



The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work

PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

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Revised Summer 2025

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK:

MISSION STATEMENT

Through excellence in professional education, research, and service, the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work provides national leadership to promote social justice, alleviate critical social problems, and enhance human well-being.

Section 1

The Practicum Program: Organization, Structure, and Agency Partnerships

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The Practicum Program: Organization, Structure, and Agency Partnerships

Organization and Structure

The practicum for social work education provides a practice setting in which students have opportunities to utilize evidence-based practice and synthesize the various knowledge and theories covered in classroom material. Practicum education is presented as a specialized body of knowledge which provides students an educationally directed experiential base on which to develop evidence-based practice.

In addition to furnishing the experiential component of professional education, it is in the practicum that the student's professional identity, professional use of self, and professional ethics and values are fully explored. A significant portion of the student's time is spent in the practicum setting. For the undergraduate, 400 clock hours of the senior year are spent on site in a service-giving capacity. The graduate student does two internships over the course of a 60-hour master's degree program, for a total of 900 hours: 400 in the first practicum experience and 500 in the final practicum internship. Post-BSW may be admitted for the 48-or 42-hour MSSW program and will complete one or two internships respectively.

The educational activities which support the practicum component of the curriculum are the responsibility of the Office of Practicum Education. A key component is the interaction between the community-based practicum sites and the UT School Social Work clinical faculty liaison who monitors the students' progress in their practicum and supports the agency in the educational partnership.

At the University, the practicum program activities are the responsibility of the (1) Assistant Dean for Practicum Education, (2) Clinical Faculty Liaisons, (3) Practicum Education Associate, and (4) other faculty performing the liaison function particularly at the Master of Science in Social Work final practicum level.

Practicum Education

Practicum Education is a multifaceted professional activity that requires students to engage the dimensions of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to support competency development in a complex configuration of activities across a wide range of settings. The practicum serves as a primary link between knowledge presented in the classroom and actual social work practice. It also provides students with an opportunity to build a repertoire of competencies, to test those practicum competencies in actual practice settings, and to enhance their sense of

identification with the profession. Both Foundation and Concentration practicum instruction are addressed below.

The practicum has historically been one of the key elements in social work education, providing an opportunity for the student to build, integrate, and apply knowledge in work with a client population within an agency setting. Practicum serves as an educational experience for the graduate student as well as a transition to the professional work world. For all these reasons, students often report that practicum is one of the most important and challenging parts of the curriculum. The undergraduate and graduate level first practicum internship is based on the generalist perspective to provide a broad and shared foundation experience regardless of students' concentration choice and should integrate an understanding of the micro, mezzo and macro level practice.

The graduate final practicum internship focuses on developing advanced practitioner skills in the students' concentration areas of Clinical or Administration and Policy Practice while maintaining the foundation year's understanding of the intertwined nature of all levels of practice.

The Practicum Partnership

Success of the practicum requires forming and sustaining a partnership between the Office of Practicum Education, agency, practicum Instructor, faculty liaison and student. This partnership begins during the placement process and is sustained throughout the practicum. Without the commitment and the dedication of each in the system, the practicum program and practicum will not fulfill its goal: to assist in the preparation of a social work practitioner who has a strong professional identity and capably engages in knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes in building practice competence.

The Office of Practicum Education

The Office of Practicum Education is responsible for supporting student practicum education, the clinical faculty liaison team, agencies and their practicum instructors, and practicum-related activities within the School of Social Work, the larger University, and in the local, state, national, and international communities. The OPE is staffed by the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education (ADPE), the Practicum Education Associate, and a part-time student employee.

The ADPE reports directly to the Dean of the School of Social Work and has the overall responsibility for directing the practicum program at both the bachelor and master's levels. The ADPE is responsible for:

1. The design and implementation of the placement processes and related student orientations.
2. The development, utilization, and evaluation of agency settings.
3. The development and evaluation of practicum instructor training.
4. Monitoring student progress in practicum and responding to student standard violations.

5. The development, implementation, and evaluation of practicum policies.
6. Chairing the Practicum Education and Community Partnership Development Committees.
7. Coordination with practicum -related training Scholars Programs and grants.
8. Representation of the practicum program in the School, the University, and the local, state, national, and international communities.
9. Oversight of the development of databases and reporting systems.
10. Evaluation of practicum program activities.
11. Coordination and evaluation of the clinical faculty liaison team and practicum education associate.

The practicum education associate's primary responsibilities center around the database and reporting systems as well as implementing placement processes, facilitating practicum instructor communication, and event planning oversight.

The Agency

In the practicum partnership, the school assumes central responsibility and leadership for the educational focus of the student's learning experience. However, agencies are a critical resource in a practicum program and carry significant responsibility for the education of students. The school's selection of agency settings and practicum instructors is a crucial part of ensuring the educational focus of practicum and the overall success of the practicum program. Fortunately, the Austin area has enough human service agencies representing diverse functions, sizes, and structures, and serving a variety of client populations to meet the school's needs for practicum placements. The school is affiliated with a broad spectrum of these agencies enabling it to be selective in the choice of appropriate settings. Available agencies differ from year to year due to changes in staffing or their ability to work with students. The school utilizes a variety of agencies in areas of service such as mental health, healthcare, schools, and child welfare, and serves a diversity of client populations including older adults, children, adolescents, and families.

Agencies utilized for the first practicum experience are generally located in the Austin area and surrounding communities to accommodate the concurrent practicum plan. This makes liaising manageable for the faculty and keeps commuting for the students to a minimum.

Agencies utilized for the final practicum experience are also generally located within Austin and surrounding areas. However, students may be placed out-of-town, state or internationally in the advanced final practicum internship.

Criteria for selection of an agency as a setting for student placement include the following:

1. The availability of necessary learning experiences.
2. The willingness of the agency executive and staff to support the educational goals of the school.

3. The availability of appropriate supervision.
4. A primary purpose of the organization, or the identified program or department within an organization, must be to address human needs. This can include the areas of social policy formulation, administration, evaluation, research, direct service delivery, the workplace, etc.
5. The agency/organization cannot engage in discriminatory practices in either the hiring of personnel, the acceptance of students or clientele, including requiring a student to sign a statement of faith.
6. The agency/organization is committed to the educational goals of the school as demonstrated by the practicum instructor's participation in the school's educational program. These activities might include attendance/presenting at practicum instructor workshops, completion of online practicum instructor training, guest lectures, participation in the School of Social Work committees, etc.
7. The agency/organization must support the placement and allow sufficient release time for the practicum instructor to provide educational supervision to the student.
8. A reasonable stipend for the services of the student is encouraged when possible. This will vary by organization, is not required, and is based on similar programs for student internships within that organization, as well as on hours of service.
9. A practicum instructor for BSW interns must have a BSW or MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited school at least two years post-graduate social work experience. For supervision of master's level students, a practicum instructor must have a MSSW degree from a CSWE-accredited school and at least two years of post graduate social work experience.
10. The agency/organization must provide access to necessary administrative resources to sustain and integrate student activities including but not limited to office space, phones, computers, documentation systems, databases, administrative support, etc.
11. The agency/organization must provide necessary measures to protect students' safety. This may minimally include training in policies and procedures for conducting home visits; interacting with potentially difficult clients; and handling emergencies, as well as appropriate screening of student assignments by practicum instructor(s).
12. The agency/organization must have a system of community accountability. This is demonstrated by a representative board of directors; fiscal accountability via the budget review process; or in the case of private-for-profit direct service organizations, subject to periodic review by an accrediting agency.
13. The agency must communicate changes in supervision staffing to the practicum office as soon as possible in order to make the necessary arrangements for student supervision.

14. The student will be in a practice setting that will expand, enhance and/or introduce new elements into their previous work and educational experiences.
15. The setting will provide a “learning” or “educational” experience for the student, rather than a “work” or “observation” experience.

These criteria represent the basic elements for safeguarding the educational nature of the practicum experience.

In addition, the MSSW first practicum placement for each student is chosen with the following goals:

1. The placement will support the generalist perspective in social work.
2. The agency will be able to provide the student with four basic requirements addressing micro, mezzo and macro level practice: individual cases, intake/assessment, a group experience and an administration and/or planning experience.

The MSSW final practicum placement for each student is chosen with the following goals:

1. The placement will support the student’s concentration focused learning: either Clinical or Administration and Policy Practice.
2. The agency will respect the advanced student status and provide educational challenges sufficient to their standing as a final Practicum student and emerging professional.

The Practicum Instructor

The practicum instructor remains at the center of practicum education and is the key to the quality of the practicum experience for an individual student. Potential practicum Instructors are identified in conjunction with the agency but approval rests with the practicum office. Criteria for the selection of practicum instructors include the following:

1. The primary practicum instructor of record for a BSW intern must have a bachelor’s or master’s degree from an accredited school of social work and at least two years post-graduate experience. The practicum instructor of record for an MSSW intern must have a master’s degree from an accredited school of social work and least two years of post-graduate experience. For international practicum, cultural competence and global realities require a broader understanding of professional social work preparation around the world, but comparable practicum instructor ability to support student education is always sustained.
2. The practicum instructor must be recommended by the host Agency as competent in the profession and capable of student instruction. The Agency must also agree to support the practicum instructor in

the educational role.

3. The practicum instructor must agree with the learning goals of professional Social Work education and be committed to quality education for the student.
4. The practicum instructor is required to work closely with the school in the assignment of case material and is responsible for providing timely feedback to the School on the progress of the individual student through the faculty liaison.
5. The practicum instructor is expected to participate in the ongoing mutual exchange of ideas with the faculty. One arena for this is in the seminars and workshops that are held during the year.
6. The practicum instructor is expected to attend orientation sessions, complete online training modules available through the school's website and/or be available for individual orientation by the faculty liaison.
7. The practicum instructor is expected to submit their resume to the OPE and create and maintain an individual profile in the Practicum database for communication and data integrity.
8. The practicum instructor for out of town or state placements must be on-site and licensed in accordance with that state's requirements.
9. The practicum instructor must be willing and able to contribute to the evaluation of the student through written documents including process recordings, learning contract, and the student evaluation instrument.
10. The practicum instructor should have been employed at the agency for at least six months prior to supervising interns. This requirement may be reviewed and exceptions approved by the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education (ADPE) under compelling circumstances, especially if the practicum instructor is a known partner.

Although an onsite practicum instructor provides the preferred method of supervision, due to the movement of social work into non-traditional settings, this is not always feasible. When an approved agency is unable to provide a full time practicum instructor to work with the student, the following options are available with final approval resting with the UT Office of Practicum Education:

1. Supervision by a part-time employee who meets the CSWE eligibility degree and experience requirements to supervise students at the different programmatic levels.
2. Supervision by an equally eligible BSW or MSSW in another division of the same agency, with approval of the administrators in each division.
3. Supervision by an equally eligible BSW or MSSW hired or otherwise engaged by the agency for the specific purpose of providing student

supervision. This must be supplemented by an administrative supervisor who is onsite and can oversee the day-to-day work of the student. The MSSW and administrative supervisor need to work closely together in the matter of assignments, agency policy and other matters that would impact on the student's achievement of the course objectives. In rare cases an MSSW who is either on the board of the agency, connected with the agency in some other way, or in practice somewhere else in the community may volunteer the time necessary for supervision. In those cases, the school will need to ascertain the level of commitment on the part of the volunteer, in order to assure the student will receive the time commitment necessary to achieve quality supervision. Like all approved supervisors, external practicum instructors are also required to provide a copy of their resume to the OPE and to complete new practicum instructor training either in-person or online.

The approved practicum instructor's primary role, in relation to the student and the school, is as an educator. The practicum instructor is viewed as the primary teacher who creates and protects a positive educational climate to facilitate student learning and engages the student in knowledge, value, and skill development related to social work practice and the service giving assignments in the agency. Other responsibilities of the practicum instructor are:

1. To orient the student to the setting. This includes all relevant personnel, policies and procedures, meetings, dress code, record keeping and agency documentation, confidentiality and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations, intake, referral, transfer and termination, special auspices, etc.
2. To establish a learning contract with each student.
3. To provide the necessary experiences to meet the educational goals.
4. To teach the appropriate use of supervision including when and how it is utilized and to what purposes.
5. To serve as a professional role model.
6. To help the student understand and appropriately use the network of human services available to the agency and the clients.
7. To evaluate with the student and the faculty liaison the progress of the student throughout the internship.
8. To provide regularly scheduled and uninterrupted supervisory conferences for the purpose of enhancing the student's educational learning and practice skills.
9. To provide necessary training and monitoring of students' compliance with safety policies and procedures.

10. The practicum instructor and Intern commit to uphold and advance the National Association of Social Workers 10 Standards and Indicators of Cultural Competence found at <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PonPTDEBrn4%3D&portalid=0>.
11. To notify the faculty liaison as soon as possible should challenges regarding the student arise in the practicum setting. The faculty liaison and practicum instructor will confer with the ADPE and make decisions regarding the student as needed.
12. To participate with the school in a continuing mutual effort to upgrade and enhance the practicum program and to attend school workshops for practicum instructor.
13. To participate in the school whenever possible by sharing expertise in specific areas.
14. To communicate to the practicum office any planned or unexpected changes that would impact current or future supervision of students.

Practicum instructors and faculty liaisons are expected to share information freely in service of the student's education. Students sign a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) waiver acknowledging the need to share educational information between the school and the internship staff. Similarly, every time practicum instructors request interns from the school, they sign an acknowledgement of their responsibility to share FERPA related information within the agency and with internship-related staff solely for the purposes of administering student internships, protecting client well-being, and reviewing student performance.

The Faculty Liaison

The faculty liaison integrates curriculum into practicum and develops the connection between the agencies and the school through regular communication and feedback with all internship related parties including the intern, practicum instructor, additional agency-based staff, and the Office of Practicum Education. Students are assigned to a faculty liaison based upon agency placement, student scheduling needs, and the expertise and interests of the students and faculty liaison. In the first practicum placement, graduate students have access to their faculty liaison on a weekly basis in the integrative seminar, during liaison visits, via phone and email and by scheduling office appointments as needed. In the final practicum placement, students have access to their faculty liaison over the course of the semester during liaison visits, via phone and email, and by scheduling appointments as needed.

A brief list of the responsibilities of the faculty liaison in relation to monitoring of student placements includes the following:

1. Conduct liaison visits at designated times during the semester to confer with the practicum instructor and the student about the student's professional development in relation to the educational

objectives and competencies.

2. Participate with the practicum instructor and student in the assessment of the student's learning needs and help identify goals and educationally substantive assignments.
3. Attempt to identify early possible challenge areas with individual students and act to assist both the student and agency to meet educational needs and resolve conflicts;
4. Aid in the growth and training of practicum instructors in their educational role.
5. Provide feedback and evaluation of student performance using weekly journals, a learning contract, process recordings and midterm and final evaluation tools.
6. Ongoing problem solving around placement issues with students and practicum instructors including moving students to different placements as needed.
7. Gatekeeping through initiation and follow through with students in level review process in adherence with the UT-SSW Standards for Social Work Education; and
8. Assign the grade for first practicum or course credit for final practicum students.

Faculty liaisons and agency-based practicum instructors work jointly to foster individualized student learning and to monitor and evaluate student progress in meeting practicum objectives and demonstrating competencies. faculty liaisons schedule and make visits with students and practicum instructors in the Austin area at least twice a full-length semester, with at least one additional visit in the summer semester for extended final practicum placements. Domestic long distance final practicum students – 60 miles or more outside Austin – typically receive one in-person liaison visit over the course of their internship with additional phone and email contact. The University has a commitment to make additional practicum visits on an as needed basis. Visits are conducted to establish learning contracts, review progress, and evaluate student performance.

Liaison visits are defined as a scheduled meeting with at least the faculty liaison, practicum instructor and intern for at least 30 minutes and may include additional staff/supervisors. Liaison visits may be in- person (typically onsite at the agency) or via video- or audio-conference call, with the preferred option being video-conference due to the value of additional non-verbal communication.

The clinical faculty designation is a non-tenure track faculty position within the School of Social Work. In the practicum program, clinical faculty members act as faculty liaisons to the practicums, providing instruction, monitoring, and evaluation of the practicum experiences of students within the Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Science in social work programs. The position also carries professional advising responsibilities in the practicum program to enhance the quality of School/agency/ student interaction. The faculty liaison links the school and the professional community with a special focus on assisting students with integration of theory and practice and

with enhancing agency-based practicum instruction.

It should be noted that clinical faculty title is a university designation for non-tenure track faculty. Clinical faculty are chosen, trained, and knowledgeable in generalist foundation education as well as advanced Clinical and APP concentration specific social work.

The Student

The primary responsibility of the student in practicum is to demonstrate the competencies of practicum and as an active adult learner in the practice setting and in the practicum seminar. Since students are providing services to clients who are often vulnerable and in need of assistance in problem solving, it is important that students make a commitment to actively pursue the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes necessary to accomplish this. Students are not expected to already possess this knowledge base and skills, but instead, to take on the responsibility to involve themselves in the learning process. This includes remaining open to and acting on feedback from the practicum instructor and agency staff, coming prepared to meetings and supervision, being willing to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and sharing this with the faculty liaison and practicum instructor.

Supervision

Students are supervised in the practicum by a person with a BSW or MSSW degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program and at least two-years, post-graduate experience. This person is vetted and approved by the School as the practicum instructor after submitting credentials to the OPE, and is required to complete the new practicum instructor training either in person at the bi-annual practicum instructor Development Institute or online at <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/1238449>.

Every student in practicum requires a minimum of one hour of supervision per 16 hours in practicum with the designated practicum instructor. The additional hour, which is required in full-block final practicum settings may include individual supervision, group supervision (with other students and/or staff), or specialized supervision by an expert in the agency or a consultant, e.g., a skilled fellow staff member, administrator, or professional from another discipline

Students should not be left alone in the agency without professional staff. Leaving students alone on the premises or otherwise in charge during staff retreats, conferences, etc. is not an appropriate use of students. Students, no matter how competent or skilled, are not in position to take on those types of staff responsibilities.

Supervision is expected to be both administrative and educational in nature. Administrative supervision includes topics such as a description of policies of the agency, assignment of work and coordination of staff efforts. Educationally focused supervision includes an emphasis on theory and helping the student connect agency assignments to the educational objectives of the placement. In supervision, students

engage with knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective process in mastering the required competencies. The practicum instructor teaches knowledge and skills, for example, through discussion of applying theoretical frameworks applicable to the client population and setting. Supervision sparks use of critical thinking skills and exercise of judgment, through discussion of ethical dilemmas and assessment data. The student's affective processes come into play in supervision as well, through increased self-awareness and self-regulation are modeled and encouraged by the supervisor. Both types of supervision are important and should be a part of the practicum experience.

Students are expected to play an active role in supervision. This includes being prepared and on time for the supervisory session. Although the practicum instructor will have topics selected for discussion, the expectation is that students will also have any topics identified that need to be covered. One of the most important areas for growth during practicum is the student's understanding of the need for a commitment to life-long learning and self-evaluation as a beginning practitioner. Learning how to prepare for and use supervision may be a new experience for students. Planning is very important in making productive use of supervision. Students are encouraged to keep lists throughout the week of issues to be discussed. Another tool for supervisory sessions is the learning contract. The goals stated in the contract may be used as a guide for the supervisory session.

Other ways to use supervision productively include:

1. Using supervision to identify strengths as well as gaps related to the competencies.
2. Discussing process recordings in supervision.
3. Reflecting on the dimensions of knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes.
4. Requesting feedback on performance and skills.
5. Seeking additional readings and resources to improve practice effectiveness.
6. Using supervision as a vehicle for examining the impact of the practicum experience on the development of professional use of self; and
7. Acting on feedback from supervisor.

Teaching Methods

Each practicum instructor is unique in their approach to practicum education. However, the following methods have proven useful over a variety of settings and practicum instructor teaching styles. Some are required by the school. Others are simply suggestions.

However, it is expected that an appropriate mix of suggested methods will be utilized, depending on availability in the agency setting and the educational needs of the students.

1. Process recordings (required)
2. Review and discussion of case documentation (required)
3. Direct observation of student's work
4. Student observation of practicum instructor at work
5. Audio recordings
6. Video recordings
7. Role plays
8. Discussion of events and experiences
9. Practicum trips
10. Interdisciplinary simulations
11. Visits to other service providers for comparison/contrast
12. Group discussion with other students/staff
13. Pertinent videos
14. Additional readings in appropriate areas
15. Attendance at relevant trainings and/or conferences
16. Student presentations
17. Online training and webinars

Service Provision and Educational Assignments

The service provision and educational assignments of practicum provide the experiential base on which a student realistically moves toward completion of the objectives of the practicum sequence, demonstrating the core competencies, and becoming a professional social worker. Assignments are identified by the practicum instructor with consultation from the faculty liaison and are based on the educational objectives and core competencies. Students are given a minimum set of assignments, regardless of agency setting, but these are individualized for every student. The learning contract links specific assignments to the learning goals of the practicum. The underlying principle in the delineation of service-giving assignments is that these provide meaningful learning experiences. Assignments are geared toward engaging the student's knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes in demonstration of the competencies of the practicum experience, to support a generalist approach to practice within the social work domain.

Furthermore, assignments are chosen for their usefulness in assisting the student to transfer competencies from the practicum to other settings in the future.

Service-giving assignments also encompass opportunities to perform a variety of social work roles in practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities including outreach, enabler, broker, advocate, teacher, planner, researcher, evaluator, etc. Both direct and indirect assignments are required during the practicum.

Student assignments include opportunities to work with individuals and families with

a wide variety of needs and concerns. Experience involving the entire problem-solving process from engagement to evaluation is required. Over the course of the placement, students have opportunities to perform intake duties, to complete assessments, to work with collateral contacts, and to carry ongoing cases. Students carry some cases from intake through termination while others are referred to them from within the agency. The practicum instructor is responsible for screening and assigning cases for the student. In addition, cases are selected to give the student an understanding of the richness of human diversity and thus represent differences in age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic levels. All students must have an opportunity to work with disadvantaged populations, providing opportunities to impact social, economic, and environmental justice concerns. Emphasis on assessment and linkage with appropriate referrals in the community is another aspect of the students' work. Case documentation of work with individuals and families is also required. Students must submit process recordings, assessments, ongoing case recordings, and other forms of recording for review by the practicum instructor and faculty liaison.

Students are also given assignments to work at the group level during their placement. All students are expected to co-plan and co-facilitate a group during their internship experience. This entails responsibility for planning for the group, curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation of the group experience. The practicum instructor is responsible for assisting the student in the identification of an appropriate learning experience in this area. Generally, opportunities for group work center around psychoeducational-focused groups such as parenting skills training, independent living skills training, development of problem-solving skills, etc.

Students are also expected to carry out an administrative/planning/research assignment, under supervision, as part of their Practicum experience. Responsibilities in this area include: the identification of a need within the agency or community; consideration of policy implications of the project; consideration of alternative approaches to addressing the need; delineation of a plan to address the concern including methods to be used and needed resources; implementation of the plan; coordination of the action systems involved; and evaluation of the process and outcomes. Projects that are identified must be within the normal duties of the professional staff within the agency and must have agency sanction. Part of this assignment may also entail an oral presentation of the project to the staff and/or Board of Directors of the agency. Students must also be given opportunities to engage in several other indirect service activities in the placement. Students are expected to attend staff meetings, case reviews, and other staff development opportunities within the agency. Attendance at staff meetings is a critical part of the student's ability to integrate himself/herself into the agency setting. In addition, students may attend meetings of the agency's Board of Directors or other policy-making group during the year. This experience is processed within supervision with the practicum instructor and is discussed in the integrative seminar. Students are also encouraged to visit other agencies and attend other community meetings including inter-organizational meetings, NASW chapter meetings, and meetings of other city, county, state, and federal policy-making bodies. In particular, students are encouraged

to observe and participate in the legislative process during state legislative sessions and to attend Social Work Advocacy Day and/or Social Work Students' Day at the legislature as offered.

Emphasis is placed on the student's carrying a manageable and sequenced load in the practicum. This is supported in the agencies by the practicum instructors. Although care is taken to structure and sequence the student's learning as much as possible, the reality of the agency-based practicum model implies that, at times, students will feel unprepared to take on some service-giving assignments. Reflections on this in supervision with the practicum instructor and with the faculty liaison in the practicum log and during integrative seminar are helpful ways of processing these experiences.

Educational Tools

A variety of educational tools are available to support student learning and accountability for interns, practicum instructors, and faculty liaisons. Among the most essential formal tools are the learning contract, journals, time sheets, process recordings, midterm and final evaluations, and self-reflective narratives.

Students develop learning contracts in consultation with their practicum instructor and faculty liaison. The learning contracts identify educational goals, learning opportunities, and responsibilities appropriate to the needs of the clients and constituencies of the internship setting that allow the students to develop and demonstrate the competencies. Learning contracts are developed at the beginning of each semester and are amendable documents based on the evolving needs of the student and the agency. Learning contracts are submitted to the faculty liaison within the first third of the student's internship semester. Forms and further instruction may be found in Section 7: Forms.

In generalist practicum, students submit weekly journals detailing their understanding of the integration of practice and theory, ethical issues, and their growing identity as professionals. The faculty liaison reviews and responds to the student's experience, using this tool to reinforce the values, knowledge, skills, and affective and cognitive processes. In advanced, specialized concentration specific practicum, the OPE requires journals for international practicum interns only but practicum instructors may employ journals as an educational tool if appropriate to the placement.

Students are expected to use timesheets to document their time in practicum and to have those signed by their practicum instructor. Students are encouraged to use the agency timesheets and are not required to use the timesheets provided at the agency exclusively but may also use the form available in Section 7: Forms.

Process recordings at their most basic consist of a transcript section of an interaction in which the intern is involved, the intern's authentic recounting and reflection upon their knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes related to that interaction, and the practicum instructor's written feedback. Process recordings should be submitted to the

faculty liaison in accordance with the guidelines below but are to be spread out over the internship to allow comparison between different points in time and potentially student development. More information is provided to the student by the faculty liaison. Midterm and final evaluations provide a teaching tool and formal structure for assessing student progress on the competencies and outcomes. The student and practicum instructor collaborate to rate, document, and evaluate the intern's progress toward the CSWE Educational Policies and Academic Standards' educational competencies using outcomes and help determine priorities for the remainder of the semester. Electronic midterm evaluations are to be submitted online by the faculty liaison, who communicates specific due dates, midway through the internship for the OPE.

Midterm evaluations serve as a first draft of the final evaluation. The practicum instructor is responsible for the content of the final evaluation. The final evaluation is a permanent part of the student's educational record and may be requested for release to state licensing boards, Doctor of Philosophy programs, and/or governmental security clearance applications. Evaluations are submitted electronically using a link sent out by the faculty liaison. Final evaluations are due to the OPE when the student completes their internship. Examples of the different evaluation tools for each level are available in Section 7: Forms for use in supervision and reference.

The self-reflection narrative is due at the end of each semester of practicum and is a guided reflection of the student's experience over the course of the internship. It allows the student to demonstrate the ability to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom with experiences in practicum. In addition, the narrative helps the student demonstrate critical analytical skills to identify issues, place them in context, and evaluate results. The intern is solely responsible for creating the narrative and submits it to both the practicum instructor and the faculty liaison.

All practicum forms are available online at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/Practicum/forms>.

Becoming an Approved Practicum Setting

The initiative for instituting a practicum internship in a given organization may originate either with the School or the Agency. Initial inquiries for how to get started moving toward approval as a UT-SSW Practicum site should be sent to the OPE at ssw-practicum@austin.utexas.edu. Agency representatives will be sent step-by-step directions on how to enter initial information about their agency and internship needs and opportunities. Questions related to navigating the database should be addressed to ssw-practicum@austin.utexas.edu. Members of the Community Partnership for Development Committee will review the submitted materials and two volunteers – one community-based and one UT - will commit to schedule a site visit. The CPDC consists of volunteers from the community and staff and faculty at the UT-SSW who are invested in developing new internship partners.

The proposed practicum instructor, other agency staff, and CPDC members will meet to explore and review internship expectations for both the agency and the school. The practicum placement expectations form used in this meeting may be found in Section 7: Forms. This is the same form that students and practicum instructors sign at the beginning of each new internship. CPDC members will also educate the agency staff regarding the need to request students each cycle. If the proposed placement is out of town, the ADPE will conduct the exploration and review of expectations over the phone. The agency will receive the practicum placement expectations form for discussion as well.

The CPDC representatives will present their findings in the committee setting for discussion and possible approval. Typically, it becomes clear to both parties in the site visit if an agency is prepared to host interns and at what level, whether generalist or advanced and concentration specific. Agencies deemed not currently suitable for hosting practicum students will receive feedback about ways to strengthen a subsequent bid for approval and/or referred for other service-learning possibilities and partnerships within the school.

The approval process for an agency request may be expedited by temporary approval from the ADPE if the placement process for interns is actively underway and it becomes important to get requests out to the students by a pressing deadline. However, the CPDC will still review and provide final approval on the internship site itself.

Criteria for Selection of Practicum Instructors

It is an acknowledged part of education in Social Work that the practicum experience is an extremely valuable component in social work education. In fact, the Council on Social Work Education has termed practicum the "signature pedagogy" of social work. Therefore, the choice of a practicum experience and the quality of the on-site educational supervision are of utmost importance. Practicum instruction is provided by a social work practitioner within an agency setting. The following are criteria established for the selection of an agency-based practicum instructor.

General Duties of All Practicum Instructors

Practicum instructors are vital in the provision of administrative and educational supervision for each student and are involved in the development of practicum assignments, coordination with faculty liaisons and in participation in practicum instructor workshops. Once the student arrives at the agency, the practicum instructor coordinates the student's orientation to the agency and the initiation of practicum assignments. Regular supervisory conferences, held on a weekly basis, may be supplemented with additional brief supervisory contacts, depending on the student's needs. Scheduling of faculty liaison visits to the agency will be the responsibility of the faculty liaison; however, coordination of students' and staff schedules within the agency for these visits is the responsibility of the practicum instructor.

Educational issues, as well as administrative issues, encountered in the supervision of students must be identified as early as possible. Whenever the practicum instructor is uncertain about the gravity of his/her observations, deliberation with the faculty liaison must be carried out as soon as possible. Unethical conduct on the part of the student should be reported immediately. (Please refer to policy on removal of students from practicum placement: Section 2.)

Procedures for Establishing Affiliation Agreements

The University of Texas System has developed standard forms for use by component schools (including schools of social work, nursing, pharmacy and others) to establish educational affiliations. The UT-SSW does not routinely require affiliation agreements which are typically long legal contracts between institutions. However, it is important that new community partners for practicum notify the Office of Practicum Education if your agency or program requires an affiliation agreement, we will be happy to coordinate between our Business Contracts office and your agency's correlated office.

Instructions for the process of establishing Affiliation Agreements

1. Contact the Office of Practicum Education to initiate the Affiliation Agreement process (ssw-practicum@austin.utexas.edu)
2. The University of Texas at Austin can provide your agency with an electronic standardized affiliation agreement form or your agency can provide The University with your system's form.
3. Once received in the OPE, the proposed and/or signed affiliation agreement is reviewed by the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education and Practicum Education Associate.
4. Pending agreed upon revisions between the OPE and the agency as needed; the affiliation agreement then moves to Business Contracts office for review, revision(s), and approval
5. Once the agency or institution and The University of Texas at Austin are in agreement, all parties including those authorized at the agency/institution and the Business Contracts office representatives sign approval. This process can take up to five months.
6. Once signed, an electronic copy of the fully executed document should be emailed to the OPE at: ssw-practicum@austin.utexas.edu

If you have any questions about the forms or procedures, please contact the

Practicum Education Associate in the Practicum Office at ssw-practicum@austin.utexas.edu or (512) 471-6207.

These agreements will legally establish a working relationship between your facility and The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work.

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Section 2

BSW and MSSW Foundation Placements, Processes and Practicum Expectations

Organization of the Foundation Practicum Experience

A generalist approach is the underlying foundation of the undergraduate and first practicum graduate sequences. This approach is seen as encompassing the eco-systems, developmental, and transtheoretical framework where students learn the importance of the interaction between the person and the environment in order to understand and better enhance the developmental and problem-solving capacities of clients, especially vulnerable populations. Students learn to identify and prioritize a wide range of needs of their client systems and to link clients with appropriate resources when needed. Within the generalist approach the student is also encouraged to consider the broader implications of client problems, to work to contribute to the improvement of human service systems and policies, and to identify needed resources for clients in order for them to reach their potential. The problem-solving approach to intervention at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels is also emphasized. Students learn to apply the problem-solving approach including the principles of data collection, problem identification, assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation to systems of various sizes. Students also learn the importance of research in the acquisition of practice knowledge, evaluation of systems, and evaluation of their own practice. Additionally, students learn evidence-based practice at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. The practicum occurs within the organizational context of an approved human service agency or program and includes both direct and indirect service assignments that are supervised by the practicum instructor, in consultation with the faculty liaison.

These faculty liaison instructors teach the one-hour/week practicum seminar as well. Students use the seminar to discuss and explore their attempts in practicum to make use of the learning they have acquired throughout the curriculum and in practice. The overall goals of the seminar are to assist the student with the practicum experience and strengthen the relationship between the classroom content and practicum. Another contribution of the seminar is to help socialize the student into the profession by discussion of common social work issues and sharing insights and experiences. The seminar assists students in problem solving around practicum issues by helping to identify and clarify broad practice issues such as client progress and worker responsibility, the connection between micro and macro practice, client self-determination, and worker's influence, etc.

The BSW Integrative Seminar and Practicum I and II Practicum objectives align with

the CSWE competencies and are expanded upon and operationalized in Section 4: Practicum Objectives and in the Practicum evaluation forms in Section 7: Forms. Students are assigned to the practicum classes by the OPE. Students are grouped in seminars depending on their agency assignment and student scheduling considerations. Usually, a variety of agencies and client populations are represented in each seminar, with an emphasis on a cluster of agencies dealing with a particular practice area or population such as child welfare, women's services, health, mental health, etc. This model allows students to become familiar with a variety of agencies and client populations, while also being exposed to more in-depth content in one specific area. Students benefit from this exposure to various agencies and populations and learn from each other. Having the same instructor teach practice, seminar, and liaison to the placement facilitates the linkage between the classroom and practicum and allows the faculty liaison to have extensive contact with the student and build knowledgeable working relationships.

Policy Statement on Agency Selection

Generalist practicum settings for BSW and first Practicum MSSW students are chosen with the following goals:

1. The student will have a practicum experience that supports the generalist approach as the underlying foundation for the practicum sequence.
2. The student will be in a practice setting that enhances their understanding of practice within the social work domain.
3. The agency will provide a real learning or educational experience for the student, rather than a work or observation experience. The student will have in-person contact with clients during their internship.
4. The agency will provide appropriate supervision for all BSW and first practicum MSSW student activities including the screening and selection of assignments geared to a beginning level student and regular ongoing feedback.

For more information on agency selection, see Section 1: Agency, and Becoming an Approved Practicum Setting as well as the Section 7: Practicum Expectations Checklist.

Required Responsibilities

The following are minimal expectations for the generalist placement:

1. Each student, with the assistance of the practicum instructor, will create a learning contract that will be reviewed by the faculty liaison during the first visit.
2. Each student will carry approximately three to six individual ongoing cases each semester as the setting allows. This is intended as a guideline and may vary based on agency and internship structure, e.g., where primary responsibilities center around intake

and assessment or crisis intervention. Placements are expected to provide in-person direct client opportunities and to consult with the faculty liaison and support the student in activities beyond the agency if client services are primarily provided remotely.

3. The agency should provide opportunities for intake/assessment.
4. Each student must have a group experience. The student will take part in planning, implementing, and co-facilitating a group during their placement. Students should bring and/or receive adequate support from the practicum instructor and training to facilitate or co-facilitate at least one multi-session group. Practicum instructors should consult with the faculty liaison and support the student in activities beyond the agency if group opportunities are limited within.
5. Each student must have an APP (Administration and Policy Practice) macro assignment during the year. This should be something that benefits the agency and is accomplished with the cooperation of the staff. That assignment has several phases, such as:
 - a. identification of a need within the agency or community.
 - b. consideration of policy implications of the project.
 - c. consideration of alternative approaches.
 - d. delineation of a plan, including methods and resources.
 - e. implementation of the plan.
 - f. coordination of the systems involved; and/or
 - g. evaluation of the process and outcomes.

Bachelor in Social Work Practicum Placements

The BSW practicum sequence consists of the practicum and the integrative seminar. The practicum sequence is typically undertaken in the student's final or final two semesters of their social work degree and entails 32-35 hours in practicum per week for one semester or 16-18 for two, for a total of 400 hours. The integrative seminar meets one hour weekly during the first semester of the BSW student's internship.

The BSW Practicum Placement Processes

The BSW practicum placement is determined in the following manner:

1. The folders of students approved by the BSW Program for Practicum are reviewed by the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education (ADPE).
2. Students receive a practicum questionnaire the long academic semester prior to their planned internships requesting specific information regarding past work experiences, volunteer activities, limitations or specific challenges regarding participation in practicum (transportation, personal factors, etc.), and areas of

interest. A practicum file is established incorporating this data plus pertinent material from the admission to the major process. clinical faculty assigned to teach the course review all of the materials.

3. Approved agencies are surveyed for the upcoming semester and submit requests for interns with specific internship descriptions including specifics related to responsibilities, location, and stipends. The Office of Practicum Education (OPE) solicits agencies and practicum instructors for requests for BSW interns in February and August.
4. Students are oriented to the placement process, meet in small groups for advising with clinical faculty dedicated to the BSW Practicum program, and submit their top seven choices for practicum agency placements online. The OPE works before and during the placement process to develop and secure appropriate BSW level internships at a variety of human service agencies and programs.
5. BSW designated clinical faculty liaisons, the practicum education associate and the ADPE meet to match students with their top choices based on input from students via the online agency selection, advising, the practicum questionnaire, and student submitted resumes.
6. The student is matched with an agency, practicum instructor, faculty liaison and corresponding seminar through a collaborative meeting with the faculty liaisons who advised the students, the ADPE, and the practicum education associate. Typically, the faculty liaison and seminar leader is the same person.
7. The OPE emails confirmation of the placement to the student, the agency-identified practicum instructor, and the faculty liaison confirming the student's name, weekly schedule, and dates of placement. To finalize the placement, the student meets with their assigned practicum instructor the semester prior to interning and collects signed Practicum Placement Expectations form (see Section 7: Forms).
8. At orientation the student is assigned to a practicum seminar and the OPE collects malpractice insurance.
9. An orientation to practicum is conducted by clinical faculty liaison assigned to the intern generally at the beginning of the first week of classes.
10. Practicum typically begins the first week of classes. Students may not begin accruing practicum hours until they have submitted their malpractice insurance payments, of which they are notified at least one month prior to the start of practicum.

Atypical Placement Processes

The majority of students will be placed using the regular placement procedures. A minority, however, will find placements using an atypical placement process, either work-based or domestic long distance (DLD). Neither of these is encouraged but students are allowed to apply for work-based or DLD when circumstances are compelling, e.g., the need for ongoing income or to return home to care for an ailing parent. Work-based and DLD placements at the BSW level both require that the student initiate the matching process 1) as a practical matter for identifying options beyond the School's established intern site relationships and 2) as a part of the screening process for students since the ability to initiate, navigate, and establish new internships demonstrates a level of independence desired in atypical internship arrangements.

MSSW first practicum students are not eligible for DLD internships despite their status as foundation interns. MSSW first practicum interns may apply for work-based placements under compelling circumstances but are only allowed one work-based placement during their program of study.

Work-Based Placements

Rationale for Policy

With decreasing financial aid for students and increasing educational costs, the need to utilize the work setting as a practicum placement may be an option to be considered on an individual basis. CSWE's standards address the need to maintain the educational focus of the practicum experience and to ensure the uniformity of administration and utilization of practicum placements throughout the bachelor's and master's programs. In addition, the Council's standards stress that such agencies commit the necessary resources to facilitate the students' progress in the educational program even though the student may also be an employee. CSWE standards also require that addressing educational competencies for practicum be the foundation of decisions around a student's practicum experience.

Work-based placements may overlap with existing employment responsibilities but at least 120 hours of the internship hours must provide new and different learning experiences beyond existing employment responsibilities. As examples, for a student required to complete 200 hours/semester in practicum, 60 must be within the employment agency but separate and apart from existing employment responsibilities. For 500/400 block hours in practicum, 120 hours must provide new and different experiences. The purpose of the 120-hour overlap is to acknowledge and deepen the learning available in existing employment responsibilities while simultaneously opening new opportunities beyond the scope of the job position. Examples of new and different responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attendance at task group meetings, e.g., Board meetings, Community Networks, etc.; Group planning and facilitation.
- Specialized trainings and instruction.
- Practice responsibilities in a different agency program.

In addition, students are required to have a new and different educational supervisor

as their dedicated practicum instructor. Special attention is given to protecting the learner's role and navigating and minimizing the potential conflicts of interest associated with dual relationships. Students are allowed one work-based placement over the course of their enrollment at the UT-SSW to allow a broader base of educational experience. Work-based placements must provide new and different learning experiences with a new and different supervisor. Special attention is given to protecting the learner's role and navigating and minimizing the potential conflicts of interest associated with dual relationships.

Processing the Request

The student interested in a work-based placement is required to:

- 1) Meet with the ADPE to discuss options for initiating a work-based placement and to review the requirements outlined in the Work-Based Proposal form (see Section 7: Forms) as soon as possible in the semester prior to the internship.
- 2) Meet with the current employment supervisor and proposed practicum instructor to review and complete the Work-Based Proposal form.
- 3) Submit an unsigned draft of the proposal to the ADPE for review and feedback.
- 4) Submit revised and signed proposal to the ADPE for final approval.

Once the draft proposal is submitted to the Office of Practicum Education, the ADPE reaches out to the proposed agency staff to review the expectations for the internship. The ADPE review may take up to 30 days to connect with the agency. This process is time-consuming for the student, for the agency considering such a proposal, and for the OPE. Every effort should be made to initiate work on the proposal as early as possible.

If the agency is new to the OPE, the agency will need to complete the regular placement approval process including a site visit from members of the Community Partnership Development Committee. If approved, the practicum instructor will need to complete the requisite practicum instructor training either in person prior to the semester's start or online as directed by the OPE.

Students will be expected to follow the steps in the placement process, including attendance at informational and orientation meetings, until proposals are complete and approved. Students whose internships are finalized for a work-based placement are not eligible for offerings through the regular placement process. See Section 7: Forms for more information.

Domestic Long Distance Practicum Placements

Rationale for policy

For a social work student's first internship, the UT-SSW seeks first to place students in established internships in the central Texas area where faculty liaison, practicum instructor, and agency resources are most readily available and the strength of the placement is best known and supervised. Under compelling circumstances as deemed by the ADPE, an undergraduate student may petition for support to initiate a domestic long

distance (DLD) internship beyond 60 miles of the University and within the contiguous U.S.

For placements in the central Texas area, students are required to work through the OPE to allow the OPE to explore new options. For DLD placements, it is just the opposite; students are required to take the initiative to set up their own placements in coordination with the OPE. In fact, a student's ability to do so is in itself a screening tool for student appropriateness for a DLD placement.

Students considering a Domestic Long Distance Practicum placement are required to:

1. Meet with the ADPE to discuss the possibility of a DLD placement to determine if the circumstances warrant approval.
2. Submit the required two letters of recommendation found in the back of the BSW Undergraduate Guide to Practicum. The additional standard of proof is because the student will be further beyond many of the school's resources in case the need for additional support arises.
3. Select potential placement agencies and determine their openness to hosting a UT-SHSSW intern. Students will need to meet the educational objectives and demonstrate the competencies outlined in their practicum syllabus. The syllabus is available on the school website <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/> and it is the student's responsibility to provide this to the agencies.
4. Once the potential agency contacts have been solidified, students should email their contact information to the ADPE who will follow up with the requisite paperwork to determine the agency and the placements' ability to support the placement. Affiliation agreements with medical institutions can take up to five months to finalize and students are therefore encouraged to initiate contact as early as possible in the semester prior to practicum.
5. Understand that placement choices will be limited based on available approved agencies locality. Placements in some areas may not be feasible due to limited resources and availability of approved agencies.
6. Understand that if the DLD placement option fails to solidify, the student is subject to the regular placement process and may have to deal with the consequences of a late start due to the DLD pursuit.
7. If a DLD placement falls through, the student on location bears the primary responsibility for securing a new placement in coordination with the faculty liaison and ADPE; and
8. Understand that all DLD placements are held to the same standards as those in the central Texas area and the decision for final approval rests solely with the ADPE.

The OPE may consult with students and agency contacts via phone or in person and will communicate decisions via email with both the student and the agency. The ADPE will assign a faculty liaison prior to the start of the practicum semester. The faculty liaison will be a resource, support and source of accountability via phone and email and will typically visit the student once during the course of their internship.

Eligibility

Students must be in good standing with the school in order to be approved for DLD placements. Students cannot be in the midst of an unresolved official level review process unless they have the explicit permission of their review members. Students are required to submit two letters of recommendation from UT-SSW faculty members as evidence of their potential to successfully complete a DLD placement. Reference forms can be found in section eight of this guide.

The additional standard of proof is because the student will be further beyond many of the school's resources in case the need for additional support arises.

Recommendations for finding potential domestic long distance placement agencies

First, students should select a target area that matches their interest. This may be an area of practice, i.e., wilderness camps, or a geographic area, i.e., a student's home state. To find agencies in the determined target area, students are encouraged to start broad. Use the United Way website for that community and other internet resources or contact members in professional networks in that area like the National Association of Social Work local branch. Students may email the practicum education associate at [ssw- practicum@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ssw-practicum@austin.utexas.edu) and they will provide a list of agencies in that area that OPE has used before if UT-SSW students have interned in that area. Please know that these are not active placement sites but leads to assist students getting started. Contacts often change and the school's relationships with long distance agencies are typically less current than local ones. The Director of the DiNitto Career Center can also be a good resource to help students get started due to that office's extensive social service agency connections around the nation.

After researching the agency in general, initial student contact is often via email with a phone follow up. Based on that communication, a student may follow up with a hard copy cover letter and resume (supplementing one that may have been sent electronically) and/or interview plans.

Students should narrow down agency options to a reasonable number. Students should not interview at a large number of agencies since this takes agency resources and can erroneously lead agencies to expect the interns' services when the student may still be in the "shopping" phase of the search. Interviews should be reserved for serious inquiries only.

Liaison Activities

A liaison visit is a scheduled meeting with at least the faculty liaison, practicum instructor and intern for at least 30 minutes and may include additional

staff/supervisors.

A liaison visit can happen in three different ways:

1. Site visit = in person, face-to-face, any agreed upon location
2. Remote video conference visit
3. Remote audio conference visit

The default option for a conference visit is video due to the value of the additional non-verbal communication included. Audio is a secondary option.

Liaison visits, assignment due dates for Full Block: Fall or Spring, 400 hours in one semester: Two liaison visits, one site and one conference.

1. Weeks 1-5: Learning contract collected
2. Weeks 6-10: Midterm evaluations collected by the OPE.
3. Weeks 11-15: Final evaluation and self-reflection narrative submitted to the OPE

Liaison visits, assignment due dates for Extended Block: Fall/Spring and Spring/Summer, 400 hours over two semesters: Three liaison visits, two site and one conference, one each per third of the internship coinciding with midterm and final evaluation due dates.

1. Weeks 2-8: Learning contract collected
2. Weeks 12-20: Midterm evaluations collected by no later than the first day of summer session.
3. Weeks 22-30: Final evaluation and self-reflection narrative submitted to the OPE.

For full-block, midterm falls in October and March. For extended, midterm falls in November/December or April/May.

Any of the parties (student, practicum instructor, faculty liaison) may request additional liaison visits including site visits. The faculty liaison may also choose to conduct a third site visit in-person especially if it is a new placement, new practicum instructor, or if there are other compelling reasons. The faculty liaison will determine the ordering of site or conference liaison visits with input from the practicum instructor and the intern.

Process recordings

1. The intern must be an active party in the PR.
2. The intern submits the PR to the practicum instructor for comments in time to get that to the faculty liaison with comments for review pre-and post mid-internship. The faculty liaison returns the PR with their additional comments to the student and practicum instructor. Two PR total.
3. The practicum instructor or faculty liaison may choose to substitute a video role play

- in lieu of a PR only with the approval of the liaison.
4. May require additional PRs as needed.

Midterm evaluations are collected midway through the internship. Final evaluations are submitted using the online evaluation links at the end of the internship. For full-block, midterm falls in October and March. For extended midterm falls in November/December or April/May. Self-reflection narratives are collected at the end of the internship for full and extended block and are designed to be shared among the intern, practicum instructor and faculty liaison. The faculty liaison should review intern timesheets at the liaison visits and collect them at the end of the internship. If the intern fails to submit a signed final evaluation, self-reflection narrative, or timesheets before grades are due, the faculty liaison may assign an incomplete or a grade earned depending on the circumstances around the delay. More information about each of these educational tools is available in Section 1 and Section 7 of this guide.

Master of Science in Social Work First Practicum Placement

The first Practicum placement occurs in the first year for full-time students and in the second year for part-time or full-time extended students. Practicum is taken on a concurrent plan that provides practicum instruction activities 16-20 hours per week during both semesters for a total of 400 hours. In addition, students take a three- hour practice class and spend an hour weekly in a practicum seminar held at the school. It is felt that the concurrent practicum plan best addresses the need of beginning social work students in these ways:

1. It provides the maximum potential for coordination between class and practicum instruction, emphasizing the relationship between knowledge and practice.
2. It provides an early opportunity for students to relate theory and apply evidence-based practice in professional social work settings with varied populations.
3. It is a format within which students have a great opportunity to develop interactional and analytical skills by virtue of having a practicum placement of longer duration, covering two semesters.
4. It allows students new to social work time and opportunity to understand and develop a social work identity.

The First Practicum Placement Processes

The first practicum placement is determined in the following manner:

1. The application materials of incoming students are reviewed by the assistant dean for practicum education (ADPE) and

clinical faculty.

2. After acceptance into the program, students receive a practicum questionnaire requesting specific information regarding past work experiences, volunteer activities, limitations, or specific challenges regarding participation in practicum (transportation, personal factors, etc.), and areas of interest. A practicum file is established incorporating this data plus pertinent material from the admissions process. clinical faculty reviews all the materials.
3. Approved agencies are surveyed for the upcoming semester and submit requests for interns with specific internship descriptions including specifics related to responsibilities, location, and stipends. The Office of Practicum Education solicits agencies and practicum instructors for requests for MSSW first practicum interns in May.
4. Students are divided into class cohorts, and a faculty liaison is assigned the students' files. During the match process, the ADPE and faculty liaisons are responsible for reviewing the students' materials and advocating for the best internship match and diverse cohort makeup allowable given the constraints of placements available and student body makeup.
5. A match is made with the agencies that best seems to meet individual student's learning needs based on prior experience, interests and selected concentration.
6. The faculty liaison assigns the student to an agency and practicum instructor. The faculty liaison and seminar leader typically is the same person
7. The placement is finalized with the agency confirming the student's name, weekly schedule, dates of placement, and faculty liaison.
8. Once the agency has confirmed the internship, the faculty liaisons notify the students of their placement, typically two-four weeks prior to the start of practicum.
9. The faculty liaisons assigned to the interns conduct a two-day Practicum Engagement Seminar after MSSW orientation and prior to classes in which the students are oriented to practicum.
10. Practicum typically begins the first day of classes. Students may not begin accruing practicum hours until they have submitted both their signed practicum placement expectations form see Section 7: Forms and their malpractice insurance payments.

Liaison Activities

A liaison visit is a scheduled meeting with at least the faculty liaison, practicum instructor, and intern for at least 30 minutes and may include additional staff/supervisors.

A liaison visit can happen in three different ways:

1. Site visit = in person, face-to-face, any agreed upon location
2. Remote video conference visit
3. Remote audio conference visit

The default option for a conference visit is video due to the value of the additional non-verbal communication included. Audio is a secondary option.

Liaison visits

Fall semester: Two site visits. practicum instructor may request an additional liaison visit if needed. faculty liaisons may also choose to conduct a third site visit especially if it is a new placement, new practicum instructor, or if there are other compelling reasons.

1. Weeks 1-5: Learning contract collected.
2. Weeks 6-10: Mid-term evaluation collected and submitted to OPE no later than October 31.
3. Weeks 11-15: Final evaluation for semester collected and submitted to OPE no later than first day of spring semester.

Spring semester: Two site visits, one each per half of the semester.

1. Weeks 1-8: Learning contract collected.
2. Weeks 9-14: Mid-term evaluation collected to the OPE no later than March 31.
3. Final evaluation and self-reflective narrative submitted to the OPE no later than the first day of the summer semester.

Process recordings

1. The intern must be an active party in the PR.
2. The intern submits the PR to the practicum instructor for comments in time to get that to the faculty liaison with comments for review. The faculty liaison returns the PR with their additional comments to the student and practicum instructor.
3. Total of four over the fall and spring semesters.
4. The practicum instructor or faculty liaison may choose to substitute a video role play in lieu of a PR only with approval from the liaison.
5. May require additional PRs as needed.

Self-reflection narratives are collected at the end of the semester along with the evaluations and are designed to be shared between the intern, practicum instructor and faculty liaison. Narratives should be turned into the OPE with final evaluations. The faculty liaison should review intern timesheets at the liaison visits and collect them at the end of the internship. If the intern fails to submit a signed final evaluation, self-reflection narrative, or timesheets before grades are due, the faculty liaison may assign an incomplete or a grade earned depending on the circumstances around the delay. More information about each of these educational tools is available in Section 1: Graduate Practicum Requirements and Section 7: Forms of this guide.

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SECTION 3

CONCENTRATION PLACEMENTS, PROCESSES AND PRACTICUM EXPECTATIONS

Organization of the Concentration Practicum Experience

The final practicum consists of two courses. The practicum sequence is based on a block practicum plan which requires that students be in practicum approximately 36-40 hours a week, for a total of 500 clock hours in one semester. Students remain in the same agency for the duration of the practicum. Students may also elect to take an extended block plan that requires approximately 16-26 hours per week for two semesters. The final practicum experience is more individualized based on the student's chosen concentration, needs, experience, and interests.

Students study within one of two advanced, specialized concentrations – either Clinical or Administration and Policy Practice (APP). The final practicum experience is concentration specific and the majority of the work in the internship should be specific to the assigned specialization, either Clinical or APP. Internships that offer a significant minority of cross-specialization opportunities should advertise that and clarify responsibilities in the interview process.

The final practicum placement, which will be in the student's chosen concentration area, is arranged for each student with the following goals:

1. The student is an emerging professional. This is the transition semester between classroom/education and practicum practice/professional identification.
2. The student should take a very active part in determining their learning and professional goals and this should be reflected in the selection of a practicum setting.
3. The student should accept professional responsibility for the interview process in affiliating with an agency/organization.
4. The school accepts a more advisory/broker role in this placement.
5. The school helps both the student and the agency clarify what is expected from this final placement.
6. Placement is an interactive process between student, school and agency, with agency and student taking more active roles than in the first placement.

It is the student's responsibility to register for the required course(s) for practicum including the concurrent SW385T Capstone course, which is only offered in the spring. The Capstone course builds upon all previous courses including practicum internships and is not a practicum -centric seminar. Students, especially post-BSW students, may take additional coursework during the summer of an extended internship.

The educational objectives for practicum align with the Council on Social Work Education Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) competencies and represent the continued expectations for concentration practicum. Building on foundation practicum competency levels, they serve as a guide to learning, teaching, and evaluation of the students' competence and may be found in Section 4: Objectives and in the practicum evaluations in Section 7: Forms.

Policy Statement on Agency Selection

The MSSW final practicum placement for each student is chosen with the following goals:

1. The placement will support the student's concentration focused learning: either Clinical or Administration and Policy Practice.
2. The agency will respect the advanced student status and provide educational challenges sufficient to their standing as a final practicum student and emerging professional.
3. The placement will balance the student's need for increased independence and agency with their continued need for professional guidance, mentoring, and social work supervision.

For more information on agency selection, see Section 1: Agency, and Becoming an Approved Practicum Setting as well as the Section 7: Practicum Expectations Checklist.

Required Responsibilities

For final practicum, the placements align with the student's Clinical or APP concentration. In the placement process, the interests/needs of the student and the task/needs of the agency are the primary criteria for selection. Therefore, the assignments vary from agency to agency, student to student.

Course objectives that must be met for this placement are contained in the course syllabi and the competencies and related behaviors are further expanded upon and operationalized in the practicum evaluation forms in Section 7: Forms. The assignments will be structured in such a way that the student will have the opportunity to demonstrate all the required competencies.

The majority of the internship will be focused on advanced work appropriate to an emerging professional and within their specialized concentration of Clinical or APP.

The Final Practicum Placement Processes

Final practicum is offered in both one semester, full block and two semester, extended block, both for a total of 500 hours. There are benefits to each from which the student is allowed to choose. All students, including post- BSWs, will have completed their preparation for final practicum by finishing their course prerequisites. Accordingly, all students have the opportunity to be well prepared for the fully immersive experience of full-time practicum in one semester. This 40-hour per week experience also approximates the full-time professional positions they will be trained to undertake upon graduation and is therefore a valuable ramp up to employment in the community as a social worker. Agencies also structure their internship offerings to match the consistency of hosting a full-time intern, and this adds to the range of learning opportunities available, e.g., crisis intervention where daily attendance is beneficial to clients and learning alike.

As higher education costs have increased, students are more often seeking paid employment during their schooling to support their education and other expenses. Offering extended practicum at approximately 20-25 hours per week over two semesters allow these students and others with extracurricular responsibilities, e.g., family responsibilities, greater access to the MSSW program which draws a more diverse student body and therefore a more enriched academic learning environment. As happens for full block placements, agencies structure their internships to match the extended nature of the two-semester students which allows, for example, longer- term counseling settings to engage interns more meaningfully over the course of a fall/spring internship and opens up internship opportunities in the summer. Having both a concentrated learning experience and an extended option also addresses the different learning needs of students who may thrive at different paces.

Regular Placement Process for Final Practicum

The following procedures are used in the final placement:

1. Students attend mandatory informational meetings about the placement process.
2. A list of available internships, from approved agencies, with brief descriptions of each program and their practicum placement offering is made available to students.
3. Students attend the Agency practicum Fair to help measure agency “fit”.
4. Students prepare a written statement of their educational goals for placement.
5. Students prepare a professional quality resume with the recommended aid of the DiNitto Center for Career Services.
6. In individualized and small group advising sessions, students and clinical faculty liaisons discuss resumes, educational goals and prioritize agency/organizations for the interview process.
7. Students rank prioritized agency setting preferences.
8. The Office of Practicum Education (OPE) collects, organizes and delivers student resumes and educational goals to the agencies.
9. The OPE sends resumes and educational objectives to agencies.

10. The OPE sends information to the students to set up an interview with the agency.
11. Students take the initiative to contact, interview and follow up with potential agency placements in a professional manner.
12. If additional interviews are necessary, the students work with the OPE to facilitate these as needed.
13. After an agency has offered a placement and the student has accepted, the student is responsible for entering the placement in the OPE database.
14. The students are oriented to practicum by the OPE.
15. Students are assigned and agencies notified of their faculty liaisons for confirmed placements. The students are given detailed information and access to agency requests for interns during the mandatory informational meeting in early fall which outlines the above procedures, giving deadline dates for each activity.

Atypical Placement Processes for Final Practicum

The majority of students will be placed using the regular placement process. There are also opportunities for placements using the atypical placement process, which includes early placement opportunities, work-based, student initiated including dual degree and domestic long distance, and international placements. Post-BSW students who begin the program in the summer are eligible and oriented to all atypical processes except the early placement process due to time constraints.

Early Placement Opportunities

The school partners with several agencies that initiate an early placement process due to a variety of agency-based reasons including but not limited to out of town status, competitive placement settings and/or the needs of the population, i.e., long-term counseling. Students will have the opportunity to attend informational meetings about these specific placements, their timetables, opportunities and expectations in early spring of the year prior to what would otherwise be their regular spring placement. Agencies must present compelling reasons as determined by the ADPE of benefit to the students to be eligible for the early placement process including significant stipends. Students in this process finalize their placements in the spring prior to their final practicum internships are relieved of their responsibilities and rights in all other placement processes by accepting these internships. If circumstances change, the student is expected to coordinate with the ADPE to determine next steps for finding a suitable internship.

Work-based Placements

Rationale for Policy

With decreasing financial aid for students and increasing educational costs, the need to utilize the work setting as a practicum placement may become an option to

be considered on an individual basis. The CSWE's standards address the need to maintain the educational focus of the practicum experience, to differentiate between job and practicum activities, and to ensure the uniformity of administration and utilization of practicum placements throughout the bachelor's and master's programs. In addition, the council's standards stress that such agencies commit the necessary resources to facilitate the students' progress in the educational program even though the student may also be an employee. CSWE standards also require that coverage of educational competencies for practicum be the foundation of decisions around a student's practicum experience.

Work-based placements must provide new and different learning experiences with a new and different supervisor. Special attention is given to protecting the learner's role and navigating and minimizing the potential conflicts of interest associated with dual relationships.

Processing the Request

The student interested in a work-based placement is required to:

1. Meet with the ADPE to discuss options for initiating a work-based placement and to review the requirements outlined in the Work-Based Proposal form (see Section 7: Forms) as soon as possible in the summer or semester prior to the internship.
2. Meet with the current employment supervisor and proposed practicum instructor to review and complete the Work-Based Proposal form.
3. Submit an unsigned draft of the proposal to the ADPE for review and feedback.
4. Submit revised and signed proposal to the ADPE for final approval.

Once the draft proposal is submitted to the Office of Practicum Education, the ADPE reaches out to the proposed agency staff to review the expectations for the internship. The ADPE review may take up to 30 days to connect with the agency. This process is time-consuming for the student, for the agency considering such a proposal, and for the OPE. Every effort should be made to initiate work on the proposal as early as possible.

If the agency is new to the OPE, the agency will need to complete the regular placement approval process including a site visit from members of the Community Partnership Development Committee. If approved, the practicum instructor will need to complete the requisite practicum instructor training either in person prior to the semester's start or online as directed by the OPE.

Students will be expected to follow the steps in the placement process, including attendance at informational and orientation meetings, until proposals are complete and approved. Students whose internships are finalized for a work-based placement are not eligible for offerings through the regular placement process. See Section 7: Forms for Work-Based Placement Proposal Request form.

Student Initiated Placements: Dual Degree and Domestic Long Distance Practicum

The MSSW Program offers six dual degree programs, where students can earn an MSSW and a Masters of Business Administration, Divinity, Public Affairs, Public Health, Arts in Latin American Studies, or a Doctor of Jurisprudence. Dual degree (DD) students are the only final practicum students allowed to initiate their own central Texas internships because they may have needs unique to their programs of study. The majority of dual degree students choose to enter the regular fall placement process and are guaranteed multiple options that fulfill the requirements of both their degree plans. Their internship development process parallels the domestic long distance (DLD) placement process.

Students come to The University of Texas at Austin from all over the country and our graduates are employed around the globe. The School of Social Work recognizes the importance of providing flexibility for students seeking internships in the areas of expertise or geography important to their careers. For that reason, the school works with students to support them in seeking and developing domestic long-distance placements. The international placement process is separate and distinct from the DLD placement process and is addressed immediately following this subsection. The placement process for Hawai'i, Alaska, and U.S. territories' is more closely modeled after the international process and is subject to additional fees. Students interested in placements in these non- contiguous states and U.S. territories need to notify the ADPE approximately one year prior the desired placement semester.

The school does offer some out-of-town placements through the early selection process and in the regular placement packets that lists agencies available, but those are considered separate and apart from the DLD process. The term DLD placement is inclusive of all student-initiated placements beyond 60 miles from the UT-SSW and indicates that students in those sites are eligible for taking associated classes via long distance means and therefore not required to attend traditional classroom gatherings.

For placements in the central Texas area, students are required to work through the OPE and to allow the OPE to explore new options. For DD/DLD placements, it is just the opposite. Students are required to take the initiative to set up their own placements in coordination with the OPE. In fact, student's ability to do so is in itself a screening tool for student appropriateness for a student-initiated placement.

Students considering initiating a placement through the Dual Degree or Domestic Long Distance Practicum placement process are required to:

1. Attend the DD/DLD orientation during the spring semester in the year prior to the desired spring placement.
2. Submit the required three letters of recommendation found in Section 7: Forms and receive approval to move forward in this process from the ADPE

by the advertised mid-summer date.

3. Select potential placement agencies and determine their openness to hosting a UT-SSW intern. To be a viable placement site, agencies must provide educational opportunities specific to the student's specialization in the program and otherwise meet all the placement requirements. MSSW candidates are required to complete a specialization specific placement (Clinical or APP) under the supervision of an on-site MSSW with at least two-years, post- graduate experience and students are to receive two hours of supervision a week, one in individual weekly sessions with their practicum instructor. Students are required to meet the educational objectives and demonstrate the competencies outlined in their practicum syllabi. These syllabi are available on the school website <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/> and it is the student's responsibility to provide these to the agencies.
4. Once the potential agency contacts have been solidified, students are required to email their contact information to the ADPE who will follow up with the requisite paperwork to determine the agency and the placements' ability to support the student in meeting their educational objectives and demonstrating competencies. Affiliation agreements with medical institutions can take up to five months to finalize and students are therefore encouraged to initiate contact as soon after the orientation to atypical practicum as possible.
5. Understand that placement choices will be limited based on available approved agencies locally. Placements in some areas may not be feasible due to limited resources and availability of approved agencies.
6. Understand that if the DD/DLD placement option fails to solidify, the student is subject to the regular placement process and may have to deal with the consequences of a late start and subsequent reduced number of Austin area options due to the DD/DLD pursuit.
7. If a DLD placement falls through, the student on location bears the primary responsibility for securing a new placement in coordination with the faculty liaison and ADPE; and
8. Understand that all student-initiated placements are held to the same standards and approval processes as those initiated by the OPE and the decision for final approval rests solely with the ADPE.

Students must have initiated all DD/DLD placement options in time for the OPE to have contact information for one proposed agency by a publicized mid-summer date (e.g., July 15). This is to allow DD/DLD placements to be finalized prior to the start of the regular placement process.

The OPE may consult with students and agency contacts via phone or in person and will communicate decisions via email with both the student and the agency. The ADPE will assign a faculty liaison prior to the start of the spring semester. The faculty liaison will be a resource, support and source of accountability via phone and email and will typically visit the student once during the course of

their internship.

Eligibility

At the master's level, only final practicum students are eligible for DLD placements. Students must be in good standing with the school as evidenced by three positive letters of recommendation and no active academic probation in order to be approved for DLD placements. Students cannot be in the midst of an unresolved official level review process unless they have the explicit permission of their review members. Students are required to submit three letters of recommendation from UT-SSW faculty members as evidence of their potential to successfully complete a DLD placement. Reference forms can be found in section eight of this guide.

The additional standard of proof is because the student will be further beyond many of the school's resources in case the need for additional support arises.

Recommendations for finding potential domestic long distance placement agencies

The following is recommended procedure to assist students in finding a suitable DLD agency placement.

First, students should select a target area that matches their interest. This may be an area of practice, i.e., wilderness camps, or a geographic area, i.e., a student's home state. After researching the agency in general, initial student contact is often via email with a phone follow up. Based on that communication, a student may follow up with a hard copy cover letter and resume (supplementing one that may have been sent electronically) and/or interview plans.

Students should narrow down agency options to a reasonable number. Students should not interview at a large number of agencies since this takes agency resources and can erroneously lead agencies to expect the interns' services when the student may still be in the exploratory phase of the search. Interviews should be reserved for serious inquiries only. Many students set up interviews or meetings over the summer prior to their spring internship while they are home, (visiting family).

International Placements

Human needs do not recognize national boundaries, and social work has a long and growing history of global response. Further, the School recognizes and values the oftentimes uniquely transformative nature of international placements and the educational advancements those provide social work students.

At the master's level, only final practicum students are eligible for international placements. Students must be in good standing with the school in order to be approved for international internships and beyond that must be deemed by the International Committee to be a good ambassador on behalf of the School, the United States and the Social Work profession. International internships are a

privilege, not a right, for students. The school retains the right at all stages of the placement process to deny a student access to, or continuation of, an international placement.

Prerequisites

1. All coursework must be completed by Spring Semester excluding: the Capstone course, Practicum Education III and IV.
2. Weekly attendance in the fall to the International Practicum Seminar in preparation for International Practicum Placement.
3. Completed recommendations by faculty liaison, practicum instructor and UTSHSSW faculty other than the liaison.
4. A survey of UT-SSW faculty and staff.
5. A positive recommendation by the International Committee.
6. Fulfilling all requirements of the International Office including restricted region and health clearances.
7. Payment of a non-refundable fee, which is required to cover associated costs to the school for international placement.

International placements must meet the same educational standards as all practicum placements and are vetted by UT faculty and/or associates based on the additional following criteria:

1. Educational soundness
The student is able to meet the objectives for their practicum class qualitatively and quantitatively.
2. Benefit to the School and the Agency
The student's placement and the relationship with the University seeks to provide a real benefit to the agency comparable in value to the student's educational gain. The placement aligns with research, practicum and/or other scholarly endeavors already engaged in or under development by the school, and the agency's relationship with the school and the student has the potential to be of lasting benefit to the clients and purpose of the agency. The most desired working relationships are those that can provide sustained mutual benefit and uniquely compelling learning opportunities not necessarily found in the U.S.
3. Feasibility
The student will be able to communicate at a proficient level with agency staff, clients and University faculty. This requires sufficient language skills for the population and reliable internet access for the students' long-distance learning courses. Feasibility also includes responsible allocation of the school's fiscal resources, i.e., placing multiple students at one site or clustering locations/travel.

4. Safety

Recognizing that 100% safety is never guaranteed, the school, through the International Committee and in collaboration with the University's International Office seeks to identify risks and ameliorating factors by assessing the site(s)/city/region/country's: security, crime, infrastructure, medical issues/resources and transportation issues. Some international locations may therefore be considered too risky for placement of students.

The school offers a variable slate of international placement options built on years of international collaboration.

Student-initiated international placements are not supported due to our commitment to international agencies that meet the school's criteria for mutually beneficial and sustained partnerships.

The International Committee decides all placement proposals and student candidate applications the summer prior to the spring final practicum experience. Details of this process are provided in information sessions that begin in the February prior to the January international practicum start.

Liaison Activities

A faculty liaison is assigned to each intern and practicum instructor in placement as a resource, support, and source of accountability. The final practicum faculty liaison is typically less involved in the student's internship than in the generalist experience. This is because students have completed most of their graduate coursework, developed a stronger sense of social work identity, learned more effective use of supervision, and are transitioning from the role of graduate students into emerging professionals.

A liaison visit is a scheduled meeting with at least the faculty liaison, practicum instructor and intern for at least 30 minutes and may include additional staff/supervisors.

A liaison visit can happen in three different ways:

1. Site visit = in person, face-to-face, any agreed upon location
2. Remote video conference visit
3. Remote audio conference visit

The default option for a conference visit is video due to the value of additional non-verbal communication included. Audio is a secondary option.

Liaison visits, assignment due dates for Full Block, Spring only, 500 hours in one semester: Two liaison visits, one site and one conference, one each per half of the semester.

1. Weeks 1-5: Learning contract collected.
2. Weeks 6-10: Midterm evaluation collected by the OPE no later than March 31.
3. Weeks 11-15: Final evaluation and self-reflective narrative for semester collected and submitted to OPE no later than the first day of the summer semester.

Liaison visits, assignment due date for Extended Block, Spring/Summer, 500 hours over two semesters: Three total liaison visits, two site and one conference, one per each third of the internship.

1. Weeks 2-8: Learning contract collected, no later than spring break.
2. Weeks 12-20: Midterm evaluations collected and submitted to OPE, no later than the first day of the summer semester.
3. Weeks 22-30: Final evaluation and self-reflective narrative for internship collected and submitted to the OPE, no later than the first day of the fall semester.

The faculty liaison will determine the ordering and timing of site or conference liaison visits with input from practicum instructor and intern. Any of the parties (student, practicum instructor, faculty liaison) may request additional liaison visits including site visits. The faculty liaison may also choose to conduct a third site visit in-persons especially if it is a new placement, new practicum instructor, or if there are other compelling reasons. The faculty liaison will determine the ordering of site or conference liaisons visits with input from the practicum instructor and the intern. The last day of extended practicum is the last day of summer classes.

Atypical internship liaison activities

Work-based and dual degree placements should be liaised to according to their full or extended format

The ADPE will assign faculty liaisons according to need for early selection agencies that have intern requirements before practicum begins in January.

Internships 60 miles or further should be liaised with according to their full or extended format. However, since student-initiated domestic long-distance placements are typically new or newly revived internships for the UT-SSW program, liaisons are required to conduct site visits prior to the mid-term evaluation due dates.

International placements require the same expectations as full-block placements with additional requirements for weekly journals and the additional use of video or audio calls directly with students and/or practicum instructors as necessary to

support and/or augment social work education abroad. Site visits are required prior to the mid-term evaluation due dates.

Process recordings

1. The intern must be an active party in the PR.
2. The intern submits the PR to the practicum instructor for comments in time to get that to the faculty liaison with comments for review pre-and post-mid-internship. The faculty liaison returns the PR with their additional comments to the student and practicum instructor.
3. Two PRs due to faculty liaison.
4. Practicum instructor/faculty liaison may choose to substitute a video role play in lieu of a PR only with permission from the liaison.
5. May require additional PRs as needed.

Midterm evaluations are collected midway through the internship. Final evaluations are submitted using the online evaluation links at the end of the internship. For full-block, midterm falls in March. For extended, midterm falls in April/May. Self-reflection narratives are collected at the end of the internship for full and extended block and are designed to be shared among the intern, practicum instructor and faculty liaison. The faculty liaison should review intern timesheets at the liaison visits and collect them at the end of the internship. If the intern fails to submit a signed final evaluation, self-reflective narrative, or timesheets before grades are due, the faculty liaison may assign an incomplete or a grade earned depending on the circumstances around the delay. More information about each of these educational tools is available in the Section 1: Graduate Practicum Requirements and Section 7: Forms of this guide.

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Section 4

General Practicum Policies

General Policies

There are general policies that refer to all students in practicum. These are summarized in the following areas.

Agency Onboarding and Costs

Administrative onboarding requirements vary from agency to agency. Students are typically expected to attend to administrative tasks prior to beginning practicum including but not limited to securing an identification badge for the agency, completing paperwork, and/or attending trainings. Students should take every measure to complete administrative onboarding in preparation for beginning educational practicum work as close to the first day of their internship as possible. Students are not allowed access to confidential material or information their malpractice insurance goes into effect the first day of classes in the fall semester and January 2 for the spring semester. Moreover, students are not allowed to accrue more than 20 hours prior to the start of practicum, which limits the time available for pre-internship onboarding.

Many agencies require and conduct criminal and background checks and/or medical authorizations of potential interns. The OPE asks that students share concerns they might have about either on forms soliciting such information and/or with their assigned faculty liaison. With this knowledge, the faculty liaison can help students address concerns both in identifying potential host agencies with amenable policies for placement, and preparing for professional disclosure in the interview process. Additionally, students with criminal histories are encouraged to visit https://www.dshs.texas.gov/plc_cheval.shtm to learn more about applying for licensure.

A number of agencies – especially medical institutions - require The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work to facilitate third party vendor background checks and/or to facilitate medical authorizations. Students will be notified in the placement process if their agency or agency of interest requires background checks, medical authorizations, and/or a third-party vendor screening which can be more expensive. Medical authorization often also requires additional vaccinations or other medical costs. The Assistant Dean for Healthcare Affairs and the ADPE coordinate closely on these pre-screening processes for healthcare settings including the Ascension and St. David's systems.

Combined, students may be asked to spend up to \$150 on these contractually required screenings. Students should consider this in their internship process and

budget accordingly. Agencies are encouraged to cover these costs when possible.

Students are expected to work closely with the OPE in the case of negative screens that disqualifies a student for a particular internship setting. The OPE will partner with the student to work diligently in finding an appropriate internship in a timely manner for a student denied placement. A student's placement may be further delayed or postponed if they have not been forthcoming and honest about the challenges.

Agency Documentation

Students must submit all agency documentation in an appropriate format and in a timely fashion. Students should receive training on documentation during the agency orientation and have reasonable access to electronic documentation systems. The content of client records often follows a certain format to protect both the client and the agency. Initially, students may write drafts of client documentation to be reviewed and signed by the practicum instructor before being entered into the client file. Some practicum instructors or assigned staff may continue to sign off on all documentation. Students must be clear on this process and are expected to seek supervision as new situations arise. Students should not document anything in a client file without learning the proper agency procedures. Confidentiality of documentation is discussed later in this section.

Arranging Hours in Practicum

Students are expected to complete 400 hours in practicum for their BSW or MSSW first practicum placement, 200 hours in the first semester and an additional 200 in the second or, for full-block BSW students, 400 hours in one semester. Students may accrue up to 20 hours toward the total count over the winter break if and only if it serves the needs of both the student and the agency. BSW and MSSW first practicum internships begin in the fall and spring semesters.

Final practicum students are expected to complete the requisite 500 hours in practicum. Final practicum full block is completed in the spring semester at an average of 36-40 hours per week. Students and/or agencies may opt for extended block placements that run in the spring and summer semesters at approximately 20-25 hours per week. The last day of extended practicum is the last day of summer classes. Students may begin accruing practicum hours as early as January 2 after they have paid for their malpractice insurance. Students are expected to begin administrative onboarding including initiating background checks, medical authorizations, etc., beginning in the semester prior to the internship's start. These hours do not count toward the practicum total unless they total 20 or more, as in the case of a new employee orientation. With approval from their faculty liaison, students who extend into the summer may increase their weekly hours to complete practicum as much as one month prior to the last business day of July if and only if that arrangement serves both the student and the agency's needs.

Students are entitled to a fall break and a spring break in keeping with the UT calendar unless there are compelling agency-based responsibilities that would require their participation as interns. If a student does not get spring break off due to agency needs, they are entitled to the equivalent amount of time on different dates as negotiated with their practicum instructor. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these breaks in order to rejuvenate for the semester. Some students may minimize their time off in order to maximize their ability to accrue hours.

Students should be off for a minimum of three weeks during the winter break since they are not allowed to accrue more than 20 hours during that time span. Students are entitled to a week off at the spring/summer semester turn, typically around graduation. As in the workplace, time off from responsibilities should be negotiated well in advance with the students' supervisor(s).

Within these frameworks, practicum agencies are for the most part open to negotiating students' hours in practicum in service of both the student and the needs of the agency and its clients. There are some general guidelines:

1. Students' hours should overlap the practicum instructors' schedules the majority of the time.
2. Students should target large blocks of time for agency service. This minimizes transitions and transportation time to and from the agency. For MSSW first practicum interns, this generally means either a Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday schedule because of their practice and other classroom schedules.
3. Students must be willing to have some flexibility in their schedules if this is needed in the agency. Some evening or weekend hours may be required.
4. Students may count one-hour each week from practicum seminar or circle group toward their practicum hour total. Students may also take up to two hours/week for journaling if appropriate. practicum and agency orientations to the internship hours also count toward the practicum -hour total.
5. Students should not consistently stay beyond the estimated hours. Commitments beyond this may indicate that the learning contract needs to be renegotiated or that time management techniques need to be reviewed.
6. Students should monitor their hours and keep track of their progress toward completing the requisite number of hours. If extensions are needed for grading purposes, notice should be given in advance to the practicum instructor and faculty liaison.
7. Students may take credit for the extra time spent on agency assignments. This may include longer hours spent in conferences, workshops, working late on projects, etc., if approved by the

practicum instructor.

8. Students must not be left alone in the agency. This includes coverage for staff meetings or retreats or other agency “emergencies.” If this happens, students should notify their practicum instructor and faculty liaison immediately.
9. Students must not transport clients in the student’s or client’s vehicle, nor are they allowed to transport clients in agency vehicles. This is to protect students because they are not covered by university insurance for transportation in any way. Similarly, students are not allowed to handle bodily fluids in their placements.

Completion of Hours and Absence from Practicum

All BSW students are expected to complete the 400 hours in practicum. If the students choose the extended internship, hours should be evenly divided at approximately 200 hours each semester.

All MSSW first practicum interns are expected to complete 200 hours each in the fall and in the spring for a total of 400 hours. Failure to do so may result in a failing grade. Under compelling circumstances, a faculty liaison may choose to allow the student to receive an incomplete for the fall semester and support them in making arrangements to makeup needed hours over the winter break before the start of the spring semester. Incompletes are determined by the faculty liaison and should reflect the student’s need for additional time due to circumstances beyond their control.

A student cannot begin accruing practicum hours in the second semester of practicum until a grade has been earned for the previous semester. When this cannot be accomplished, the student must postpone practicum until eligible for matriculation into second semester practicum. MSSW final practicum students are expected to complete 500 hours in practicum over the spring and summer semesters.

1. General: It is the student’s responsibility to inform the practicum instructor as soon as possible and prior to any absence from practicum. The practicum instructor should inform the faculty liaison of any concerns regarding student absence.

If a student is absent for significant period of time, there are four options:

- a. Withdraw from practicum, with the consent of the faculty liaison and the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education.
- b. Be assigned by the ADPE to repeat the semester either in the same or a different agency.
- c. Take an incomplete and finish the next time that practicum semester is offered; or
- d. Earn a failing grade in first practicum or fail to receive credit for final practicum.

2. **Holidays:** Students may take all University holidays and whatever holidays are observed by the by the agency. If the student elects to work through a holiday, such as spring break, it will count toward the required practicum hours. Students are encouraged to negotiate these potential days off much the same way that an employee might navigate their personal plans within the responsibilities of the agency and their position. Students do not accrue hours not served in practicum, i.e., when the University is open for a holiday, but the agency is not.
3. **Inclement weather days:** Students do not accrue hours when not in practicum and will need to make up hours missed due to inclement weather.

Change of Placement due to Educational Environment

If the student or practicum instructor has concerns that the educational environment at their internship will not allow them to demonstrate the required competencies:

1. The student and/or practicum instructor should begin to address the concerns in supervision. If this is not immediately possible, the faculty liaison may be a resource, and can problem solve with the student or practicum instructor and encourage and support addressing the concerns in the supervisory relationship.
2. The student and/or practicum instructor must communicate with the faculty liaison about the concerns if they remain unresolved and are threatening the educational experience of the student.
3. If the concerns are determined unable to be reconciled and the result of the environment, e.g., a change in agency leadership or reduction in supervisory staff, then, in consultation with the student, the faculty liaison or practicum instructor may decide a student should be moved.
4. If the decision is made to move the student, the faculty liaison will identify a suitable agency and make arrangements for a different internship. This can take time and may delay a student completing the requisite hours for the semester or internship.
5. If the decision to move the student occurs within the first two weeks of the placement, and the student has been actively involved in appropriate activities, the student may be excused from making up that time. However, beyond two weeks, the student may need to negotiate an appropriate number of approved hours to ensure sufficient time in the new placement.
6. As a representative of the agency, the practicum instructor retains the right to terminate a student's placement in their organization or

program. The UT-SSW expects conference around the issues whether to explore continuation at the agency or in seeking understanding about the reasons for the change as they relate to the placement or the student.

7. The faculty liaison will be in consultation with the ADPE for all placement changes and will submit a Placement Update electronically to the OPE.

When a Student is Not Making Satisfactory Progress in Practicum

1. When a student is not progressing at a satisfactory rate: The practicum instructor must notify the faculty liaison as soon as a significant problem or pattern of problems becomes evident.
 - a. The faculty liaison will arrange a conference with the practicum instructor as soon as possible.
 - b. The student, practicum instructor and faculty liaison are involved in an analysis of the problem.
 - c. The student is given formal notification that the performance is substandard and the concerns are tied to the Student Standards through a level review if appropriate.
 - d. Guidelines are developed for the student to follow in raising the standard of performance. These are given to the student in writing.
 - e. If the student does not meet the requirements, a failing grade may be earned and the level review process may escalate as appropriate.
2. When it is possible that a student may demonstrate the competencies if provided extra time:
 - a. The practicum instructor, faculty liaison, and student will discuss the student's rate of progress. If the student can demonstrate the practicum competencies given extra time and attention, then a plan will be developed. This must be a joint decision, based on the following: the student's work to date, the agency's willingness to commit continued resources, the practicum instructor's willingness to commit extra time, and the student's commitment to the identified plan.
 - b. If the agency is unwilling to continue to host the student, the faculty liaison will work with the student to replace the student in a new practicum agency. The student is expected to share concerns and conditions from the foreshortened practicum experience with the new practicum instructor in supervision and

- on the learning contract in the new setting.
- c. A specific amount of extra time, usually 4 to 6 weeks, may be allotted at the end of the semester for the student to continue in practicum. This does not represent an absolute date for the end of practicum but is a target that will be reevaluated as the end of that period is reached.
 - d. If the student has not demonstrated the competencies of practicum by the end of the extra period, then the following options exist and will be determined by the faculty liaison:
 - i. the student may repeat the semester providing the availability of a current practice seminar; or
 - ii. the student may earn a failing grade.
3. If a student does not wish to spend the extra time necessary to successfully complete that practicum assignment, the options are as follows:
 - a. Withdraw from practicum, with the consent of the faculty liaison and the ADPE.
 - b. Be assigned by the ADPE to repeat the semester either in the same agency or a different one.
 - c. Take an “incomplete” and finish the next time that practicum semester is offered.
 - d. Earn a failing grade.
 4. Documentation of student progress may be assessed using the following tools:
 - a. direct observation of skills and behavior in practicum.
 - b. client records and documentation.
 - c. process recordings and journals.
 - d. feedback from other agency staff or other professionals.
 - e. written work.
 - f. use of supervision.

Removal of a Student from Practicum

A student may be removed from practicum under the following circumstances:

1. Request of the student, with the consultation with the faculty liaison, practicum instructor and approval from the ADPE.
2. Decision of the ADPE, in consultation with the faculty liaison and practicum instructor. The following are grounds to remove the student from practicum:
 - a. Failure to maintain confidentiality about a client as mandated by agency policy and/or the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and Texas Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Conduct.

- b. Failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics and TBSWE Code of Conduct.
- c. An attempt to harm oneself.
- d. An attempt to harm someone else.
- e. Use of non-prescribed drugs or alcohol while on duty at the internship.
- f. Repeated tardiness at the agency and/or tardiness without notification.
- g. Repeated absences from the agency and/or absence without notification.
- h. Repeated change in scheduled practicum hours without prior approval.
- i. Inappropriate behavior in connection with the practicum placement.
- j. Unresolved student standard violations whether or not they are addressed in a level review.

The ADPE will make the final decision regarding removal from practicum, with documentation from the practicum instructor, agency, and faculty liaison. The student may appeal the decision following the guidelines in the official UT School of Social Work catalog. Whether the student will be allowed to return to practicum in the same or a different agency will depend on the seriousness of the incident and/or the ability of the student to work through the problem. Students who are not allowed to return to practicum will receive a failing grade for the course and a level review. The ADPE will have the responsibility to work with the student around the issues and may specify conditions for a return to practicum.

A student will earn a failing grade in practicum and not be replaced in the same semester if they are terminated from two or more agencies due to their own lack of performance or other failure to meet the expectations in their setting. The ADPE and faculty liaison determine if the responsibility falls to the student with input from the practicum instructor and Agency staff.

First practicum MSSW and BSW candidates may choose to retake practicum in a subsequent semester in which it is offered. A failing grade in practicum for final practicum will result in dismissal from the program.

Grievance Process

The grievance process as stated in the School of Social Work MSSW Student Handbook applies to the termination of a student from practicum. The process is designed to give the student further channels for appeal of the decision made regarding termination from practicum. Although a student will be involved in the decision-making process, should the student wish to appeal a decision made, the first step is with the Graduate Advisor, the Graduate Studies Committee and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the School. If the student wishes a further appeal, the formal procedures are outlined in the Student Guides to BSW and Graduate Practicum handbooks.

Student Standards for Social Work Education

Because of the nature of professional social work practice, the School of Social Work has different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. These standards highlight key criteria for admissions and continuance that are linked to students' abilities to be effective social work professionals. This document formalizes the standards so that students and faculty can be clear about expectations and procedures to address concerns. The ultimate goal of the standards is to help students have a successful experience in the School of Social Work. The student standards may be found in Section 9: Appendix.

All social work students will be provided with and expected to read the Student Standards and NASW Code of Ethics and the Texas Board of Social Work Education Code of Conduct. Students will then be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they have read and will abide by the documents and to abide by those codes. The acknowledgment form will be kept in the students' files. The Student Standards and complete NASW Code of Ethics can be found in the Student Guides to BSW and Graduate Practicum.

Confidentiality

The NASW Code of Ethics also serves as a guide for professional behavior concerning confidentiality of client matters. Confidentiality is not only an ethical concern, but a legal issue as well. Social workers, including student interns, are legally bound to safeguard the confidentiality of information concerning clients. Breaking client confidentiality is grounds for malpractice. The Code also prescribes behavior related to colleagues and co-workers and the responsibilities and obligations of social workers to their employing agencies.

In addition to the NASW Code of Ethics, students are expected to abide by any agency-based policy concerning confidentiality. The agency's policies usually cover areas such as storage and maintenance of client records; what information, if any, can be shared about the client with persons outside of the agency; with whom information can be shared; how to obtain informed consent from a client to release information; internal procedures for discussing client concerns, etc. Students should request a copy of the agency's policy on client confidentiality during the agency orientation.

Discussions with faculty liaisons and in the first practicum integrative seminars about clients are educationally focused and are considered appropriate case consultations. Therefore, although standard precautions should be taken to de-identify information concerning clients, these discussions are covered under the NASW Code of Ethics. Agencies and practicum instructors are also aware that students must utilize client and agency information in order to complete classroom assignments and in practicum seminar discussions. However, students within the seminar are bound by the Code to keep this information confidential.

Some guidelines for use of client and agency information in the practicum seminar include:

1. Information about clients, their relatives, and significant others used in written assignments such as process recordings, case assessments, logs, etc. should be de-identified to the greatest extent possible. Initials should be used to disguise names or names should be concealed.
2. Information that is highly personal and detailed should be reviewed to see if it needs to be used at all.
3. Process recordings should not become part of the client's file.
4. Materials on clients in which a court case is pending or suspected of being imminent should not be used to meet assignments.
5. Audio and/or video recordings of clients require informed consent releases by clients following the agency guidelines. Students should discuss this with their practicum instructors prior to seeking client approval.
6. Supervision regarding confidentiality should be scheduled early during the orientation period.

Safety/Infection Control

The school has a number of placements where student interns work directly with potentially violent populations. Some student interns also travel to various neighborhoods to conduct home visits as part of the learning process.

There have been situations in which student interns have been exposed to infectious diseases at their placement sites. This is an issue that primarily affects interns placed with agencies serving the homeless, persons with HIV/AIDS, and other high-risk groups. Students may potentially be exposed to Hepatitis, TB, HIV, and/or other infectious diseases.

Students should not be left alone in the agency without professional staff. Leaving students alone on the premises or otherwise in charge during staff retreats, conferences, etc. is not an appropriate use of students. Students, no matter how competent or skilled, are not prepared to take on those types of staff responsibilities.

As partners in education, the agency, student, and the school share responsibility for making sure that the work environment is safe. In an effort to ensure the physical health and safety of student interns, the following is recommended for agencies, students, and faculty liaisons:

Agency Responsibilities

1. Inform students of potential safety risks.

2. Provide safety training. This includes training for students related to effective communication with clients and techniques for de-escalating hostility and conflict.
3. Notify the practicum office via the assigned faculty liaison in the event that a student is involved in an unsafe situation including potential/actual exposure to contagious disease and/or incidents of physical violence/aggression perpetrated by a client.
4. Take steps to improve the safety of the work environment, including providing safety guidelines for working with clients in the office and in the client's home.
5. Inform students of potential health risks that exist in the practicum setting.
6. Provide training and education on universal precautions designed to reduce the risk of infection.
7. Inform the faculty liaison and/or the practicum office immediately in the event that a student has been exposed to or is found to have contracted a communicable disease such as tuberculosis or hepatitis.
8. Refer students who are suspected to have contracted a communicable disease to the Austin Health and Human Services Department-Travis County Health Department (or the health department in the city where the agency is located) for testing and treatment.

Student Responsibilities

1. Participate in training on infection control and safety as provided by the agency.
2. Request training on infection control and safety if not offered by the agency.
3. Follow guidelines for safety and infection control in place at the agency.
4. Report incidents of safety and infection exposure to the agency and to the practicum office.

Faculty Liaison Responsibilities

1. Provide safety and infection control training at practicum orientation.
2. Monitor risk factors during agency liaison visits, agency workshops, in seminars, and journals.
3. Communicate incidents with the practicum office.
4. Discuss issues related to health and safety with practicum instructors and students as they arise.

Mileage Reimbursement

Agencies are encouraged to provide mileage reimbursement to students as they do professional staff. Students will need to inquire at the beginning of practicum about agency procedures for obtaining mileage reimbursement for home visits and other required travel. Many agencies are not able to provide mileage reimbursement.

Stipends

Agencies are encouraged to provide a stipend as a way of further professionalizing the working relationship and of becoming more competitive in the process of securing strong intern candidates.

In Academic Year 2018-19, approximately one-third of agencies provided a stipend to interns at an average of just over \$2,200 per internship. Stipend payments ranged from \$250 to \$10,000 plus room and board. A stipend of only a few hundred dollars can help offset parking and mileage costs while keeping administrative overhead to a minimum. Stipends may also be paid at an hourly rate, e.g., \$15/hour. The OPE can assist agencies considering ways to offer stipends. Stipends are not required.

Malpractice Liability Insurance

Both the University and practicum agencies require that all social work students in practicum placement be covered by a professional malpractice liability insurance policy to protect both the agency and the individual against malpractice liability claims. All graduate social work students in practicum courses must obtain this coverage prior to entering practicum placement and must be covered for the duration of their practicum placement.

Students are able to meet this professional malpractice liability insurance requirement by participating in the school's blanket liability program underwritten by Wortham Insurance & Risk Management of Austin as approved by the UT Board of Regents. The limits of liability under this policy are \$2,000,000 each claim/\$6,000,000 aggregate, and coverage is only while the student is in practicum.

Specific information as to how students obtain this coverage is made available to students in the practicum placement process. There are additional limitations when applied to international practicum.

Under this insurance policy, students are not covered for any claims relating to the operation of motor vehicles, whether personal or agency vehicle. Since the University has ruled that students cannot provide services for which they are at risk without liability coverage, students may not transport clients within practicum as part of their internship program. Agencies cannot ask or allow students to transport clients while in practicum placement. Similarly, students are not allowed to handle bodily fluids in their placements. New agencies are made aware of this in the screening and onboarding process and practicum instructors sign a statement acknowledging this at the beginning of every internship.

Cultural Competence and Practicum Instruction

The School of Social Work actively supports the need for students to increase their cultural competence during their professional education. Most students will take a semester-long course entitled Social Justice in which they will learn more about themselves, about other groups, and about the process of becoming a culturally competent social work practitioner.

At its most basic level, cultural competence consists of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Knowledge includes an understanding of oneself, information about cultural customs and practices of various groups, and an awareness of the dynamics of oppression. Skills include various elements, such as bilingualism, interpersonal skills, behavior consistent with cultural norms, social advocacy skills, etc. Attitude includes components such as genuine openness/curiosity, willingness to risk, generosity, and forgiveness. Practicum instructors are encouraged to use the supervisory relationship to both challenge and support the knowledge, skills, and attitudes demonstrated by students.

A resource for increasing cultural competence is the following *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* adopted by NASW in 2015.

Sexual Harassment

In support of its Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action program, it is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin to maintain an educational environment free from sexual harassment and intimidation. Although the practicum office evaluates and monitors agencies on a continual basis, preventative steps should be taken to ensure that sexual harassment does not become part of the student's practicum experience; or, if it should occur, that the student has sufficient information to be able to deal effectively with it.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has defined sexual harassment as follows:

Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of Sec. 703 of Title VII. Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Such conduct on the part of supervisors or co-workers is expressly prohibited and

the offenders are subject to disciplinary action. The University's Equal Employment Opportunity Office is empowered to investigate complaints based on sexual harassment. If employees believe that they are experiencing this type of conduct, they should immediately report any such incidents to the Equal Employment Opportunity Office located in Main Building 106M, 471-1849.

Toward that end, The University has formulated a policy that prohibits sexual harassment between faculty and students. This policy is formally stated in section four of the Handbook of Operating Procedures of the University.

The complete policy on sexual harassment can be found at:

<http://www.utexas.edu/policies/hoppm/04.B.02.html>

The complete policy on sexual misconduct can be found at:

<http://www.utexas.edu/policies/hoppm/04.A.03.html>

In addition, many practicum agencies have agency policies that deal with sexual harassment. Students should obtain a copy of their agencies' personnel policy manual and be familiar with this information. Students should notify their faculty liaison immediately should they wish to explore any issue or situation that appears to involve sexual harassment.

Title IX Resources and Reporting

The University is committed to providing an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex and gender discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence (including domestic violence and dating violence), and stalking (<https://titleix.utexas.edu/educate/>).

All practicum instructors and employees of the University including faculty liaisons supervising UT students are mandated reporters of Title IX related incidents. Mandated reporters are required to report known Title IX related incidents – current or historical – to either the UT-SSW Title IX Liaison, who is also the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education, or the University Title IX Coordinator. Title IX related incidents may be shared in any number of ways including but not limited to written assignments, classroom discussion, or supervision and all reports must be relayed to a Title IX officer.

Students entering the UT-SSW are oriented to Title IX resources and requirements upon entry to the program and are aware that practicum instructors are mandated reporters. Practicum instructors are expected to work with the student on how the student chooses to report a Title IX incident(s). For example, a student may choose to email the Title IX Liaison directly and include the practicum instructor. If the incident(s) in question is not impacting the student's practicum performance in any

way, a student may choose instead to report directly to the University Title IX Coordinator, thereby bypassing the Office of Practicum Education.

In service of the students' education, the University's goals are to:

1. support the student regarding resources, rights, and accommodations available to them;
2. assess and intervene with due process regarding potential threats to the student and/or university community; and
3. document the prevalence of Title IX related occurrences and accountable university response.

More information about Title IX may be found at <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>.

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Section 5

Practicum Standards and Objectives

CSWE Practicum Standards

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the accrediting body for Schools of Social Work throughout the United States and Canada. In this capacity, CSWE establishes the basic educational and professional standards for Baccalaureate and Master's level professional degree programs. The standards below were approved in 2008 by CSWE. These cover the standards pertinent to the practicum section of the Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). The BSW and MSSW first practicum experiences are expected to provide generalist practice experiences. MSSW final practicum is expected to provide advanced practice experiences.

Educational Policies

Educational Policy 2.0—Generalist Practice

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. The baccalaureate program in social work prepares students for generalist practice. The descriptions of the nine Social Work Competencies presented in the EPAS identify the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with competence at the generalist level of practice.

Educational Policy M2.1—Specialized Practice

Specialized practice builds on generalist practice as described in EP 2.0, adapting and extending the Social Work Competencies for practice with a specific population, problem area, method of intervention, perspective or approach to practice. Specialized practice augments and extends social work knowledge, values, and skills to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate within an area of specialization. Specialized practitioners advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies

in their area of specialized practice. Specialized practitioners synthesize and employ a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills based on scientific inquiry and best practices, and consistent with social work values. Specialized practitioners engage in and conduct research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery. The master's program in social work prepares students for specialized practice. Programs identify the specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for practice in the area of specialization.

Educational Policy 2.2—Signature Pedagogy: Practicum 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. Practicum education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of practicum 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 practicum—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Practicum education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies. Practicum education may integrate forms of technology as a component of the program.

Practicum Objectives

The purpose of the competencies as course objectives is to serve as a guide to learning and teaching throughout the semester for which they are applicable. In this role they serve as focal points for educational supervision. They also provide guidelines for the evaluation of the student's performance. The mid-semester and final evaluations are particularly focused on the competencies and their related outcomes. A student is expected to have demonstrated the competencies commensurate with their student status at their stage of programmatic study by the end of the semester or internship. The individual practicum instructor is responsible for providing opportunities for those practice experiences or assignments that will enable the student to demonstrate the competencies. The student is responsible for demonstrating their abilities through written work, client interaction, supervisory discussions and other means.

	Profiles of Assignments	Practicum Instructor Qualifications	Time Frame	Hours Required
BSW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing individual cases 2. Co-planning and co-facilitating a group 3. Involvement in an administrative/planning project requiring data collection, analysis and reporting 4. Attendance at board and/or staff meetings 	BSW or MSSW Two years of post graduate experience is required.	Sept-Dec or Sept-May Jan-May or Jan-July	400 hours total 32-35 hours/week one semester or 16-20 hours/week two semesters
MSSW First Placement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing individual cases 2. Planning and facilitating a group 3. Involvement in an administrative/planning project requiring data collection, analysis and reporting 4. Attendance at board and staff meetings 	MSSW and 2 years post-graduate experience	Sept-May	400 hours total 16-20 hours/week one semester
MSSW Final Placement CLINICAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In depth work with specialized populations including ongoing individual cases 2. Attendance at staff meetings 	MSSW and 2 years post-graduate experience	Jan-April, May, June, or July	Block-500 hours
MSSW Final Placement ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY PRACTICE (APP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involvement in project(s) requiring data collection analysis and reporting 2. Attendance at board and/or staff meetings 	MSSW and 2 years post-graduate experience	Jan-April, May, June, or July	Block-500 hours

See other sections in this manual for further elaboration **on this overview of practicum requirements by educational level.**

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Section 6

Methods of Evaluation

The student, the School of Social Work, and the agency interact within a systems context, giving and receiving feedback in the ongoing educational process. Recognizing the interdependence of these elements, the school conducts ongoing evaluation on a multitude of levels, with all participants in the practicum program responsible for feedback and maintenance.

Evaluation of Student Performance and Grading

Evaluation in practicum is the determination of whether the student has satisfactorily achieved the educational objectives and demonstrated the competencies of the practicum sequence. Evaluation is viewed as a process that is jointly undertaken with the student, practicum instructor and faculty liaison participating. Key elements in the process include:

1. A delineation of the student's present capabilities in terms of knowledge, values, skills, affective and cognitive processes.
2. Identifying areas where growth is needed including what the student has already accomplished and not accomplished toward demonstrating the competencies.
3. Determining specifically what must be done in the future to address any concerns and/or refine abilities.

Grades and/or credit earned are assigned by the faculty liaison, based on input obtained from the practicum instructor during the liaison visits and liaison assessment of student progress. BSW practicum is pass/fail and MSSW first practicum is graded on a letter grade basis, and students must earn a C or better in order to receive credit. Final practicum is graded as credit/no credit. Students who do not receive credit for final practicum are not allowed to repeat and therefore cannot complete the master's program at the School of Social Work.

Student progress may be reflected in verbal presentation of material, interaction with clients and collateral contacts, discussion of assignments with the practicum instructor and faculty liaison, journal entries, process recordings and case documentation, and interaction with other personnel within the setting. Students are expected to uphold the NASW Code of Ethics, the Texas Board of Social Work Examiner's (TBSWE) Code of Conduct, and the UT-SSW Student Standards. practicum objectives represent the minimum expectations of performance at the completion of each semester.

Evaluation of student performance in Practicum is an ongoing process throughout the placement period, with the student's participation an integral part of this process. Practicum instructors are expected to give ongoing feedback to their students. Assessment is used to help students examine their educational progress in meeting the objectives of practicum instruction.

It is intended that the student will develop ongoing self-awareness to serve as the foundation for future learning and development.

The evaluation forms for all semesters of the student internships are available in Section 7: Forms. The forms are provided as an educational tool, and actual evaluations should be completed online using the evaluation link provided by the Office of Practicum Education. OPE recommends that the student and practicum instructor share the task of completing the evaluation forms to promote ongoing dialogue and understanding about achievement of the educational objectives and demonstrating the competencies.

Grading for Foundation BSW and MSSW Practicum

BSW Integrative Seminar and practicum are taken concurrently as are the MSSW first practicum and the practice. Therefore, satisfactory progress in both class and practicum is expected. If a student fails practicum and is able to retake practicum the next semester is available, they will be required to also retake the associated integrative seminar or practice class concurrently regardless of grade previously earned in that class. Students may not carry an incomplete in either course into the next semester. Students must earn a C or better in first semester to continue. Syllabi for the practice courses are provided to the student at the beginning of the semester and available on the school's website at <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/academics/eclassroom/>.

Grading for MSSW Concentration Practicum

The faculty liaison assigns credit earned based on student progress as outlined above. Final practicum is credit/no credit and students who do not receive credit for final practicum will not be allowed to retake final practicum and instead will be released from the program. Students in final practicum may fail to receive credit because of:

1. Unresolved and/or escalating concerns tied to Student Standards including NASW and TBSWE codes and addressed through the Level Review process outlined in the MSSW Guide.
2. Persistent failure to demonstrate the required competencies.
3. Egregious ethical violations or behavior otherwise harmful to others.

Procedures for Evaluation of Practicum

Student Evaluation of the Practicum Experience

Each student is expected to provide feedback on an ongoing basis directly to their practicum instructor regarding maximizing student learning in the agency setting. Recognizing that this can be a challenge in some situations, students are expected to provide feedback to their faculty liaison regarding the strength of educational opportunities, supervisory experience and overall internship.

Students are surveyed upon exiting the program regarding their practicum experience with the faculty liaison, OPE, internship setting, practicum instructor, and integration of classroom and practicum curriculum. Students are encouraged to use this anonymous, protected venue for providing valuable feedback in the service of improving the practicum experience for all students.

This information is then used by the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education and the Practicum Education Committee in making decisions regarding the future use of the agency and practicum instructor. Urgent issues raised by students in practicum are routinely addressed in liaison visits and, as necessary, with the intervention of the OPE. Students should bring concerns about their placement to the attention of their faculty liaison as soon as possible so that concerns may be addressed promptly.

Practicum Instructor Evaluation of the Practicum Program

Practicum instructors are also given an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the placement process, the faculty liaison, the training workshops, and the practicum program in general.

Practicum instructors receive questionnaires twice annually at the practicum instructor workshops and this information is reviewed by the ADPE and communicated to the practicum committee to make changes to improve the program. Practicum instructors also provide feedback on the Practicum program through ongoing communication with the faculty liaisons and the OPE.

Faculty Liaison Evaluation of the Agency Setting

In addition to ongoing monitoring of and communication with staff at the practicum settings, the ADPE and the clinical faculty meet at the end of the spring semester to gather and share information regarding agencies and practicum instructors for use in future placement decisions. This process solicits information about the learning environment of the agency, the practicum instructor's level of expertise, the appropriateness of the learning assignments, the match between the student and the practicum instructor, and ways to make improvements in all of these. As a result of this evaluation, the OPE then creates an action plan for follow up with practicum instructors as needed in order to provide opportunity and investment in making necessary changes to maintain or reestablish strong internship experiences. It is the intent of the OPE to provide internship settings and practicum instructors with ample opportunity to redress concerns through authentic and timely feedback.

The Assistant Dean for Practicum Education regularly monitors the quality of the practicum sites by utilizing interaction with the agency/practicum instructors, agency self-reporting, written and verbal reports from the faculty liaisons, the student evaluations, participation in workshops and workshop questionnaires.

The school is committed to providing timely, transparent, consistent and professional feedback regarding significant concerns related to internships so that the agency-based practicum instructors and practicum program representatives can sustain ongoing and mutually beneficial working relationships.

Section 7 The Degree Programs

Bachelor in Social Work Program - <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/academics/bsw/>

Master of Science in Social Work Program - <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/academics/mssw/>

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work Program - <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/academics/phd/>

Section 8 Selected Forms

FORMS ARE ON THE WEB AT:

<https://socialwork.utexas.edu/Practicum/forms/>

Section 9 Appendix

You can view the documents in full linked below:

- MSSW Graduate Guide to Practicum available at:
<https://socialwork.utexas.edu/academics/practicum/forms/>
- NASW Code of Ethics available at: -
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
- NASW Standards for Social Work Education available at:
<https://www.socialworkers.org/practice/>
- NASW Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence are available at: -
- <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/NASW-Practice-Standards-Guidelines/Standards-and-Indicators-for-Cultural-Competence-in-Social-Work-Practice>
- Texas Social Worker Code of Conduct on page 96 of TBHEC Consolidated Rulebook for Social Work: <https://bhec.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-March-SW-Rulebook.pdf>
- Other readings and resources as assigned by agency, practicum instructor and/or faculty liaison