they fit with the NASW Code of Ethics, UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles, and other critical theories and frameworks. • Apply the ethical decision-making model to work through a situation that presents an ethical dilemma; discuss in supervision. • Discuss with other agency professionals how they deal with ethical dilemmas. • Review and discuss additional ethical or governing policies that may impact service delivery at the agency (i.e., agency policies, HIPPA/FERPA guidelines, SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP, etc.). • Review and discuss UM’s IRB process if applicable to the practicum context. • Discuss personal/ethical/value dilemmas with the supervisor. • Journal personal biases or judgments that may |

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| | <p>hinder appropriate behaviors and discuss managing the same with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peer in the seminar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss needed areas of growth in supervision and work on strategies toward growth. |
| <p>g. Utilize supervision and peer consultation to ensure ethical social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend weekly supervision meetings and reflect on professional behavior. • Prepare topics to discuss with the supervisor (areas for growth, personal and professional boundaries, ethical dilemmas, professional communication, clinical interventions, etc.). • Consult with supervisor regarding issues arising in practice. • Integrate feedback into practice. • Utilize the seminar to consult with peers and the field liaison. • Develop communities of practice with peers and professionals from other disciplines. |
| <p>h. Utilize collaborative approaches to complex ethical decision-making that follow standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, additional codes as appropriate, and relevant laws and regulations, and ensure the participation or representation of those most directly affected.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss agency policies and how they fit with the NASW Code of Ethics, UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles, and other critical theories and frameworks. • Apply the ethical decision-making model to work through a situation that presents an ethical dilemma; discuss in supervision. • Discuss with other agency professionals how they deal with ethical dilemmas. • Review and discuss additional ethical or governing policies that may impact service delivery at the agency (i.e., agency policies, HIPPA/FERPA guidelines, SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP, etc.). • Review and discuss UM’s IRB process if applicable to the practicum context. |

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>c. Utilize anti-racist, anti-colonial strategies to challenge racism and other forms of oppression that compromise human rights or create impediments to socially</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with current political events and their impacts on social issues and clients. • Identify forms of oppression/ discrimination against clients/ populations and discuss them |

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| <p>just policies, programs, and practices.</p> | <p>with a supervisor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify economic barriers to social services and care; discuss with the supervisor. • Identify and discuss institutional and systemic barriers to a client’s progress with the supervisor. • Identify and review key concepts of social empowerment strategies. • Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills by finding potential solutions and discussing the same with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in practicum seminar. • Critically evaluate service delivery to determine ways the current provision of services may. |
| <p>d. Advocate for trauma-informed systems of care, expanded access to effective trauma-focused interventions, and social justice for marginalized and oppressed people who are most at risk for experiencing trauma, including historical, racial, and secondary trauma.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong understanding of trauma (both primary and secondary), responses to trauma, and short and long-term effects of trauma on individuals, families, and communities. • Develop a strong understanding of the principles of trauma-informed care and service delivery. • Familiarize yourself with current political events and their impacts on social issues and clients. • Advocate for low-barrier client access to agency, community, state, and national services. • Contact your elected officials to support/ oppose harmful policies and legislation. • Join and attend local, state, and national coalition meetings. • Attend a public hearing or organizational meeting focused on increasing social and economic justice. • Develop professional relationships with advocacy organizations serving the agency population. • VOTE! Engage in voter outreach and education. |
| <p>e. Engage in justice-oriented practice that integrates the critical understanding of specific environmental, social, and economic justice issues affecting rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with relevant data on poverty and economic inequality related to practicum context and geographic area of practice. • Include specific attention to poverty and economic justice in intervention planning. • Identify a policy that addresses environmental, social, and economic issues affecting your community and greater geographic region. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research specific policies affecting clients served by practicum, program, services available, and advocacy opportunities. • Identify specific Universal Declaration of Human Rights articles relevant to the practicum context. • Use practicum case examples to show how anti-racist and anti-colonial strategies address human rights violations and inform practice. • Complete and present a case study for SW 535 that draws from practicum experience. • Participate in community education or change efforts to address ongoing oppression and discrimination. |
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Competency 3: Engage in Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>c. Design research and practice interventions that are anti-racist, empowering, collaborative, inclusive, equitable, and responsive to organizational and community contexts.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review evaluative tools utilized by the agency and evaluate with an ADEI lens. • Compare the agency's practice methods with ADEI methods discussed in various classes. • Discuss ways to engage and improve ADEI in practice with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in the practicum seminar. • Summarize the empirically supported interventions available to support the population you serve in culturally relevant ways. |
| <p>d. Engage in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that demonstrate cultural humility and critical understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and document ways you engage in cultural humility within your practice setting. • Outline and discuss the challenges and opportunities of practicing in rural and Indigenous communities. • Outline and discuss the experience of Indigenous clients seeking services in your practice setting. Determine any barriers and facilitating factors to seeking services. • Identify when you have worked across differences with a client or constituency. Critically evaluate the strengths and challenges you experienced during interaction and discuss them with a supervisor. |

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>c. Apply research-informed knowledge of trauma, including historical trauma and trauma-informed systems, to designing, delivering, and evaluating effective interventions at multiple levels of practice.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong understanding of trauma (both primary and secondary), responses to trauma, and short and long-term effects of trauma on individuals, families, and communities. • Develop a strong understanding of the principles of trauma-informed care and service delivery • Analyze and discuss evidence-informed methods and evaluative tools utilized by the agency. • Discuss theories and perspectives utilized when working with clients and their effectiveness. • Research evidence-informed policies informing agency practice and client population; discuss with the supervisor. • Read professional journal articles relevant to clients served by the agency. • Discuss trauma-informed intervention utilized with the client population with the supervisor. • Interview treatment team members for varying perspectives on practice and various models/approaches used. • Discuss specific cases with the supervisor, including problem, proposed solution(s), proposed plan of action, and/or proposed measurable outcomes. |
| <p>d. Apply multiple ways of knowing and skills of program evaluation (including Indigenous evaluation frameworks and decolonizing methodologies), critical participatory action research, and advocacy to address identified concerns of rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review professional literature related to best practices from various sources and perspectives. • Bring findings from readings to bear in seminar and practicum supervision. • Complete program evaluation assignment for SW 521, utilizing Indigenous evaluation frameworks and CPAR. • Learn about the evaluation process used in the practicum. Review research to learn various ways to evaluate practice in a particular context. Suggest possibilities for change as appropriate. • Develop and implement one evaluation process that engages clients as evaluators (e.g., children's "satisfaction scale" for an after-school program; homeless shelter resident's perspectives on service and support priorities). |

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>c. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical and contemporary significance of the Indian Child Welfare Act in decolonizing or Indigenizing practices with families, communities, and nations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply specific knowledge from SW 532: ICWA to families, communities, and nations your practicum agency serves. • Critically evaluate how agency services can create opportunities for Indigenous clients to build/enhance cultural connectedness. Discuss with the supervisor. • Critically evaluate the ways the agency can advocate for the implementation of ICWA. For example, discuss with the supervisor how the agency advances the spirit of ICWA- keeping Indigenous youth connected to family, culture, and tribal community. • Consider applying ICWA principles to work with all children and families (e.g., proximity to family, kinship placements, offering culturally specific services to families, reunification). |
| <p>d. Apply frameworks for critical policy analysis that integrate a historical understanding of social policy and a commitment to social justice, intersectionality, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a policy that impacts your practice and critically evaluate its impact on the individual and/or community you serve. Consider whether this policy reinforces or resists racism, anti-LGBTQ beliefs, colonization, etc. • Critically evaluate the history behind a policy impacting services delivered at the agency. What was the intention behind the policy? Does the policy meet its intended goals? Discuss with the supervisor. • Collaborate with the supervisor to create a policy that promotes equitable delivery of services to minoritized populations. |
| <p>e. Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services in rural and indigenous communities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize SW 531 in-class activities and assignments to demonstrate how you can utilize social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how a social welfare policy affects the delivery of and access to social services in your practice setting. Include an analysis of the considerations particular to rural and indigenous communities. |
| <p>f. Advocate for policies that inform and support trauma-informed systems of care.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with current political events and evaluate the potential connection to trauma experienced by clients. Discuss with the supervisor. • Advocate for low-barrier client access to agency, |

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| | <p>community, state, and national services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your elected officials to support/ oppose policies that can potentially re-traumatize clients. • Join and attend local, state, and national coalition meetings and advocate for consideration of trauma-informed approaches to social issues. • Attend a public hearing or organizational meeting focused on increasing social and economic justice and trauma-informed service delivery to clients served by the agency. • Develop professional relationships with advocacy organizations serving the agency population. • VOTE! Engage in voter outreach and education. |
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Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
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| <p>c. Apply a critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the engagement process.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice and document your use of an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. • Identify and discuss with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles that inform your approach to the engagement process. • Document how you engage with and interview clients/families demonstrating cultural humility. • Take reflective notes and discuss with your supervisor how your positionality may impact ethical/ value dilemmas encountered in your work with clients. • Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias, and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination. |
| <p>d. Effectively address and navigate issues of difference, power, and resistance that arise in the engagement process with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the ways that power is at play in the engagement process. • Seek feedback from the supervisor about ways to build rapport and trust and to roll with resistance with clients. • Review literature on rapport-building/ interpersonal skills and practice in various |

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| | <p>communities and apply concepts in practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in active listening with clients, colleagues, peers, and others. • Demonstrate ability to roll with resistance and use appropriate interpersonal skills with clients. • Research and apply knowledge related to diversity to enhance client well-being. • Observe the supervisor and others in their interactions with clients. • Identify areas of comfort and discomfort in client engagement and discuss them in supervision. • Engage with and interview clients/families to determine how power (power with, power over, power to) impacts their experience in the world. • Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination. |
| <p>e. Implement culturally grounded and trauma-informed principles of engagement with clients and client systems that reflect the understanding of and sensitivity to multiple forms of trauma, including historical, intergenerational, racial, and secondary trauma.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a case study to show how you can practice from a culturally grounded and trauma-informed perspective in the practicum context. • List specific engagement skills relevant to practicum context (engaging non-verbal children or adults; engaging neighborhood residents; engaging resistant clients; engaging clients who have experienced racism or other forms of trauma) and document your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles. • Identify specific opportunities to practice engagement skills and further your understanding. • Engage in ongoing assessment of learning in supervision. • Identify trauma-informed resources relevant to clients served by the practicum. • Critically evaluate how the experiences of historical, intergenerational, and racial trauma may impact the engagement process. Discuss with the supervisor. • Participate in agency, inter-agency, and community opportunities to enhance culturally-informed practice – e.g., cultural committees, |

trainings, community consortiums, etc.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
|---|---|
| <p>c. Apply a critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the assessment process.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the developmental stages of the client population/integrate this into the assessment process. Ensure evaluation of the developmental stage is informed by an understanding of intersectionality and applies an anti-racist/anti-oppressive lens.• Critically evaluate assessment tools and the appropriateness of fit when used with minoritized client populations.• Do a family genogram/Eco map after completing the assessment.• Practice using systems theory/strengths perspective/anti-racist lens.• Utilize culturally relevant intervention strategies to increase understanding of the client in the environment.• Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar.• Engage with and interview clients/families to determine strengths (e.g., connection to culture) and challenges (e.g., experience of intergenerational trauma).• Observe client assessment and write/organize/interpret client data.• Develop a written assessment of the client that includes the client's strengths and challenges, including the impact of systems on the client's presenting issue.• Critically examine assessment tools and processes, and complete comprehensive, strengths-based, bio-psycho-social-spiritual or Just Practice assessments.• Discuss the potential for bias in the assessment process with the supervisor if utilizing the DSM. Work with clients to identify DSM diagnoses, treatment goals, and culturally relevant |

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| | interventions. |
| d. Utilize collaborative processes of assessment that honor the knowledge, expertise, and experience of the participants and involve them as partners in the change process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document ways in which you involved clients/stakeholders in a teaching-learning process. • Partner with clients to critically examine assessment tools and processes of assessment. Develop a culturally relevant assessment approach. • Complete comprehensive, strengths-based, bio-psycho-social-spiritual, or Just Practice assessments. • Discuss the potential for bias in the assessment process with the supervisor if utilizing the DSM. Work with clients to identify DSM diagnoses, treatment goals, and culturally relevant interventions. |
| e. Apply knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed organizations to assess and improve organizational practice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically evaluate the organization's practices to determine the strengths and challenges of trauma-informed service delivery. Discuss opportunities for change efforts with the supervisor. • Discuss with the supervisor the organization's approach to the assessment of the experience of secondary traumatic stress amongst staff. • Discuss the agency's approach to secondary traumatic stress prevention and response with the supervisor. |

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
|--|--|
| c. Apply a critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the intervention process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a mutually agreed upon focus of work and goals and objectives for clients. • Empower clients to identify and work on specific achievable goals. • Utilize culturally responsive interpersonal skills with clients. • Facilitate a support group or psycho-educational group • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including intervention and termination, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and discuss with your supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles that inform your approach to intervention. • Analyze and/or acquire evidence-informed methods being utilized within the agency. • Critically evaluate evidence-informed or other intervention strategies used with clients to determine the extent to which they are culturally relevant. Discuss with the supervisor opportunities for adaptation. • Utilize culturally relevant interventions to increase understanding of the client in the environment. • Facilitate a support group or psycho-educational group that applies an understanding of anti-racism and cultural humility. • Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar. |
| <p>d. Demonstrate understanding of intervention as a collaborative process of action and accompaniment with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that honor their knowledge, experience, and expertise.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect clients to culturally relevant community resources. • Utilize culturally relevant interventions to increase understanding of the client in the environment. • Maintain communication/follow-up with clients regarding outcomes and potential success. • Determine commonly used and culturally relevant client resources and the most effective referral process. • Attend and participate in community, state, and federal advocacy events (e.g., city council hearings and legislative lobby days). • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including intervention and termination, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels. |
| <p>e. Advocate for the advancement of trauma-informed systems of care,</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in community forums (e.g., local needs assessments and city council meetings) to |

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| <p>expanded access to effective trauma-focused interventions, and social justice for marginalized and oppressed people who are most at risk for experiencing trauma, including historical, racial, and secondary trauma.</p> | <p>advocate for the advancement of trauma-informed systems of care related to the issues addressed by your practicum agency and document themes to share with agency staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate inter-agency meetings with consumers and providers to expand access to effective trauma-focused interventions. • Conduct qualitative interviews with providers, consumers, and community members to assess the effectiveness of collaboration. • Provide recommendations based on results. |
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Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
|---|---|
| <p>c. Apply a critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the evaluation process.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review evaluation and data collection tools/ methods used at the agency. • Evaluate assessments/data collection and intervention practices during supervision. • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including evaluation and follow-up, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels. • Integrate research coursework into practicum learning. • Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar. • Apply a strength perspective in the evaluation process and review of outcomes. |
| <p>d. Design and carry out collaborative and empowering evaluation processes responsive to organizational and community contexts where those most affected are meaningful stakeholders in the decision-making and change efforts.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify specific ways to gather and include client/stakeholder feedback to inform decision-making and change efforts (e.g., surveys, interviews, etc.). • Identify possibilities for integrating participatory approaches into your agency's evaluation process. |

Competency 10: Apply Forms of Leadership to Support Collaborative, Interdisciplinary, or Transdisciplinary Relationships and Active Community Participation in Addressing

the Intersection of Local and Global Issues Impacting your Community and Greater Geographic Region

| Behaviors: | Suggested Learning Activities: |
|--|---|
| <p>a. Apply understanding of the relationships among local, state, federal, and Indigenous governments to inform effective advocacy for the rights and well-being of residents of one's community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate knowledge of unique community factors, characteristics, or initiatives into agency assessments and/or interventions. • Research effective strategies for activism and advocacy and their implications for local, regional, and global practice. • Research social work issues specific to your geographic location, including American Indian topics (historical trauma, tribal history, sovereignty, cultural humility, cultural resilience), rural health care, and technology access. • Use knowledge of American Indian topics (historical trauma, tribal history and sovereignty, cultural humility, cultural resilience) to inform practice. |
| <p>b. Utilize inclusive, collaborative approaches to leadership to bring diverse community and organizational stakeholders into processes of organizational change.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview AFI and other organizational stakeholders on their leadership styles and use of inclusive and collaborative approaches. • Engage in collaborative meetings at the agency, community, state, and national levels. |
| <p>c. Facilitate and/or engage in critical dialogue around diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a community change process that considers power relations. • Facilitate a dialogue process around diversity, equity, and inclusion at your practicum or in the community. • Facilitate advanced integrative seminar focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion. |
| <p>d. Apply knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed organizations to assess and improve organizational practice.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate trauma-informed workplace assessment tools in supervision. • Implement a workplace assessment in collaboration with your AFI. • Develop trauma-informed care presentation related to practice context and present at the agency. |

Appendix D. Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Practicum and Classroom

Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Practicum and in Classroom

Commitment to ethical principles and the capacity to engage in ethical decision-making processes are hallmarks of professionalism. The MSW program prepares students for ethically grounded practice across diverse social work arenas. Part of that professional development includes inquiry into the history of human values and ethics; the evolution of standards for ethical practice in social work; and the differing ways of framing practice ethics in different cultural, political, and organizational contexts. During the first semester of the foundation year, students will be studying the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, the International Federation of Social Workers Statement of Ethical Principles, and the ethical codes governing practice in a variety of national settings. This course of study is geared to help students understand the history and evolution of codes of ethics over time, the variation across contexts, and the implications for contemporary professional practice.

Students will also be engaging in practice guided by the NASW Codes of Ethics, both in their practicum settings and in the classroom. The practicum and the classroom offer structured opportunities to apply ethical principles of social work; utilize frameworks for ethical decision making; and address ethical dilemmas in a supportive context. Both classroom and practicum experiences offer opportunities to explore the core values of social work, their relationship to professional goals and values, and the ways in which values and ethical standards may conflict. For example, through direct practice experiences and classroom simulations, students learn about values related to confidentiality and privacy, self-determination, conflicts of interest, informed consent, social justice, and professional boundaries. They face the challenge of negotiating situations where two or more of these values are in conflict. Course instructors, field instructors, agency supervisors, and students are expected to help one another maintain standards of ethical practice and professionalism and continually examine the ways in which ethical principles are realized in practice.

In both practicum seminar and practice classes students will be asked to prepare case presentations wherein they present a specific issue related to a client, organization, or community with whom they are working; address the background of the issue; summarize an action plan and put forth a series of questions or concerns for peer consultation. In preparing and presenting cases in seminar or other classroom settings, students are expected to adhere to NASW standards of ethical practice. When presenting a case involving an individual or family, students must ensure that the confidentiality and anonymity of the client(s) are protected. Students should adhere to agency protocols and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) regulations as appropriate when preparing a case presentation. The preparation of a case presentation can raise complex ethical questions, and we encourage students to consult with the agency supervisor and the course instructor regarding these questions prior to the presentation.

The rural context presents another layer of complexity for ethical practice. Frequently social workers in multiple agencies work with the same client. Changing identifying information for a case presentation may not necessarily protect a person's anonymity. Thus, confidentiality regarding case presentations is critical. Further, following best practices for peer consultation, if a class member believes that he has

personal or professional knowledge of the “case” under discussion, he should excuse himself from the discussion to avoid violation of professional boundaries.

Case presentations involving community organizations, social actions, and policy work also require careful attention to standards of ethical practice. Here the boundaries between public knowledge and issues of privacy and confidentiality may be less clear. Students are encouraged to consult with their practicum supervisor and instructor regarding ethics of macro practice and case presentations prior to the presentation.

All participants in seminar discussions and classroom case presentations are expected to maintain and respect confidentiality regarding both the “case” and the discussion by group members. This respect encourages a safe, honest teaching-learning environment at the same time that it creates the opportunity to put ethical principles to practice.

Appendix E. MSW Program Modality Transfers

MSW Program Modality Transfers

There are three MSW Options at the University of Montana. Students must follow the process to be considered for a modality transfer. Due to the differences in term start times, structure of course progression, and graduation timeline between the Grounded MSW and Online MSW programs, switching between programs is typically not logistically possible, may delay graduation, and will affect financial aid status.

Students accepted into the Grounded MSW program are expected to complete their degree in the Grounded program. Admittance into the Online MSW program is required for participation.

If you have been **accepted** to one program and request to switch **before** the start of the term you were accepted for, please contact the program you originally applied for, as soon as possible.

If you applied to and were **denied** admission to one program and would like to apply to another, please know that all programs uphold the original admissions decision, and you will be asked to reapply for the next available term.

Transfers are not guaranteed. Requests to transfer mid-semester will not be approved. Students must complete the current semester before transferring programs. Requests to transfer may be denied due to being on a Student Support and Accountability Plan.

Transferring to the MSW Advanced Standing Program requires approval of the MSW Director and MSW Lead. Students must submit a new, complete application to the MSW Advanced Standing Program in order to be considered. See Advanced Standing Handbook for complete policy.

- Grounded MSW, Tomas Hernandez, tomas.hernandez@mso.umt.edu 406-243-5582
- Online MSW, Kinsey Webb, kinsey.webb@mso.umt.edu, 406-243-5599
- MSW Director, Amanda Cahill, amanda.cahill@mso.umt.edu, 406-243-5567

Appendix F. Graduate School Leave of Absence Form



University of Montana Graduate School Leave of Absence Form

Name: _____ ID (790#): _____ Email: _____

Major: _____ Degree: _____

Term (Semester & Year): Beginning of Leave:

Beginning of Leave: _____ Returning from Leave: _____

Reason: Please check if it is due to you or a family member entering active duty military service.
(explain below)

Program Summary

I have attached an up-to-date transcript Are you currently enrolled? Yes No

List all other requirements for your program, and give a timetable for completion of those requirements:

Student Signature Date

Department Chair/Dean Signature Date Approved Denied

Graduate Dean Signature Date Approved Denied

Appendix G. Employment-Based Practicum Guidelines

Employment-Based Practicum (EBP)

Overview

This is an option for students already employed in social or human services organizations supporting their employees' educational pursuits.

Under this option, students use their **current employment position** as their practicum. Activities from the student's employment position must provide opportunities to integrate theory into practice and speak directly to the core competencies and practice behaviors. In other words, job responsibilities and tasks must relate to the core social work competencies. These criteria can also be met by having students take on additional, new, and different opportunities and responsibilities outside the employment position. For example, students take on a different role within the organization, distinct from their employment position, to ensure that social work competencies and practice behaviors are met.

If an employer supports the student to engage in a completely new role/program within the agency, we strongly encourage them to release the employee from some of their job responsibilities to complete their educational practicum hours (e.g., 25 hours are completed in the employee's regular role and 15 hours are completed in the new and separate practicum role). Students approved for this type of EBP may be paid by their employer for their practicum hours (negotiated between student and employer). If an employer can support a student using their current position as their practicum, the student will be paid for their practicum hours.

Requirements for an EBP

MSW students are encouraged to get diverse learning and practice experiences over their two practicum placements, so staying in the same EBP for both years is not an ideal option. However, sometimes, students have the opportunity to stay with the same agency but take on a completely different role that allows for diverse and new learning. In that case, staying at the same agency in an EBP might be an option, although students have to submit a separate continuation proposal to the Field Education Program. **Exceptions to EBP policy may be considered by the Director of Field Education on a case-by-case basis when it can be demonstrated that the proposed practicum can provide a unique educational experience in a new program or with a new focus and with a new agency field instructor.**

The student's employer, the University of Montana School of Social Work, and the student will work together to ensure that the following EBP conditions are met:

- The student must be in good academic standing and good standing at their employing agency. **Students wanting to complete an EBP must have been employed at least 3 months** before requesting an EBP because an unsuccessful probationary period is also likely to disrupt the student's field placement.

- The employment supervisor and/or BSW or MSW Agency Field Instructor (= practicum supervisor) must agree that the student's practicum performance will not influence their employment evaluation.
- The agency must be willing to allow the student/employee to attend classes and have an educationally focused field placement experience.
- The educational opportunities in the place of employment must permit achievement of the 9 social work competencies and skills compatible with the student's social work practice classes and course of study, i.e., Generalist (for BSW and 1st year MSW) or Specialization (for 2nd year MSW)
- Agency Field Instructors for BSW students must have a BSW or MSW from an accredited social work program plus 2 years of post-social work degree experience. Agency field instructors for MSW students must have an MSW from an accredited social work program and two years of post-MSW work experience.
- The Agency Field Instructor and employment supervisor of a student may be the same person. In such cases, supervision time for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment (e.g., separate supervision times each week or 30 minutes focused on work and 30 minutes focused on practicum learning). Our goal is to ensure the role of the student as a learner while engaging in their paid employment position. In other words, the student's role as a student should be prioritized along with their learning and skill development.
- If the agency does not have a qualified social work field instructor on staff, they must arrange for an approved off-site BSW/MSW supervisor to provide the required supervision and designate an on-site task supervisor/ agency field instructor to provide daily oversight and support (e.g., some organizations have board members or volunteers that meet degree requirements and can serve in the outside supervisor role). The Field Education Program is available to brainstorm options.
- Students can only count **a maximum of 20 hours per week** towards practicum hours.
- The agency must be willing to sign the UMSSW Practicum Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and agree to the EBP-specific requirements of the MOU. The MOU may not be altered or amended unless agreed to by all persons (student, employer, and field education program). Accordingly, if an agency alters the terms of placement without informing the UMSSW Field Education Program, the field faculty will suspend the EBP placement, which will not be resumed unless a revised agreement can be arranged in a timely manner. Any revised agreement must be written and signed by the agency's Executive Director (or their designee), the student-employee, and the faculty liaison and filed with the Field Education Program.

- The Employment-Based Practicum Application must be received by the deadline specified by the Field Education Program. The application requires a letter of support from the agency director/ employment supervisor and a current job description. In addition, students applying for an EBP must be able to demonstrate how their employment role offers a new role with new and distinct learning opportunities OR how their current employment role relates to the core social work competencies. Once the application is returned to the Field Office, it will be reviewed, and a response will be given as soon as possible to indicate whether the placement has been approved. A site visit may be required as part of the application review process before determining approval.
- **Employment-Based Practicum is not the same as a paid internship** (i.e., a practicum position receiving a small educational stipend or hourly pay for the 15 hours per week a student contributes to their practicum agency). Consequently, paid internships/ practicums do not fall under the same requirements as the EBP.

Application and Approval Process

Online MSW students:

1. When completing the Practicum Proposal Form via SONIA, students wanting to complete an EBP must complete all required EBP fields (ideally in consultation with their employer).
2. PPFs, including the EBP application, for students moving into their specialization year (year 2) practicum are **due July 1**. PPFs, including the EBP application, for students entering their generalist year (year 1) practicum are **due July 15**.
3. The Field Education Program reviews the PPF and all EBP information, follows up with additional questions or concerns, and, if necessary, arranges a meeting with the student, the work supervisor, and the proposed agency field instructor (if different than the work supervisor) to discuss the terms and structure of the placement and assure that all parties understand and approve the educational arrangement.

Termination of EBP

If a student in an Employment-Based Practicum is terminated from their employment role, consequently leading to termination of their practicum, the same academic review process will apply as for non-EBP placements (refer to the student handbook). Termination of employment may ultimately lead to a pause in practicum and a delay in a student's graduation timeline.

Appendix H. Field Placement Safety Checklist

Field Placement Safety Checklist

Organizational Culture

- Does the agency have written safety policies? If so, obtain a copy and read them. Does the agency have a safety committee? Does this committee assess current safety measures and policies and identify gaps in protocols/procedures?
- Does the agency have an incident reporting system? Does the agency collect and track data about assaults, threats, and abuse towards staff?
- Learn the policies and reporting procedures related to sexual or other harassment in the workplace.

Office Safety

- Determine how to safely enter and leave the building (entrances and exits), including after dark. Is a key or access code required to enter the building or employee workspaces? Are there security cameras inside or outside the building?
- Know the office procedures for checking in and out of the office.
- Learn what to do and where to go in case of a fire. Locate the closest fire extinguisher. Learn where emergency numbers are posted (police, fire department, and poison control). Is there an office alarm system or code words for staff to alert others to their need for assistance? Are personal or mobile safety devices available (personal alert systems or panic buttons) available?
- Know procedures for handling blood-related incidents (bloody noses, etc.).
- Know where safety equipment (first aid kits, latex gloves, defibrillator, PPE, etc.) is located.

Home/Community Visits with Clients (if applicable)

- Know the agency's policy regarding notification to office staff of your whereabouts and contact information when conducting field home visits.
- Ensure that your car, or the agency's car, is ready for use (ample gas, in good working condition, maps or GPS available). Does your car have a health bag (latex gloves, masks, bandages, etc.)?
- Carry a charged cell phone and familiarize yourself with the limitations of cell phone service in the areas where you may be traveling. Know how to use any agency-provided cell phone.

- Know the agency policy regarding identification badges (can work for or against you in the community; be aware of the confidentiality issues, also). Carry some kind of agency identification card with you at all times.
- Find out the agency policies and practice regarding meeting clients away from their home (i.e. nearest park, at a restaurant, etc.).
- Dress for safety:** Wear comfortable clothes and flat shoes that are easy to walk in. Consider not wearing expensive jewelry, political buttons, slogans, etc.
- Before visiting a client in their home/neighborhood for the first time, find out who in the office can provide information about the safety of the specific neighborhood and/or the client's living situation (rural areas, presence of guard dogs, dangerous or criminal activities, weapons in the home, etc.).
- Before making a home visit where you may engage in higher-risk activities, determine a safety plan with your supervisor (i.e., removing a child from the home, notifying of a reduction in benefits, any civil commitment procedure, helping someone who is unsafe because of interpersonal violence move/access a shelter or safe house, delivering other potentially unwelcome information, etc.).
- Before making a home visit where there is potentially an increased risk due to a client's condition (active substance abuse, untreated mental illness, history of recent and/or frequent violence or threatening behavior, communicable disease), determine a safety plan with your supervisor.
- If you feel you are in a dangerous situation or place, leave and return to the office. Discuss your concerns with your supervisor.

Transporting Clients

- Assess the client's level of agitation (if any), use of intoxicants, and the meaning of the appointment to the client.
- Ensure the vehicle's interior is free from potential weapons and that the vehicle is in good working condition (e.g., ample gas, working brakes, headlights/taillights).
- Is the vehicle equipped with proper safety equipment in case of an emergency (e.g., flares, battery cables, spare tire)?
- When transporting a child, engage the child safety locks in the vehicle and know the proper use and installation of a child safety seat that is appropriate for the child's age and size. If possible, utilize a "buddy system" to have a second colleague in the vehicle when transporting a client.

Post-Incident Reporting & Response

- Learn how to report a personal injury that may occur in the office or the field. Learn the process for completing an incident report following an incident of client assault, threats, or abuse (verbal and physical) or vehicular accident.
- Develop a safety plan with your supervisor and the agency in response to the incident.

Safety Training

- Does the agency provide an orientation or training to staff for risk reduction and safety promotion? Does the agency provide training related to verbal de-escalation techniques, effective strategies for clinical interventions with violent or potentially violent clients, non-violent self-defense, and the impact of secondary trauma?

Appendix I. MSW Course Completion Checklist

| MSW Course Completion Checklist | | |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Course Number and Title | Credits | Grade |
| SW 500 Orientation | 1 | |
| SW 505 Foundations of Social Work Practice | 2 | |
| SW 510 Human Behavior and Social Environment I | 3 | |
| SW 511 Human Behavior and Social Environment II | 3 | |
| SW 515 Practice with Individuals and Families | 3 | |
| SW 520 Social Work Research Methods | 3 | |
| SW 521 Advanced Research | 3 | |
| SW 525 Practice with Groups and Communities | 4 | |
| SW 530 History of Social Policy, Justice and Change | 3 | |
| SW 531 Methods of Social Policy | 3 | |
| SW 532 Indian Child Welfare Act | 1 | |
| SW 535 Advanced Integrated Practice | 4 | |
| SW 545 Practice of Organizational Leadership | 3 | |
| SW 576 Generalist Integrative Seminar I | 1 | |
| SW 577 Generalist Integrative Seminar II | 1 | |
| SW 578 Advanced Integrative Seminar I | 1 | |
| SW 579 Advanced Integrative Seminar II | 1 | |
| SW 586 Generalist Practicum I | 2 | |
| SW 587 Generalist Practicum II | 2 | |
| SW 588 Specialization Practicum I | 3 | |
| SW 589 Specialization Practicum II | 3 | |
| SW 599 Professional Portfolio | 1 | |
| Total | 51 | |
| Electives (9 credits required) | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Electives Total | 9 | |
| Total to Graduate | 60 | |

Appendix J. MOU of Roles and Responsibilities

Field Education Program

Memorandum of Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities Criteria for Agency Participation and Agency Field Instructors

Student Information

Student Name

Date

Agency Field Instructor Information

Agency

Agency Field Instructor Name

Agency Field Instructor Email

Purpose

The Agency and the School of Social Work agree to refrain from discriminating against anyone based on age, sex, race, religious belief, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. Both parties commit to adhering to all applicable federal and state anti-discrimination policies. This agreement can be terminated by either the Agency or the University of Montana School of Social Work without any specific reason, provided a written notice is given thirty (30) days in advance.

Please review each of the criteria and agreements for all involved parties. Confirm your understanding and agreement by choosing 'Yes' or 'No' for each statement. Conclude the process by signing.

The UMSSW Field Education Team has agreed to:

- Act as a resource person for students concerning questions, resources, and suggestions for learning opportunities.
- Assign the grade for each student's practicum.
- Assist in orienting new Agency Field Instructors to the School of Social Work curriculum and practicum program.
- Assist students and agencies in the placement process.
- Assist students in applying and integrating theory into practice.
- Assist students in completing the Learning Agreement to structure the practicum experience.
- Assume responsibility for removing a student from a placement if necessary.

- Assume responsibility for the overall direction and coordination of the practicum.
- Assume responsibility with the Agency Field Instructor for the end-of-semester student performance evaluations.
- Be available to students, agencies, and field liaisons to consult and facilitate student/agency issues.
- Conduct site visits as needed.
- Meet each semester with the student and the Agency Field Instructor together.
- Provide guidelines for the evaluation of the student.
- Provide orientation and training for Agency Field Instructors.
- Screen student applicants and assess their readiness for practicum.

The Student agrees to:

- Adhere to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#).
- Attend the agency on days and times agreed upon by the student and the agency field instructor. If unable to attend practicum, communicate effectively and notify the Agency Field Instructor as soon as possible.
- Behave professionally, taking responsibility as an adult learner to understand duties and carry out assignments.
- Bring awareness to the Field Liaison or Field Education of any questionable professional practices within the agency.
- Complete all paperwork required for practicum in a timely manner via Sonia, including the practicum application, MOU, Essential Skills and Functions form, Risk Acknowledgment form, timesheets, learning agreement, midterm and final evaluations, and other forms as required.
- Complete an evaluation of the overall practicum experience at the end of the semester.
- Coordinate and attend three site visits with the Agency Field Instructor and Field Liaison throughout the practicum term.
- Discuss with the Agency Field Instructor, Field Liaison, or Field Education faculty any areas of disagreement, dissatisfaction, or confusion concerning any part of the practicum experience.
- Make yourself reasonably available for weekly supervision meetings with the Agency Field Instructor.
- Prepare for weekly supervision meetings by reviewing the Learning Agreement, adhering to deadlines, completing work, formulating questions about assignments/practice situations, and asking for ongoing feedback.
- Provide proof of professional malpractice insurance and health insurance. While serving in this practicum, the student understands they are not employees or volunteers of the University of Montana or the Agency. As such, UM and the Agency do not provide student workers' compensation insurance coverage. The student understands that they are performing the practicum as part of the BSW or MSW educational program and agrees to maintain health insurance coverage throughout the practicum.

- Read and understand the UMSSW Student Handbook and follow outlined policies and procedures.
- Understand that placement cannot be changed or self-terminated without following the [problem-solving phases](#) in the handbook and without prior approval from the Director/Assistant Director of Field. Self-termination will result in a performance review and could lead to the termination of the program.
- Work the required hours to complete a practicum, approximately 15-20 hours maximum per week, during a set and consistent schedule. Regularly submit practicum timesheets via Sonia and abide by agency policies and procedures, including confidentiality.

For Employment Based Placements, the Student agrees to:

- Complete and count no more than 20 hours per week toward the required practicum hours.
- Follow the same policies and procedures for non-employment-based practicum placements per the UMSSW Student Handbook.
- Understand that an EBP cannot be changed or self-terminated without following the [problem-solving phases](#) in the handbook and without prior approval from the Director/Assistant Director of Field. Self-termination will result in a performance review and could lead to the termination of the program.

Agency Participation Criteria:

- Allow the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) time to attend necessary field training(s), engage in practicum site visits, and complete midyear and final practicum evaluation.
- Assign activities to students that meet the educational goals and objectives of the practicum and UMSSW Field Education Program.
- Create a positive, respectful, supportive learning environment to provide rich educational experiences.
- Demonstrate a commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression, and LGBTQ-affirming practices.
- Ethics and values of the social work profession are demonstrated within agency policies, programming, and service delivery.
- Provide educationally directed field supervision through the designation of an on-site field instructor who will provide regular and ongoing supervision for at least one hour of one-to-one contact per week.
- Provide orientation and onboarding for students at the beginning of the practicum.
- Provide space for the students, including access to a desk, telephone, and computer if necessary.
- The Agency and the School of Social Work agree that neither will discriminate against any individual based on age, sex, race, religious belief, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. All parties agree to comply with all federal and state anti-discrimination policies.

For Employment Based Placements, the Agency agrees to:

- Agency Field Instructors for BSW students must have a BSW or MSW from an accredited social

work program with at least two years post-graduation experience. Agency field instructors for MSW students are required to have an MSW from an accredited social work program with at least two years post-graduation experience.

- Allow the student/employee to attend classes and have an educationally focused field placement experience.
- If the agency does not have a qualified social work field instructor on its staff, it must secure an approved off-site BSW/MSW supervisor to fulfill the necessary supervision requirements. Additionally, the agency should designate an on-site task supervisor or agency field instructor to provide daily oversight and support. Organizations may have board members or volunteers who meet the degree requirements and can serve as the external supervisor in certain cases. The Field Education Program is available to provide assistance and brainstorm potential solutions in such situations.
- Support the development of educational opportunities in the place of employment that permit achievement of the nine social work competencies and skills compatible with the student's social work practice classes and course of study, i.e., Generalist (for BSW and 1st year MSW) or Specialization (for 2nd year MSW).
- The Agency Field Instructor and employment supervisor of a student may be the same person. In such cases, supervision time for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment (e.g., separate supervision times each week or 30 minutes focused on work and 30 minutes focused on practicum learning).
- The agency must be willing to sign this UMSSW Practicum Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and accept the EBP-specific provisions in this agreement. The MOU should not be modified or amended unless all parties (student, employer, and field education program) reach a consensus. Consequently, if an agency alters the placement terms without prior notification to the UMSSW Field Education Program, the field faculty will suspend the EBP placement. The placement will only resume if a revised agreement can be promptly arranged. Any revised agreement must be documented in writing, signed by the agency's Executive Director (or their designated representative), the student-employee, and the faculty liaison, and submitted to the Field Education Program.
- The employment supervisor and BSW or MSW Agency Field instructor (= practicum supervisor) must agree that the student's practicum performance will not influence their employment evaluation.

The Agency Field Instructor agrees to:

- Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Attend an AFI orientation session provided by UMSSW (required for all new AFIs).
- Attend and engage in three Zoom-based site visits throughout the 450 practicum hours.
- Complete agency evaluation of the practicum experience at the end of the practicum.
- Follow policies and procedures outlined in the UMSSW Student Handbook.
- Guide students in developing a Learning Agreement to structure the practicum experience.

- In consultation with the student, assign duties and responsibilities of increasing difficulty and challenge as appropriate.
- Monitor student performance, providing formal and informal feedback regularly to the student.
- Notify the UMSSW's Field Education Program regarding changes in students' schedules, attendance issues, or any issues that could impact the integrity of the learning experience.
- Orient new students to agency structure and function, student responsibilities, policies and procedures, and commonly used community resources.
- Provide students with disabilities with reasonable accommodations agreed upon by the [Office for Disability Equity](#) and the Director of Field Education.
- Provide suitable office space and support staff as available.
- Provide weekly supervision to the student in individual or group format during a set time.
- Reimburse students for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the same manner as agency employees.
- Review the [field placement safety checklist](#) with the student during the agency onboarding process.
- Structure assignments/practicum tasks to help students learn various social work interventions common to generalist social work practice and advanced practice opportunities.
- Utilize the practicum software, Sonia, to approve student timesheets, approve and provide comments, if needed, on the students' learning agreement, and evaluate the student's midyear and at the end of the practicum.
- Utilize the student as a learner who will assume numerous responsibilities of benefit to the agency rather than as someone to fill the needs of an understaffed agency.
- The Field Director completed the above section acknowledging that Agency Field Instructor does not have to complete MOU as an official Affiliation Agreement between the UMSSW and the practicum agency is in place.

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| Student Signature | Date |
|-------------------|------|

| | |
|---------------|------|
| AFI Signature | Date |
|---------------|------|

Appendix K. Professional Standards: Essential Attributes and Functions

Professional Standards: Essential Attributes and Functions of University of Montana Social Work Students

The following standards, distinguished from academic standards, describe physical, cognitive, emotional and character requirements to provide reasonable assurance that a student can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and practice. Acquisition of competence as a social worker is a lengthy and complex process that will be undermined by significant limitations of the student's ability to participate in the full spectrum of the experiences and the requirements of the curriculum.

Students are evaluated on these professional standards in all areas of our BSW and MSW programs including admissions, classes, and field practicum. Students are expected to possess these attributes and skills at a level appropriate to their year in the programs. Students' continuation in the BSW and MSW Program is contingent upon positive faculty evaluation of their performance in relation to academic standards, field practicum standards, and the professional standards described here. Failure to demonstrate essential attributes and functions on a consistent basis, may lead to students' dismissal from the BSW or MSW Program, therefore it is important that these standards are well understood:

Communication Skills: Social work students exercise professional judgment in all communications with students, faculty, staff, clients, and other professionals. Professional competence encompasses using email in an appropriate manner and responding to email communications from other students, faculty, staff, administrators, and field instructors in a timely and appropriate manner. Student must have the ability to communicate effectively orally and writing and demonstrate a grasp of professional language and concepts. This includes producing clear and legible casework and clinical notes in appropriate format for setting and situation, organizing thoughts and ideas into appropriately written referenced essays and research papers.

Self-Awareness: Social work students know how their own values, beliefs, attitudes, and past experiences affect their thinking, behaviors, relationships, and overall practice. Students examine their internal processes, their strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Social work students demonstrate an awareness of how others perceive them and are willing to change behaviors that are non-conducive to working relationships with clients or other professionals.

Empathy: Social workers endeavor to gain insight and understanding into the values, lived experiences, and beliefs that clients have. Social work students communicate empathy and support clients as a basis for building a productive and professional relationship with the client.

Objectivity: Social work students maintain enough objectivity to sufficiently and systematically evaluate clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way.

Intellectual Capacity: Social work practicums, lectures, and seminars require students to process, retain, and integrate information from a variety of sources including printed materials, verbal delivery,

role plays and live demonstration. Students must participate in interactive discussions and activities, provide presentations, write for both scholarly and professional purposes, and take and pass examinations. These activities require interpersonal skills and cognitive skills such as reading, writing, decision-making, and sound judgment. In addition, students must be able to think critically, analyze and interpret objective and subjective data, and apply effective problem solving skills. Students must demonstrate the cognitive ability to effectively use and apply the program's competencies as illustrated in the student handbook, field manual, and syllabi.

Interpersonal Skills: Social work students demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals. These include showing respect for and consideration of others, listening skills, and the ability to communicate effectively both verbally and non-verbally. Students take appropriate responsibility for their actions and consider the impact on others. They work effectively with others, regardless of level of authority. Students advocate in an appropriate, respectful and responsible manner taking into consideration the complexity of each situation. They use proper channels for complaints, conflict resolution, and grievances. Students demonstrate a willingness to receive feedback from faculty and agency field instructors, administrators, staff and colleagues in a positive and respectful manner.

Individual and Cultural Diversity Skills: Social work students provide care to all regardless of age, race, ethnicity, origin, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental status, or other conditions. Demonstrate understanding of how own personal/cultural history, attitudes, and biases may affect understanding of and interactions with people different from oneself. Integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural differences in the conduct of professional roles.

Self-Care: Social work students recognize the signs of stress and emotional problems, develop appropriate means of self-care, and seek supportive services when necessary to minimize any adverse impact on scholastic and professional performance. Students must be willing to seek the advice of their faculty advisors and follow recommendations made by their advisors and/or faculty decisions regarding the appropriate maintenance of their academic, physical, or psychological health, which may include assessment and/or therapeutic services.

Professional Dress and Behavior: Social work students behave professionally by practicing within the scope of social work, being punctual and dependable, completing coursework and practicum assignments on time, understanding and following their practicum dress code, prioritizing tasks, and adhering to the NASW code of ethics.

Professional Ethics and Integrity: Social work students use the NASW code of ethics as the foundational guide when it comes to working with clients, communities, and other professionals. They comply with all applicable ethical and legal standards for privacy and confidentiality as they relate to any and all communications made in connection with their field placements. Students work to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and seek out appropriate supervision and guidance from the Director/Assistant Director of Field Education, field liaisons, BSW and MSW agency field instructors and faculty when facing ethical challenges. Social work students behave honestly and in a trustworthy manner with respect to all duties performed in connection to the classroom and field placements.

Works Cited

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- MSW Application Requirements* [Columbia School of Social Work MSW Application Requirements]. (2018). New York, New York. Retrieved from <https://socialwork.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/MSW-Application-Requirements-2018.pdf>
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- Professional Standards: Essential attributes and functions of Pacific University MSW students* [Pacific University Social Work Program Practicum Manual]. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.pacificu.edu/sites/default/files/Images/editors/2225/Field%20Manual%202018.pdf>

Appendix L. Acknowledgment of Risk

Field Education Program

Affirmation and Acknowledgement of Risk

Student Information

Student Name

Student 790#

Emergency Contact Information

Emergency Contact Name

Emergency Contact Email

Emergency Contact Phone Number

Emergency Contact Relationship to Student

Affirmation and Acknowledgement of Risk

Students must carefully read the statements below and select "Yes" or "No" on the right side of each statement, indicating that they have read, understood, and agreed to them. Apart from this, students must complete the [Six Ways to Protect Yourself from COVID-19](#) course provided by the World Health Organization and upload their Certificate of Participation.

- I acknowledge that all risks cannot be prevented and could result in my bodily injury, including death. I agree to assume those risks beyond the control of University faculty and staff. I agree that it is my responsibility to understand and follow the Practicum Site's policies and procedures designed to identify and control risks, including safety and security procedures and bloodborne pathogen policies, and to obtain any immunizations which the Practicum Site may recommend or the University require. I am otherwise capable, with or without accommodation, of participating in this practicum.
- I acknowledge that engaging in this activity may require a degree of skill and knowledge different from other activities and that I have responsibilities as a participant. I acknowledge that the UMSSW Faculty have been available to more fully explain this activity's nature and physical demands and the inherent risks, hazards, and dangers associated with this activity.
- I acknowledge that participation in this activity is purely voluntary, no one is forcing me to participate, and I elect to participate despite and in full knowledge of the inherent risks.
- I acknowledge that the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). I acknowledge that COVID-19 is highly contagious and is believed to be spread mainly through person-to-person contact. I further acknowledge that participating in this practicum during the pandemic increases the possibility of my exposure to COVID-19, and the risk of infection cannot be eliminated.

- I acknowledge that there are certain risks inherent in my participation in this practicum or clinical education experience, including, but not limited to, risks arising from:
- Driving to and from the practicum site or while in the course of practicum or clinical experience activities;
- Unpredictable or violent behavior of specific client populations served by the practicum or clinical site;
- Exposure to infectious diseases, including tuberculosis or other airborne pathogens (e.g., COVID-19) and hepatitis, HIV, or other bloodborne pathogens.
- I affirm that I understand the nature of clinical practicum or clinical experiences involving regular engagement in on-site, in-person practicum, or clinical education activities in my assigned setting.
- I assume my responsibility for physical fitness and capability to perform the activities involved in any practicum or clinical education courses and sections I am registered for (check all that apply below). I understand if I have any questions as to whether a physical or medical condition would prevent my full participation in any of the courses mentioned above, I should approach my practicum/clinical coordinator or director, the course instructor, or the University Office for Disability Equity who will discuss possible accommodations. I will notify my primary course instructor or faculty of any accommodations recommended by UM's Office for Disability Equity (ODE).
- I consent to such treatment if I require emergency medical treatment due to an accident or illness arising during the practicum or clinical experience. I acknowledge that the University of Montana does not provide student health and accident insurance. I agree to be financially responsible for any medical bills incurred due to emergencies or other medical treatments. I will notify my practicum/clinical instructor, coordinator or director, and my course instructor if I have medical conditions about which emergency personnel should be informed.
- I had fully informed myself of the contents of this affirmation by reading it before I signed it. I am of lawful age and legally competent to sign this affirmation and acknowledgment.
- I have had the opportunity to review the UMSSW field placement safety checklist and/or will review it with my practicum agency supervisor during onboarding.
- I certify that I have completed the free World Health Organization (WHO) course on Six Ways to Protect Yourself from COVID-19 and uploaded either a Certificate of Participation OR a screenshot of successful course completion to this form.

By signing, I _____ affirm that I have read and fully understand the

Print Name

acknowledgment of each risk on _____.

Date

Student Signature

Appendix M. Field Education Supervision Overview, Topics, and Agenda

MSW Field Placement – Orientation Checklist

A guide to things you may need to complete within the first two weeks of your practicum placement

Introductions & Orientation

- Introduce yourself to all staff at your site/agency and across programs; not only those who are actively involved in field education.
- Share your name, office location, and placement schedule with key staff members.
- Get a tour of the physical layout of the agency/organization.
- Make sure you have a workspace that includes a computer, a phone, and a place to keep confidential information.
- Review important logistical details like dress code, bathroom location, staff room, lunch breaks, parking, mailboxes, and the need for any identification or name tags.
- Review electronic communications expectations including: how frequently to check e-mail and expected timeliness of response; personal use of email, cell phones, and social media.
- Learn telephone protocol: how to answer, use voicemail system, etc.
- Review safety procedures and emergency protocols for both the workplace and any community-based work or home visits.
- Receive an overview of how paperwork and documentation are handled, including time frames and deadlines.
- Review specific information about confidentiality and potential disclosures of confidential information with your AFI. If in a clinical setting, HIPAA regulations should be reviewed.
- Ask for clarification or additional information about any of the orientation items listed above that the AFI conveys to you, or other areas you identify as helpful to you in becoming familiar with the organization.

Organization Overview – Student

- Review the organization's staffing patterns and roles, services offered, populations served and funding sources.
- Review the agency mission, organizational chart, policies, procedures, and program budget overview.
- Find the answers to the following: What is this organization's purpose? Who does it serve and who is eligible for services? What is the role of a social worker? What is the role of the social work student? What is the community context for this work? How is the agency funded?
- Have your Agency Field Instructor help you identify other people in the organization who they believe would be good for you to get to know or interview.
- Consider creating a map that illustrates how people flow through the organization and begin to picture your role – where you are in the picture – and who you might need to learn more

about.

- Ask your AFI about readings or materials to review that would be relevant to the field placement.

Organizational Culture & Agency Norms – Student

- Ask your AFI: What are the professional and cultural norms for the organization? How are interns expected to demonstrate these norms? (Examples: dress code, hours, sick time, other time off, social media use, who and when to call if you will be late or out unexpectedly)

Field Placement Logistics: Supervision, Meetings & Documentation – Student

- Schedule your weekly supervision times, staff meetings, and any other standing commitments with Field Instructor/Task Supervisor
- Begin conversation about supervision structure and how you plan to collaborate on documenting supervision, setting agenda and determining content
- Start drafting your Learning Agreement and discuss learning activities for each competency and practice behavior with your AFI and get their input (the Learning Agreement is due by week 4 of the semester)

The University of Montana

Social Work Practicum Checklist

→ Before Interview

- Update resume
- Update cover letter
- Research agencies
- Review scheduling needs/ conflicts
- Professional Dress (even if the interview is online!)
- Prepare several questions for interview

→ During Interview

- Be on time! (10 minutes early; be early for online meeting and ensure technology works)
- Bring printed resume for interview OR share resume before the interview via email
- Professional Dress (even if interview is online!)
- Ask questions you have for the agency
- Take a deep breath, relax, you got this!

→ After Interview

- Thank you email
- Possible follow up email (week later)
- Once agency confirms placement, email UMSSW Field Team
- Create Placement** in Sonia through the Placements Tab
- Complete SONIA Practicum Forms
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
 - Essential Skills Agreement
 - Practicum Acknowledgment of Risk Form
 - Complete **this 2-hour WHO Training** & upload certificate of completion
 - Learning Agreement (will be discussed in SW 487, SW 576 or SW 578; to be completed after start of semester and no later than week 4 of the semester)

→ Important Dates to Remember

- Practicum Application – check emails for due date!**
- Secure Practicum no later than week 1 of the fall semester
- Practicum Forms due no later than week 4 of the semester

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF SUPERVISION

- Make sure you have a set time for your weekly meetings – this allows you to build a relationship with your supervisor and ensures you have a time scheduled into your calendar!
- Come prepared! Throughout your week track down topics, issues, situations, questions etc. and bring them to supervision
- Have an agenda
- Allow yourself to be vulnerable – talk about your struggles and challenges within practicum and what comes up for you
- Ask for feedback
- Ask for support
- Integrate your learning agreement into supervision meetings on a regular basis

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR SUPERVISION (Administrative, Educational, Supportive)

- Thorough orientation to the agency, employees, standard operations & policies, dress code, etc.
- Professional boundaries with co-workers and clients
- Safety at practicum
- Communication, styles of communication, active listening
- Learning styles
- Developing confidence and competence
- Discussion of current or past courses taken and how they might connect to practicum tasks and experiences
- Social work theories, approach or models and their translation into the “real world social work practice”
- Emotional needs and support, e.g. feeling overwhelmed taking in an abundance of new information, facing social justice issues firsthand
- Stage of Change discussion (Engagement, Assessment, Planning, Intervention, Evaluation, Termination)
- The NASW Code of Ethics, broken down in sections and applied to current practicum situations, hypothetical situations, or past client/agency situations
- Confidentiality issues, HIPPA
- Use of technology at practicum
- Journal articles or readings that relate to the practicum placement or populations served at the practicum agency
- Use of journaling to process feelings in practicum

- Transference and Counter-Transference issues that may develop when working with clients
- Self-Disclosure with clients (when to and when not to)
- Current events, federal or state level policies and legislation effecting clients/ agency/ service delivery
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion and anti-racist principles within the agency and when working with clients
- Burnout and compassion fatigue/ secondary trauma (signs and symptoms, ways to mitigate and respond)
- Self-care
- Colleague relationships in the practicum setting
- Resources and referrals
- Effects of bureaucracy on service delivery and clients
- Positive feedback, constructive criticism and clear expectations
- Dealing with conflict
- Reviewing the learning agreement and ensuring competencies are met

SAMPLE SUPERVISION AGENDA

Supervision Agenda (Date):

Questions I Have (Supportive; Educational; Administrative):

Resources I May Need (Supportive; Educational; Administrative):

Particular Cases or Projects (Consider bringing relevant materials):

Integration of Course Materials:

Review Learning Agreement/ Social Work Competencies:

Goals and Objectives for next week:

Decisions and Plans Made:

The Social Work Practicum Learning Agreement - Everything you need to know and more

1. What is the Learning Agreement and why do I need it for my practicum?
 - The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) created a set of Core Competencies for all social work students in accredited programs. As described in [the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#): *“Competency-based education is an outcome-oriented approach to curriculum design. The goal of the outcome-oriented approach is to ensure that students are able to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice. In the EPAS, social work practice competence consists of nine interrelated competencies and component behaviors that consist of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.”*
 - Practicum gives you the opportunity to integrate classroom knowledge and theory into hands-on social work practice; the learning agreement will be your action plan to ensure that the Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors set by CSWE are being met during your practicum experience.
 - As a **BSW student** in the UM School of Social Work program, you are being prepared to become a generalist social work practitioner, meaning once you graduate, you will have the ability to view social problems and human development from broad ecological, strengths-based, and diversity perspectives. The learning agreement helps you be intentional about developing in a comprehensive way.
 - As a **MSW student** in the UM School of Social Work program, you are being prepared to become an advanced integrated social work practitioner, meaning once you graduate you will have the ability to view social problems and human development from broad ecological, strengths-based, and diversity perspectives and engage individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in the process of strengthening personal capacities, social programs, and public policies. The learning agreement helps you be intentional about developing in a comprehensive way. The learning agreement for first year MSW students (generalist year) will focus on the nine core competencies and behaviors as created by CSWE. The learning agreement for second year MSW students (specialization year) will focus on UMSSW program specific and enhanced behaviors.
 - **Advanced Standing MSW student** in the UM School of Social Work program are being prepared to become advanced integrated social work practitioners, meaning once you graduate you will have the ability to view social problems and human development from broad ecological, strengths-based, and diversity perspectives and engage individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in the process of strengthening personal capacities, social programs, and public policies. Students in the Advanced Standing program only complete the specialization year learning agreement which will focus on advanced competencies and UMSSW program specific and enhanced behaviors.
2. How to get started?

Step 1: Create a list of all the tasks you will be doing in your practicum. Ask your AFI for a practicum position description that provides an overview of the main tasks and responsibilities you will be taking on. What does the agency expect of you? What is it that you want to learn? Five years from now, what do you hope to do, and what do you want this practicum to prepare you for?

Step 2: Review the sample learning agreements which can be found on your Sonia landing page (right hand side under documents). Read through the sample to get a better idea of the suggested activities for each practice behavior and ways of measuring and evaluating learning activities. What learning activities apply to your practicum setting and context? Are there remote learning activities (webinars, online meetings or trainings, telehealth work) you can include here?

Step 3: Go back to your original list and plug those ideas into the learning agreement.

Step 4: Identify the gaps in your learning agreement. For example, you have plenty ideas for engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation with your client group, but not much on policy analysis. Start brainstorming ways to fill in the gaps and don't hesitate to ask your Agency Field Instructor (AFI) or Field Liaison for additional ideas.

Step 5: Consider feeding two birds with one seed aka using some of your course work for your practicum! **Go to your class syllabi** and look through them: Are you being asked to do a policy analysis in your papers? Do you have a research assignment in one of your classes? If so, double dip.

Step 6: Brainstorm with your AFI ways you can develop competency in these gaps and make sure you gain approval from your AFI for specific projects.

Step 7: Include alternative and remote learning activities and tasks in the learning agreement to address possible consequences of COVID-19 on your in-person learning goals.

3. Turning the Learning Agreement into a meaningful tool.

- Find ways to integrate your learning agreement in your day-to-day learning activities at your practicum site, e.g., make it a habit to bring it to your weekly supervision meetings for review.
- Print a hard copy of your learning agreement and carry it with you to review during supervision on a regular basis, write notes on it and use it as a field diary, amend it and track down activities/learning goals you haven't captured yet. Keep in mind that changes made on the hard copy need to also be made in Sonia.

- Use it as a tool to advocate for what you need in practicum!
4. Learning Agreement and end-of-semester evaluations
- Your AFI will evaluate your performance twice during the two semesters of practicum: at the end of your first semester (roughly around 225 hours) and at the end of your second semester (when you have reached the required 450 hours).
 - The evaluation is based on your performance and completion of the practicum activities identified in your BSW/MSW Learning Agreement (which addresses CSWE's core competencies and the related practice behaviors; in the MSW Concentration Year there are additional practice competencies specific to UM's Advanced Integrated Practice curriculum).
 - You are encouraged to meet with your AFI before the mid-term and final evaluation and site visit to discuss your progress and/or areas in need of continuous growth in some of the practice behaviors; that way your AFI can accurately assess their performance.
 - There is no grade attached to your first semester evaluation (you will receive an "N" – In Progress) and AFIs evaluate student performance utilizing a 1-5 competency-based rating scale measuring student progress against the accomplishment of each of the practice behaviors. For more information about practicum grades, review your Practicum Manual.
 - It is your responsibility to coordinate all site visits with the AFI and the Field Liaison to take place at the practicum agency or via Zoom (depending on student/AFI/Field Liaison preference); you will receive instructions via email throughout the semester to schedule these meetings.
 - At the end-of-semester site visit with your AFI and Field Liaison, the completed evaluation and your progress will be discussed, and all parties will sign the evaluation via Sonia.
5. Learning Agreements and SONIA
- You will complete your learning agreement through your online Sonia account (located in the FORMS tab) by the fourth week of the semester.
 - You can print a hard copy from Sonia (print in landscape mode). Changes made on the hard copy need to also be made in Sonia.
 - Once you have completed the first draft, the learning agreement is then submitted via Sonia to your AFI for review and approval.
 - SAVE the document regularly! SUBMIT when initial draft is done! Saving the document does not pass it on to your AFI – it has to be submitted!
 - If the AFI approves, the learning agreement is sent to the Field Liaison.
 - If the AFI does not approve and/or suggests changes, you should visit with your AFI in person and discuss what additional learning opportunities you might want to include in the learning agreement before submitting it again.
 - Once your learning agreement has been approved by your AFI, it is submitted via Sonia to the field liaison for final approval.
 - The approval process is similar for the semester 1 and semester 2 evaluation.

Appendix N. Interruptions for Field Education Policy

University of Montana School of Social Work (UMSSW)

Policy for Interruption of Field Placement due to National or Local Events

UMSSW has developed a plan to address temporary disruptions to students' social work field placements caused by national or local events such as communicable diseases, natural disasters, and/or civil unrest.

If students are advised by their agency, supervisor, and/or government not to attend their field placement or if safety concerns warrant a temporary disruption, they should immediately consult with both their UMSSW Field Liaison and their Agency Field Instructors (AFIs).

In an effort to fulfill the 6000 practicum hour requirements and educational competencies during temporary field placement stoppages, we are providing alternative field learning activities that can be completed off-site.

This policy is meant to address short-term field placement disruptions, with a maximum of 30 days. If the stoppage continues beyond that period, the UMSSW Field Education Program will review it to determine the most appropriate response to support students in completing their field placement requirements.

Alternate Learning Activities

Agency Field Instructors should assign students off-site alternative field learning activities that the student may complete during a temporary field disruption. Examples of alternative field learning activities are listed below.

- **Supervision:** Weekly supervision using Zoom or other teleconferencing applications.
- **Meetings with individuals, families, and groups** utilizing teleconferencing applications that can be accessed via computer, tablet, and/or telephone, provided teleconferencing applications meet any agency requirements regarding HIPPA and/or confidentiality.
- **Training(s) for Agency:** develop training(s) that will benefit the agency (ex -self-care, ethics, etc.)
- **Groups/Workshops for Clients:** develop curriculum for future implementation with clients (ex - life skills, grief, trauma, domestic violence, etc.)
- **Written Materials for Clients or Community:** develop handouts, flyers, or brochures (e.g., explaining voting rights, informed consent policies, etc.).
- **Organizational Policy Review:** review agency policies with suggestions/recommendations where appropriate (ex- safety policies, diversity policies, use of social media, utilization of technology, etc.)
- **Legislative Policy Review:** review relevant laws and policies impacting the population students work with (ex- Indian Child Welfare Act, Family First Prevention Act, Homeless Camping Bans/ Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, etc.) and provide a synopsis of key takeaways or prepare

advocacy materials (letter to editor, develop key talking points, etc.)

- **Literature Review:** conduct a literature review on a specific topic relevant to field placement (ex- effectiveness of an intervention, how the interruption of services impacts mental health or economic stability, etc.)
- **Grants:** research potential grant opportunities and/or prepare aspects of the grant writing.
- **Community Networking/Resource Development:** teleconference with various service providers, participate in resource mapping, and develop a list of resources for clients with services offered, referral process, etc.
- **Complete online training(s):** complete assigned training(s)/ webinar(s) and provide a certification of completion and/or a short-written reflection and/or prepare a presentation to disseminate knowledge gained.
 - Talk to your AFI about recorded webinars they have available about your practicum population/ focus
 - The Center for Children, Families, and Workforce Development offers excellent training modules on a variety of topics: <http://health.umt.edu/ccfwd/training/default.php>
 - Listen to the social work podcasts/ Ted Talks relevant to social work practice and social justice issues: <http://socialworkpodcast.blogspot.com/>

Agency Field Instructors may come up with other activities or training(s) besides those listed on this page. **All activities should be pre-approved by the student's agency supervisor.**

Confidentiality and the Use of Technology

All students must comply with relevant laws, regulations, ethical standards, and organizational policies to ensure clients' confidentiality. Students and agencies are encouraged to utilize the standards listed in the [Technology in Social Work Practice guide](#) to inform their use of technology. While each agency should develop their own protocols around the use of technology and confidentiality, the following best practices should be followed by all students:

- Take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate boundaries when using personal phone numbers or other electronic communication. For example, consider temporarily hiding your caller ID through your phone's settings when making outgoing calls.
- Position web cameras so that others can only see your face- all visible confidential data should be removed from the camera view.
- Conduct all sensitive conversations in a private space. Be mindful that family members or bystanders may overhear portions of your discussions.

Appendix O. Student Support and Accountability Plan
Student Support and Accountability Plan
Confidential

Date:

Student:

Advisor:

Faculty Support:

Initial Concern:

Current Concern:

Semester and Year:

MSW Program Director:

Field Team Representative (if applicable):

The purpose of this Student Support and Accountability Plan is to address CSWE Accreditation competency-based expectations, reiterate University of Montana’s School of Social Work’s expectations, and allow the student the opportunity to demonstrate improvement and commitment. Academic policies and conduct expectations are laid out in the MSW Student Handbook and is to be used as a guide for this support plan.

Summary of Academic or Non-Academic Concerns:

| Competen- cy/ Ethical Area(s) of Concern | Current Performance | Expectations of Student | Timeline for Completion | Review Dates and Status P=Progressing C=Completed U=Unsatisfactory |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Next Steps:

- Student will maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher to ensure adequate progression in the program.

Student:

- Check University email at least once/day and respond to faculty messages within 48 hours.
- Reach out to instructors as needed for clarification on assignments and to ensure

understanding of requirements.

- Submit assignments and participate in classroom discussions by the expected due date.
- Communicate with professors in advance of due dates when requesting an extension.
- Reach out to advisor _____ for advising needs.
- Reach out to student support person/faculty mentor _____ for support as needed.
- Other Supports Available:
 - Office of Disability Equity about process and eligibility for accommodations. Contact information: Phone 406-243-2243, Website: <https://www.umt.edu/disability/>
 - Writing and Public Speaking Center to further develop academic writing skills including accurate use of APA. Contact information: Phone 406-243-2450, Website: <https://www.umt.edu/writing-center/>
 - Wellbeing Support Coordinators are available to support student wellbeing. You can request to meet through the [website](#).

Advisor Role in Supporting Student

- Check in with student on grades/assignments.
- Review policies as needed.
- Provide resources as needed.

Faculty Role in Supporting Student

- Check in with student on progression through Spring courses towards the conclusion of each term.
- Provide coaching as needed around communication with course instructors regarding challenges associated with comprehending material and/or assignment instructions.
- Support ongoing development of the essential attributes and functions of professional social work students.

***See the MSW Online Handbook for full policies regarding Academic Standards. Failure to meet the requirements laid out in this Student Support Plan, and those laid out in the policy, will result in suspension or termination from the program.**

Note: This Student Support Plan is now in effect. Please sign and date below to indicate that you have reviewed the plan and that you understand its implications.

Signatures

Student

Date

Advisor

Date

Program Lead/Director or Dept Chair Date

Faculty

Date