



UMSSW Private Practice Placement Guidelines

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.

Adapted from the University of Utah and Metropolitan State University of Denver Program Policies