



**GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY**  

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**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Field Supervisor Handbook**

**Amanda Stansbie, MSW  
MSW Field Education Coordinator**

**Katie Scheuerle, LMSW  
BSW Field Education Coordinator**

**School of Social Work  
391C DeVos Center 401 West Fulton Street  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
Tel: (616) 331-6550 Fax: (616) 331-6570**

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## **Welcome!**

Thank you for choosing to become a Field Supervisor or Task Coordinator for Grand Valley State University School of Social Work. In taking advantage of this opportunity you have agreed to become an integral part of our students' educational experience. Your willingness to share your expertise ensures that the next generation of social workers will be well prepared to meet the changing needs of our communities.

This manual provides you with guidance in matching your student's learning needs with the unique opportunities offered in your practice setting. It clarifies our expectations of a Field Supervisor or Task Coordinator and provides helpful tips to ensuring a successful field placement for all.

No two students are exactly alike in what they bring to the internship, nor are they alike in what they need from the internship. However, we have found that a number of elements need to be in place for any student to get the most from their Field Education experience.

The five common aspects of a successful placement include:

1. Agency commitment allowing the Field Supervisor time for adequate supervision;
2. A carefully organized student orientation to the agency that includes providing clear expectations;
3. Assignment of professional tasks and duties compatible with the Student's unique learning needs;
4. A graduated assignment of professional tasks and duties and;
5. Weekly, structured supervision.

An additional aspect of Field Education is to provide gatekeeping for the social work profession. Field Education is where both educators and practitioners are able to observe and evaluate a student's ability in service provision. As educators we have had the opportunity to see how the student academically interacts with theory and ideas. However, it is the combination of applying theory to practical situations that makes for an effective placement as well as the opportunity to evaluate the social work potential of each student. This manual will provide you with direction for how to handle issues and concerns regarding students should they arise.

For further information, please consult the [MSW](#) or [BSW](#) Field Education Manual.

## **Mission and Goals of the MSW Program**

The mission of the GVSU Master of Social Work (MSW) Program is to prepare advanced generalist social workers who enhance and sustain the welfare and well-being of the citizens, organizations and communities of West Michigan, the state, the nation, and the world; and who further the goals of the University and of the social work profession in this region and beyond. This is accomplished through professional leadership; advancement of the social work field's knowledge through research and evaluation; and a focus on diversity, social justice and human rights. West Michigan's unique setting consists of diverse cultural communities as well as urban and rural settings, creating significant potential for skilled social work professionals to make a profound impact on the community.

The goals of the MSW Program are:

1. To provide a foundational MSW curriculum and an advanced generalist social work curriculum that prepares MSW graduates for autonomous social work practice that promotes social, economic and environmental justice and endeavors to address poverty and other social problems within individual, organizational and community contexts within, but not limited to, West and Northern Michigan and the state of Michigan.
2. To award the MSW degree to individuals who are skilled practitioners adhering to the NASW Code of Ethics, incorporating diversity into their practice and capable of assuming 9 leadership and scholarly professional roles in the community, region, state, national and global communities.
3. To contribute to the ongoing development of professional social work knowledge and practice through research and scholarly inquiry that employ state-of-the-art technology.
4. To prepare students for continued professional development opportunities throughout their careers, including doctoral education.

## **Mission and Goals of the BSW Program**

The mission of the GVSU Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program is to prepare generalist social workers who enhance and promote well-being and advocate for social, economic and environmental justice of the citizens, organizations and communities of West Michigan, the state, the nation, and the world; and to further the goals of the University and of the social work profession in this region and beyond. West Michigan's unique setting consists of diverse cultural communities as well as urban and rural settings, creating significant potential for skilled social work professionals to make a profound impact on our community.

The goals of the BSW program are:

1. To provide a generalist social work curriculum in a high quality learning environment that prepares BSW graduates for entry level social work practice that promotes social, economic and environmental justice and endeavors to address poverty and other social problems within organizational, individual, and community contexts within, but not limited to, West Michigan and the state of Michigan.
2. To prepare generalist social workers who exhibit a professional commitment to enhancing social justice, promoting human rights, ensuring the dignity and worth of all individuals, practicing with integrity, upholding one or more of the profession's Code of Ethics, incorporating diversity into their practice, and advancing the profession's reputation and knowledge base.
3. To prepare students for continued professional development opportunities throughout their careers.
4. To maximize the strengths and assets within local, regional, statewide, national and international social welfare and human services communities through civic/community engagement in organizing, leading and participating in effective capacity building and social and political action activities.

## **Basic Field Education Information**

### **A. MSW Program –**

#### **1. Regular Status and Advanced Standing MSW students:**

GVSU School of Social Work has two cohorts of MSW students: regular status and advanced standing. The difference between the two groups is that advanced standing MSW students have a prior BSW degree and are exempt from taking certain foundational social work courses.

#### **2. Beginning and Ending Dates:**

- a. GVSU MSW regular status students begin a field education placement according to the University's calendar year in the Spring/Summer semester which begins in May. Students complete three (3) consecutive semesters (Spring/Summer, Fall and Winter semester) at a field site.
  - i. Regular status MSW students completing a field education placement in a school setting begin their field placement in the Winter semester, in January; completing three non-consecutive semesters (Winter, Fall, Winter semester).
- b. Advanced standing MSW students begin their field education placement in the Fall semester which begins in late August. Advanced standing MSW students complete two consecutive semesters at their field placement (Fall and Winter semester).

#### **3. Timeline for Designating MSW Student Placement:**

- a. The GVSU Field Education placement process (matching and interviewing with a potential field site) for regular status MSW students extends from November through April, with field education at the field site beginning in early May.
- b. The GVSU Field Education placement process for regular status MSW students seeking a placement in a school setting extends from October through December, with field education at the field site beginning in early January.

- c. The GVSU Field Education placement process for advanced standing students extends from May through August, with field education at the field site beginning at the end of August.

#### **4. Field Education Hours:**

- a. GVSU MSW students must complete a total of 300 hours of field education at a field site each semester (averages out to approximately 20-25 hours for 12-15 weeks depending on the semester).

### **B. BSW Program –**

#### **1. Beginning and Ending Dates:**

GVSU BSW students begin their field education placement in the Fall semester which begins in late August. Students complete two consecutive semesters (Fall and Winter semester) at their field placement site.

#### **2. Field Education Hours:**

GVSU BSW students must complete a total of 210 hours of field education each semester (approximately 14 hours a week for 15 weeks).

#### **3. Timeline for Designating BSW Student Placement:**

The GVSU Field Education placement process (matching and interviewing with a potential field site) for BSW students extends from November through April, with field education at the field site beginning in late August.

### **C. Expectations for Field Education for all BSW & MSW Students –**

#### **1. Recording of Time:**

A monthly time sheet is used to keep track of student hours at the field site. Completed time sheets require the signature of both the student and the Field Supervisor.

#### **2. Field Education Days:**

The days a student works at a field site is negotiated between the student and the Field Supervisor. It is expected that the student will be at the

field site during hours when they can be involved in tasks relevant to their learning needs, as well as, when supervision is readily available.

### **3. Supervision:**

The field site is responsible to provide professional supervision for a social work student during field education. The expectation is that a student will receive at least one hour of direct face-to-face supervision from their Field Supervisor each week. Our accrediting body (CSWE) prefers supervision of an MSW student be provided by a masters-level graduate of an accredited social work program with at least 2 years of post graduate experience. For a BSW student, supervision should be provided by a graduate of an accredited social work program (BSW or MSW) with at least 2 years post graduate experience. However, arrangements can be made for supervisors who have unique skills and/or opportunities, or who have an advanced degree in a related human service area. In this instance, the Field Education Coordinator will work with the field site and Faculty Field Liaison to ensure the social work perspective is eminent and supervision is sufficient.

## **Matching Process**

All BSW and MSW students must complete a field education application and submit it to the respective Field Education Coordinator. The Field Education Coordinator uses a process to match students to potential field sites taking into consideration the student's interests, experience and skill set, as well as the requirements/preferences of the organization and Field Supervisor. Students are not allowed to contact an agency or potential Field Supervisor with the intent of soliciting their own placement.

The objective of Field Education is to provide a student with a Generalist/Advanced Generalist education of transferable skills that will socialize the student into the Social Work profession.


## **Tips for Interviewing Students**

- Before interviewing the prospective student intern, review the student's application packet which will be sent to you prior to the interview.
- At the outset of the interview ask the student about their understanding of your site and how your site matches their particular interests and



learning needs; understanding that many skills that may be learned will be transferable to a number of populations and fields of practice.

- Depending on the student's familiarity with the site, offer information relating to the agency mission and the role of social work in your setting.
- Ask the student to describe their personal experiences within the scope of social work practice, whether these were in the role of volunteer or employee.
- Ask the student what their class schedule will be during the internship. If applicable, inform the student of important days or times they should be at the internship.
- Describe for the student specific aspects of social work practice and opportunities for student participation in this practice.
- Assess the student's "fit" within your particular setting (i.e. requisite personal or professional experience and maturity, presentation of self, congruence of student philosophy with agency mission) by asking questions to clarify and elicit additional information.
- Before ending the interview ask the student for their assessment of interest level, motivation, and readiness for the internship; encourage the student to identify specific areas of interest and learning need.
- Conclude the exchange with a clear statement of your willingness or reluctance to host the student for the internship, and identify next steps and responsible parties in moving the process along.
- Promptly complete the "Certification of Field Placement" form and forward it to the Field Education Coordinator.
- Take the necessary steps to communicate the prospective intern's status and needs in relation to the host agency's administration.
- If accepted for placement, inform the student of any activities or procedures required of the student and the approximate cost the student would be expected to absorb. (i.e. agency application, background check, drug scree, physical exam)



*Take time to screen and interview the potential student intern before offering them an internship.*

Please see **Appendix A** for a sample list of interview questions.

## **Defining the Role of a Student**

The role of a student in Field Education is unique. Students in Field Education do not fit into a neat box of volunteer or staff. Their time with an organization is educationally focused on applying concepts learned in the classroom into a real life practice setting. As such, they are not there to learn a specific “job” within the field placement setting, but the broader skill sets and competencies to be a social worker. The student is expected to think, analyze, and critique as well as do. As such, students must be willing to open themselves up to being vulnerable and allow themselves to be in a learner role.

The position of students within an agency emphasizes experience, inquiry, reflection and dialogue. Students are expected to engage in the day-to-day operations of the agency, but the emphasis is on how the experience contributes to the student’s professional development. It’s not enough for the student to “get the job done”. They need to have the time and support to reflect on how the job was done, why it was done that way, whether there were other ways the job could have been done, and how they would do the job differently next time.

From the agency’s perspective, students should be free to inquire about practices, challenge approaches, and ask questions. Students get to see the outstanding effort and well-designed program as well as the poorly coordinated effort and the ever-present political tensions. While this perspective can be threatening to an agency or organization, most find the additional perspective refreshing and invigorating. As part of their experience, students are coached on how to diplomatically approach sensitive agency issues, and recognize their own political style.

It is preferred that students who are training as generalist or advanced generalist practitioners have opportunities to engage in a range of activities. In addition to working with cases, students might review how data is collected and analyzed, work on specified projects that benefit the agency or client population, develop new or innovative programming ideas, and attend board or agency planning meetings. While these activities might not be part of the activities of a comparable employee, they add critical breadth and depth to the student’s experience.

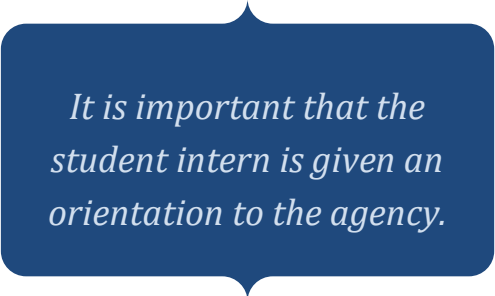
Student assignments and responsibilities should roughly commensurate with those of a professional staff member. At the midpoint of the placement, students have often proven that they are ready to take on most of the roles of an equivalent staff person. At the end of the placement, the student should have the proficiency to perform as a full staff member. In this way, we have together prepared the student to be an effective social work practitioner.

## **Orientation to the Agency**

(adapted from About.com article: Employee Orientation: Keeping New Employees on Board  
by Dr. Judith Brown)

Just as you would welcome any new employee, it is important that student interns are welcomed and introduced throughout your organization. Not only are interns new to your organization, in many cases, they are new to the professional world of social work.

Providing the student with an orientation to your organization serves several purposes. First, an orientation can reduce anxiety for the student. When put in new, unfamiliar situations, anxiety can surface which may impede a student's ability to learn. Proper orientation helps to reduce anxiety and provides guidelines so the student doesn't have to experience the stress of guessing. Likewise, an orientation demonstrates to the student that the organization values the student and their role, and is invested in the student's success.



*It is important that the student intern is given an orientation to the agency.*

Second, an orientation provides an opportunity for clear, open communication. For example, an orientation should include what the organization's expectations are for the student as well as what the student can expect from others.

Third, providing an orientation for the student saves time in the long-run. Simply put, the more thorough the initial orientation, the more time students can spend engaged in assigned responsibilities.

When planning for your student intern to begin at your organization, consider the following questions:

- What things does the student need to know about this work environment that would make them more comfortable?
- What key policies and procedures must students be aware of on the first day to avoid mistakes in the future?
- What special things (desk, work area, equipment) can you provide to make students feel welcome, comfortable and secure?

Please see **Appendix B** for a sample orientation checklist.

### **Ideas for the 1<sup>st</sup> Month in the Agency**

(adapted from Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work)

The following is a list of ideas about different kinds of experiences available in most field placement agencies that would be good beginning assignments and/or initial learning opportunities for students:

1. Develop a list of questions for students to answer after they have interviewed key staff members or had contacts with key referral agencies.
2. Invite students to “shadow” specific staff members in their work with clients (whether in the office or during home visits). Give the student specific guidance in what they are to be observing and analyzing. Assist the student to gain an understanding of the population(s) being served, service and intervention methods, and those organizations commonly linked/referred/coordinated with for the given population. Monitor or facilitate a meeting in which the “shadow and shadowee” give feedback to each other on their performance.
3. Consider orienting students through an actual case. This is a way of “starting where the student is” with what they want to know about how to work with clients. This could be done by selecting a case which you could “walk-through” with the student beginning with what the agency has to offer the particular client(s), how help is offered through agency services, what other services might be available in the community, how to begin thinking about assessment, etc.
4. Invite students to be participant observers in team meetings/consultations/staff meetings.

5. Begin student's client contact with an intake experience when feasible. This can provide a beginning profile of the clients who come to the agency, the range of problems presented, how decisions are made to admit for services or how to refer to other resources in the community.

6. Students can be given responsibility for independent tasks once the orientation to the agency has been completed. This work can be a case assignment but it also can be another task assignment which will put them in touch with clients and/or staff (i.e. informing clients of new services, follow-up calls to clients as part of program evaluation, community outreach and/or needs assessment contacts.)

7. In some instances, it may be possible for a Field Supervisor to "share" a case/client situation with a student. For example, think of viable additions to the service being provided (i.e., meeting with the client's children during the client's individual or group time, designing case management functions for student to perform, etc.)

8. Prior to assigning an independent case to the student, consider reverse shadowing in which the supervisor observes the student providing assessment or intervention and providing feedback for growth prior to the student gaining independent but supervised practice.

9. Have the student sit in the agency waiting room to observe how clients are greeted and treated by agency staff. Encourage the student to put themselves in the clients' place as they begin their "relationship" with the agency.

10. Have students answer the telephones for a few hours (after being well oriented to the agency). Answering questions that come in about agency services will give the student yet another view of agency purpose and function and will expand their beginning understanding of "asking for help."

11. Have the student visit local agencies with whom your agency provides referrals to, or works closely with, to begin acclimating the student to available resources for clients.

12. Be sure to check in with the student to explore how they are adjusting to the agency and clients.

13. Assign appropriate reading (books, articles) to increase knowledge of client base.

14. Have student begin writing their Student Learning Contract.

## **Student Safety**

Safety is a critical component of any student orientation. Field Supervisors should promote an environment where the student feels comfortable, supported, and expected to discuss safety issues and concerns. Make safety a regular agenda item of weekly supervision. Site supervisors, to the extent possible, should be mindful of assigning cases and responsibilities appropriate to a student's skill and experience level. A safety orientation is based upon the following information:

- Potential safety risks present in the organization, program, service delivery model, and client population to which the student is assigned based upon incident related data and research.
- Safety related policies, procedures, and practices of the organization.
- Risk reduction strategies employed by the organization including use of safety devices (cell phones, security alarms, calendars for tracking staff/intern locations, etc.).
- How to screen and assess for potential safety related risks.
- Best practices for client engagement to avoid and/or de-escalate situations in which a client becomes agitated, angry, or potentially aggressive/violent.
- Use of universal safety precautions in attending to service provision with individuals, groups, families, and the community.
- Use of supervision and consultation when safety issues are present.
- Safety planning protocols and communication expectations for when potential risk is present.

- Incident reporting, supports, and expectations in the aftermath of a safety related incident.

A safety orientation encompasses:

- Environmental safety including fire safety, the organization's disaster/emergency preparedness plans (tornado, inclement weather), weapon's policy, etc.

*Each field agency should develop a plan of safety for all students in placement.*

- Tour of Agency/Building Security including signing in and out, after hours policies and procedures, building security, parking, any neighborhood or community issues or considerations. Also, security of personal belongings should be included in a building orientation.

- Nature and type of population served and any potential associated safety concerns that may occur including the potential for boundary issues, threats or aggression, and agency policies related to the presence of substances or clients who are intoxicated and/or under the influence.

- In-home/community based safety procedures.
- Health safety including potential exposure to infection, communicable disease, biohazards, and pests including universal precautions related to exposure to bodily fluids or infection, any recommended or required immunizations, procedures for pests/vermin such as lice, scabies, bed bugs, cockroaches, etc.
- Transportation policies and procedures related to driving on behalf of the organization or transporting clients, as applicable to the program in which the student is placed (i.e. insurance coverage, using student's personal vehicle or agency vehicle, use of car seats when transporting children, number of persons allowed in a car, times when a student would not transport, etc.)
- Approaches to working with potentially violent or unpredictable client situations.

- Responses to threatening statements, letters, phone calls, emails and other communications directed to the student or other agency personnel.
- Risk of providing personal information to a client/the community, including social media.
- Physical restraints of clients: interns are not required to perform physical restraint of clients.

## **Technology**

Technology is an integral part of social work practice. It is critical that Field Supervisors orient students to the technology utilized within the organization; understand the best practices, potential drawbacks, and implications of the use of the various technologies including, but not limited to, electronic records, email, cell phones, texting, telephonic services, telehealth services and social media. Students need to be oriented to agency policies for each aspect of technology utilized along with relevant ethical considerations, laws, and regulations associated with the use of technology. The student needs to gain an understanding for the implications of the use of technology on confidentiality, informed consent, conflict of interest, the competence level of the social worker in utilizing technology and that of the client, as well as contingency plans in the event of technology disruption or failure. Students are helped to understand that their ethical conduct, be it in person or through the use of technology, are held to the same standards.

## **Social Media**

During your orientation with the student, it is wise to address social media within the field of social work, drawing particular attention to how social media may impact your organization both positively and negatively. Due to social work professional standards and the obligation to follow the National Association of Social Workers *Code of Ethics*, social workers need to continually assess the ethical and practice implications of social media use. Privacy, confidentiality, and the establishment/maintenance of professional boundaries must be considered as well as the necessary precautions to protect the student/employees and clients.

There are applications for social media within social work both in clinical and macro areas. Social media has a broad range of utility in clinical social



work practice such as the use of online content for psycho-education and education to reduce stigmas associated with vulnerable populations. It is the social worker's professional responsibility to maintain appropriate clinical boundaries online as much as possible to protect both their privacy and the privacy of their clients.

Within macro practice, social work has many practical applications including education, advocacy, outreach, mobilization, fundraising, and evaluation. Macro social workers need to be careful about how they may be branding their agency or project.

As part of your orientation with the student, share your organization's policy on social media. If the organization does not have a written policy, have a discussion with the student on the social media practice guidelines of the organization. Below are some helpful talking points to use.

The NASW *Code of Ethics* (2018) standards that are applicable to social media include:

- Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons (Section 1.03i).
- Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes (Section 1.06e).
- Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients (Section 1.06f).
- Social workers should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of technology. Social workers should be aware that involvement in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender

identity or expression, mental or physical ability, religion, immigration status, and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular clients (Section 1.06g).

- Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients (Section 1.06h).
- Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media (Section 1.07r).

**Other important considerations include:**

- Students should be expected to exercise great care in how they represent themselves and the social work profession as a whole in any online activities. It is very easy for an outsider to misinterpret statements or images out of context (misrepresentation).
- Social media sites are public domains and any information can be accessed by anyone. Once information is in cyber space, it never goes away.
- Maintain the highest level of privacy settings. Realize the safety related concerns with the information that you make available about yourself and your family online.
- Texting, email, and Twitter are quick and effective ways to communicate with others however, many ethical, legal, and clinical issues must be addressed when using these communication tools. The potential for unintentionally sharing protected information is significant and must be considered. In general, consider the security, privacy, and confidentiality of all communication methods and when in doubt seek consultation and supervision before embarking into unfamiliar or uncertain areas.

## **Working Together – Effective Communication**

(adapted from Michigan State University School of Social Work)

During the student's first week, we recommend having a conversation with the student about their learning style and communication style, your supervision and communication style, and both parties' expectations. We find this lays the foundation for a more open, productive, and professional supervisory-supervisee relationship.

### **Ask the Student:**

- How do you learn best? Do you learn by doing? Do you prefer to observe first and process what you observed before doing? Do you need to understand the “whys” first? Do you need clear guidelines, protocols, or a plan in order to perform a task?
- What is your communication style? Are you direct? Quiet or reserved? Thoughtful or analytical? Friendly or unassuming?
- Which communication style do you respond best to?
- How do you respond to constructive criticism?
- How do you approach conflict?
- What are your expectations for this internship? What do you hope to learn? By the time you graduate, what do you hope to accomplish professionally?
- How can I help you reach your goals?
- What expectations do you have of me?

*Effective communication between you, the student, and the Faculty Field Liaison is critical to developing and maintaining a positive placement experience.*

### **Share with the Student:**

- Your supervision style. Do you tend to hand hold? Are you mostly “hands off”?
- Your communication style.
- Your goals for the student.

- Times you are available. Do you have an “open door” policy? If your office door is closed, does that mean the student should not knock?
- What you expect the student to do during “down time.”
- What you expect the student to do when she/he is sick or unable to come to work. Can the student text you? Can they email? Do you prefer a phone call?
- Other expectations you have re: assignments, contact with clients, time off, professionalism, etc.
- Consequences for not meeting expectations.
- How to professionally advocate for her/himself.
- Your experience thus far in social work. Share your successes as well as your struggles.

Students are often hesitant to bring up issues or concerns about their placement. Students may feel intimidated by their supervisor and/or Faculty Field Liaison, or may be afraid that bringing up problems will only make matters worse. As Faculty, we consistently encourage students to bring issues or concerns forward to discuss and problem solve in class. We particularly encourage students to bring concerns to our attention as early as possible. In most instances, when students express a concern with their supervisor or placement, their colleagues in seminar and their Faculty Field Liaison assist them in finding ways to address the issue directly with their Field Supervisor or Task Coordinator. This process is seen as part of the professional maturation process.

This is equally true for you as a Field Supervisor or Task Coordinator, and for us as Faculty. If issues arise with a student, the sooner they are addressed the better. Problem solving an issue should also generally start with a discussion between you and the student. Your Faculty Field Liaison is always available to you as you consider various approaches to the concern. In most instances, these discussions are enough to get the placement and relationship back on the right track. However, occasionally, further exploration and discussion is necessary. In these situations a meeting between you, the student, and your Faculty Field Liaison may be warranted.

Sometimes Field Supervisors or Task Coordinators feel uncertain about whether to call questionable student performance to the attention of the Faculty Field Liaison. The Field Supervisor or Task Coordinator may feel

they are being a pest to the School, the Liaison, or in some way jeopardizing their relationship with the School. This is not the case! Faculty Field Liaisons want to be available to you and responsive to the needs of our students. We recognize that students are at various stages of developing their ideal professional self, and that difficulty and challenges inevitably arise along the way. It takes the active participation of all three parties to adequately develop every student's potential.

## **Responding to Concerns with the Student**

On rare occasions, as students move through their placement, chronic or serious concerns may develop. Again, working together to address these issues is critical. While you always have the right and power to terminate a student's placement at any time and for any reason, working through a process of resolution or termination is extremely helpful. This process can assist the student in recognizing areas where significant change is needed or allow them to reflect on the wisdom of their career choice. When you have concerns, the following indicates steps to take:

- Address the concern directly with the student during one-to-one supervision. Students need to hear directly and clearly the nature of the concern. The student is usually helped by supervisory coaching toward acceptable change. Watch for changes that reflect the student's effort to make corrections; these changes should be recognized in follow-up supervisory sessions.
- If the student is not responding to supervisory coaching or appears unable to make the required changes, involve the Faculty Field Liaison.
- Schedule a meeting with you, the student, and the Faculty Field Liaison where the issue can be address and problem-solved.
- Document the concern(s) regarding the student and the issue(s) at hand. In addition, written guidelines and timelines for how the student is to address the concern should be detailed. (See the Performance Improvement Plan section.)

*Address any concerns you may have early on with the student. If appropriate, involve the Faculty Field Liaison.*

- Schedule a follow-up meeting with the student and Faculty Field Liaison to determine whether the concern has been resolved or if further action, such as placement termination, is warranted.
- If placement termination is warranted, document the details of the concern/issue and outline the reasoning why termination was decided. Using your report, the School of Social Work has a Practicum Review process that evaluates the situation and decides on the future direction for the student. (See the Practicum Review Committee Process section.)

Students should also be encouraged to share with their Field Supervisor any struggles or concerns they may have regarding their learning experiences or the placement site. Agency-based supervision is the primary setting for discussion of these issues, and for problem-solving new approaches. If the student and Field Supervisor are unable to develop a mutually agreeable solution, a three-way conference between the student, Field Supervisor and Faculty Field Liaison may be called.

On even more rare occasions, student behavior may transgress your agency norm to the degree that you want the student to leave the placement immediately. Examples of this would be gross negligence of the student's responsibility or a major transgression of the NASW *Code of Ethics*. In these circumstances, please contact your Faculty Field Liaison as soon as possible, and document for the Liaison the details of the concerns that prompted your decision. Using your report, the School of Social Work has a Practicum/Professional Review process that evaluates the situation and decides on the future direction for the student.

### **Practicum Review Committee (PRC) Process**

On the rare occasion that a field education placement is terminated, the following process is requested from the Field Supervisor:

- Document the concerns and the reason(s) for termination in behaviorally specific terms and provide this to the Faculty Field Liaison or Field Education Coordinator. When this documentation is received by the Field Office, the remainder of the PRC procedure and time frames begin.

- Meet with the student and Faculty Field Liaison to discuss the termination in person, as appropriate. This can be an important step in assisting the student to gain understanding of the performance/professionalism that they need to move forward.
- A Practicum Review Committee meeting will be held in which the student, Faculty Field Liaison, the student's Academic Advisor, and a Faculty Advocate meet to review the circumstances that led to the termination and make recommendations to move forward. Documentation from you and the Liaison are reviewed as well as the perspective of the student.
- Typically, after a termination the Field Office will reach out to you in order to see what can be learned from the termination and ensure a solid relationship between you and GVSU School of Social Work.

## **Supervision with the Student**

### **Important Reminders:**

- Students need one hour of structured supervision with their Field Supervisor once a week.
- Schedule supervision on a weekly basis for the same time; supervision should be consistent and regular.
- Students and Field Supervisors each come to supervision prepared with their own agenda.
- Informal supervision can also take place after the student has shadowed and observed workers, allowing the student to respond to and process the experiences.
- Supervision is an interactional process. It is not therapy.

### **Four Areas of Focus for Supervision:**

1. **Content/Administrative:** By content, we mean the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of the student. Discuss what work needs to get done, how it's getting done, and progress made on the student's designated learning activities as indicated in the Student Learning Contract, including any questions or concerns related to specific

learning activities. Check with the student regarding hours, schedule, etc.

2. **Reflective Thinking:** Allow a safe place for the student to examine and articulate her/his thoughts, ideas, and behavior, while also remaining open to alternative thoughts, ideas, and interpretations. Often the subjects that prompt this type of thinking are: how one approached a case or project, and the thinking behind a specific course of action. It is also critical to pay attention to the student's internal world. How does her/his sense of self affect her/his perspective, ideas and decisions? This element of supervision is essential to the student developing critical thinking skills and the ability to self-reflect, self-monitor and self-correct in practice situations. Below are questions that promote reflective thinking (Perrault & Coleman, 2004):

#### **A. Content Reflection Questions**

1. Tell me about your experience.
2. What happened and what was said or done by all involved?
3. What skills/techniques did you use when you (insert task)?
4. What kinds of feelings arose?
5. Tell me one positive and one negative about the experience.
6. What was the most comfortable part of the experience, and the least comfortable?
7. What are some of the social/gender/cultural/economic/ethical/privilege/equality issues related to this experience?

#### **B. Process Questions**

1. How did these issues make a difference?
2. What bothered you about the experience?
3. What was your biggest concern? How did you approach it?
4. How has the experience impacted you?
5. What are your limitations as a helper? What are your strengths as a helper?
6. How does this relate to your social work career?



### **C. Premise Questions**

1. Why is this experience valuable?

### **D. Action Questions**

1. What could have been done differently, and what could you do to make this happen?
2. What is the best outcome of the issue you are dealing with, and what could be different?
3. What are some other similar environments where you could apply this experience?
4. What barriers are you facing? What are your ideas about how to overcome them?

3. **Feedback/Evaluation:** Students need continuous feedback where supervisors acknowledge their good skills, progresses made, and suggest improvements that could be made next time. Effective feedback:

- Is meaningful – it is focused on the learning outcomes associated with the activity.
- Is timely – deliver it when students can make the most of it.
- Identifies and positively reinforces good performance.
- Constructively addresses relevant areas in which the student could improve (Lee & Scoufis 2003).

Providing constructive feedback to the student is as important as providing positive feedback. Being too “nice” and always saying the student is doing a “good” job is just as harmful as not recognizing the areas in which they are excelling (Lotmore, 2014). However, criticism that is not balanced with positive feedback, or that is provided in an unsupportive and authoritarian manner and without advanced preparation or specific suggestions for change, is unlikely to be helpful or lead to positive growth.

4. **Support:** Social Work can be stressful and difficult. Being an undergraduate or graduate social work student is stressful and difficult, as well. A little support goes a long way. Trauma informed supervision practices outline the importance of looking at how the work of serving individuals, families, and communities is impacting the helper. It also assists in eliciting self-care strategies, an important

career long skill. Supportive supervision can be utilized to help the student explore their inter-professional relationships with colleagues at the field placement and assist the student with understanding the nature of professional collegial relationships and address any barriers to these relationships.

**Field Supervisor/Task Coordinator:** In some instances students may be placed in a setting where there is a Task Coordinator and a Field Supervisor. A Task Coordinator may be an individual from another discipline (psychologist, counselor, community organizer, etc.) or a social worker who does not have the required experience or degree to perform the role of Field Supervisor. The Task Coordinator and Field Supervisor should work in collaboration to ensure that:

- the student's learning goals are being met;
- regular feedback is provided;
- there is a plan and common understanding for a supervision schedule; and
- the evaluation of the learning contract will be conducted utilizing the input of each role.

## **Developmental Stages**

While each internship is unique, Sweitzer and King (2017) have defined four developmental stages that are common to student experiences with field education. Understanding these stages can assist a student and their supervisor to anticipate and address areas of challenge or disillusionment that may occur in a proactive manner. The stages, with their associated tasks and concerns include:

1. **Anticipation-** Students at this stage are often excited and eager to move into the “real world” and begin to engage in social work practice. However, along with the eagerness there can be some anxieties, which is a normal in the learning process. Students may wonder if they will be accepted by their internship site, how they will be supervised, and the quality of the experience they will receive. They may also wonder if they are truly ready, competent, and prepared for what the

internship will require of them. Other anxieties may center on meeting the demands of field education along with coursework, employment, family, and other life responsibilities.

Some of the key tasks that assist a student through the anticipation phase are setting clear and achievable goals for the placement, defining the skills needed to attain those goals, develop positive relationship with the field supervisor and other key staff at the organization, check any assumptions made early in the internship to ensure the student has an accurate understanding of their placement, and make an informed commitment to the placement.

2. **Exploration-** In this stage the student is growing in their competence, but not quite fully there. Students are engaging in more responsibilities and increasing independence. The student is interacting with a broader range of professionals at the site and in the community. The two challenges at this stage are assessing and improving. A student and their supervisor are consistently assessing where the student is in their professional growth and development and looking to progress forward and improve their skill set. Students stay in touch with their learning goals and are seeking feedback on progress towards them. Reviewing both successes and failures is an important part of the learning process at his phase. Challenges are a normal part of the learning process. For some students, they may have had a different vision of what the placement would entail than what it actually is, and this will need to be worked through and expectations adjusted. Engaging in the process with the site and discussing challenges openly assists in overcoming obstacles; whereas student disengagement or avoidance of problems may result in disillusionment and impact performance.
3. **Competence-** As confidence grows student enter a feeling of accomplishment. Morale and investment are typically high. Students are better able to appreciate the professional and ethical issues that arise in their placements. Some of the potential challenges in this stage include the stress of trying to meet multiple demands/commitments in and outside the internship. Another potential challenge occurs if students feel they reach a plateau and the

internship becomes repetitive. Student and their field supervisor need to work together to keep the student appropriately engaged in meaningful activities that promote continued growth and not let the field placement become stagnant.

4. **Culmination-** Students are approaching the completion of the internship and their social work program. Students may feel a combination of achievement and some sadness over the ending of the experience and discharge/transfer of clients or responsibilities. There may be anxiety about finding employment and economic considerations. There may be simultaneous conflicting emotions. Students need to face their feelings, both positive and negative and have appropriate ways to express them. Students need to proactively identify ways to say goodbye to clients, colleagues, supervisors, classmates, and friends in the program or transition to different relationships upon entering the workforce. As well, students redefine relationships with individuals (family and friends, etc.) outside of the program that were impacted by the rigors of internship and coursework.

## **Learning Contract and Student Evaluation**

The Learning Contract is created as a cooperative effort between the student, the Field Supervisor, and the Faculty Field Liaison. Each Learning Contract is unique and is based on what the Field Supervisor and agency can teach, what the student hopes to learn, and what the school expects the student to learn (Bogo & Vayda, 1998). The Learning Contract provides us with a way of holding the student accountable for specific accomplishments and conversely holds your agency responsible for providing specific agreed to opportunities.

Essentially, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has established Competencies and associated Behaviors that each student needs to accomplish. The Learning Contract allows the student and Field Supervisor to establish specific tasks for how the student will accomplish each Competency. The student and Field Supervisor also identify how these tasks are to be verified during the evaluation.

Aside from providing the student with direction and learning opportunities, the Learning Contract is the basis for evaluating the progress of the student at the end of each semester. Your Faculty Field Liaison will meet with you and your student at the end of each semester to evaluate the student's performance. It is most productive if you and your student have reviewed their evaluation prior to this meeting. This is most conveniently and effectively done as part of the supervision process and allows for further development of your relationship with your student. It provides an opportunity for you and the student to discuss their strengths and areas for growth, any difference of perspective regarding the student's performance, and opportunities and direction for the coming semester. To access the BSW and MSW Foundational Learning Contract [here](#). To access the MSW Advanced Practice Learning Contract, click [here](#).

Please see **Appendix C** for a list of the CSWE Competencies and associated Behaviors.

## **Performance Improvement Plan**

At the end of each semester, Field Supervisors are asked to evaluate the student's performance using the learning activities identified within the student's Learning Contract. The rating scale is as follows:

- 1) Unacceptable competence
- 2) Minimal competence
- 3) Emerging competence
- 4) Competence
- 5) Advanced competence

A performance improvement plan is needed for a practice area receiving a score of 1 "unacceptable competence" or 2 "minimal competence."

Please note that a performance improvement plan can be implemented at any time during the semester should it be warranted.

The performance plan should:

1. Clearly identify what skill(s) or behavior(s) needs improvement and identify any associated goal(s);

2. Include what specific actions the student will take to demonstrate improvement;
3. Include specific deadlines;
4. Indicate what measures of success will be utilized to determine if the remedial plan is successful; and
5. Have all parties' signatures on the plan (Student, Field Supervisor, Liaison).

Please see **Appendix D** for a sample performance improvement plan.

## **Conclusion**

This handbook is meant to provide you with the basic framework of a field placement, as well as practice wisdom Field Supervisors have accrued. During your time with Grand Valley State University School of Social Work we will be inviting you to join us for field related events with other supervisors to share experiences and ideas. We hope that you will add to our knowledge! Again, we appreciate your willingness to assist in the growth of our students and our profession.



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## **Appendix A: Sample Questions for Student Interviews**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you choose social work as a career path?
3. What do you consider to be your strengths and areas of improvement?
4. How would your former professor or past supervisor describe you?
5. What type of work environment do you prefer?
6. What do you know about our organization?
7. What do you know about the issues faced by our clients/consumers?
8. What interests you in this internship?
9. What do you expect to learn or gain from this internship?
10. How would you assess your writing and communication skills?
11. What type of job-related skills have you developed that may help you in this internship?
12. How do you handle deadlines and effectively managing your time?
13. What has been the most challenging part of your education?
14. Give me an example of when you worked with a team.
15. Give me an example or a situation in which you faced difficulty at work or school. How did you overcome that difficulty?

16. Give me an example of how you dealt with a conflict with another person/classmate/colleague/professor, etc.
17. What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in the next five years?
18. What does your upcoming school/work schedule look like? How do you plan to manage an internship in addition to your other responsibilities?
19. Do you have any specific questions or concerns about this internship?

## **Appendix B: Orientation Checklist**

- Mission statement, philosophy, history of agency
- Map of building, tour of physical setting, break rooms, bathrooms, conference rooms, storage/supply rooms
- Introduction to key staff
- How to use the telephone system
- Location of mailbox, supplies, copy machine, postage
- Mileage logs
- Timesheets
- Staff meetings: when, where
- Computer operation, log-in, regulations, access codes, email, electronic health record
- Security of clients, building, staff
- Access to the building (keys)
- Parking and/or parking permit
- Confidentiality, HIPAA requirements
- Use of agency vehicles, policy regarding the transporting of clients
- Personal safety/home visit safety protocols
- Other agency policy & procedures
- Dress code policy

- Determine student's weekly schedule including school and agency breaks
- Preferred reporting procedure when student is sick or late
- Set up formal supervision schedule and discuss purpose/function of supervision
- Smoking rules/policy
- Lunch breaks
- Review necessary training the student should attend
- Review of the State of Michigan Mandatory Reporting & Duty to Warn Provision
- Professional behavior/communication with staff and clients
- Review implications of social media; share the agency's social media policy if applicable.

## **Appendix C: CSWE Competencies and Behaviors**

### **Generalist**

#### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

#### **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and

- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multidisciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;

- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;



- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

## **Advanced Generalist**

### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Advanced Generalist social workers demonstrate ethical and professional interactions based upon training in multiple evidence-based and best-practice perspectives at all levels of practice. They use current and emerging technology as appropriate to engage with others to effect social change. Advanced Generalists engage in self-reflection and seek collegial critique of their professional skills and integrate this feedback regularly into autonomous practice. They analyze complex, multidimensional situations and utilize ethical frameworks to guide their interactions with constituents. The Advanced Generalist embraces holistic and collaborative inter-professional relationships in which the contributions of each profession are combined to optimize outcomes. They are committed to lifelong learning and critical thinking, and understand the social environment is constantly evolving and they must evolve as well. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Critically evaluate professional supervision from colleagues regarding practice effectiveness to develop a professional identity and optimize professional use of self;
- Engage in self-reflection that deepens their understanding and implementation of professional values, ethics and boundaries;
- Resolve ethical dilemmas encountered in practice situations by applying a multi-systemic understanding of social work values; and
- Critically evaluate the use of technology to engage with others and make their practice more efficient and effective.

### **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Advanced Generalists consistently examine the consequences of systemic oppression and their impacts of implicit bias on all populations served and their social environments. They assess the strengths of all cultures from an empowerment perspective to effectively advocate with and on behalf of all client populations. Advanced Generalists structure interventions to increase the choices and opportunities of all populations, especially those who are vulnerable, oppressed, or disadvantaged. They translate their knowledge of ecological systems into culturally responsive services and service delivery systems, utilizing well-developed self-awareness to recognize the influences of their own cultural backgrounds and manage the influences of their personal biases and values. Advanced Generalists understand and respect their constituents' points of view. They understand diversity as comprising multiple perspectives, and strive to achieve inclusiveness and respect for differences of all types. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Develop and implement interventions that incorporate different perceptions of social problems and issues across diverse cultures and initiate proactive strategies to address discrimination;

- Recognize the roles of language and communication style in promoting and sustaining oppression at all levels; consistently use non-oppressive, empowering language;
- Identify and challenge systemic forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Provide leadership that affirmatively contributes to the development and growth of culturally responsive practices; and
- Recognize and effectively manage or eliminate personal biases and oppressive behavior in 19 personal practices and spheres of influence.

### **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Advanced Generalist social workers advocate for fundamental human rights and justice. They examine the impact of historical legacies, global interconnections, economic systems, and the political context which impacts human rights. Advanced Generalists critically synthesize theories of human need and social justice to promote justice and human rights and stand in solidarity with disenfranchised groups. They create strategies and advocate for change so that goods and services are distributed equitably; and civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural rights are recognized and protected. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Critically evaluate historical contexts, global interconnections, economic systems and political contexts that impact the human rights of all;
- Engage with constituents to jointly analyze create and advocate for practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice; and
- Provide leadership in advocating for human rights and social, economic and environmental justice.

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

Advanced Generalist social workers are educated to function as responsible consumers, producers and evaluators of research. They think critically about the protection of vulnerable populations and are culturally sensitive when designing and evaluating research processes. Advanced Generalists critically evaluate published research and outcome studies to identify strong evidence-based practices for use with constituents. They design systematic, reflexive research consistent with ethical standards and informed by multi-disciplinary sources. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Generate conclusions based on research that promote linkages between research and theory, practice, and policy;
- Formulate and articulate implications for research, practice and policy to advocate for constituents based upon the synthesis of research; and
- Produce professional reports demonstrating intellect, integrity, honesty and justification for conclusions and contribute to the knowledge base of social work practice.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Advanced Generalist social workers consume, produce and evaluate social policy. They theorize how human rights, social justice, and social welfare are directed and influenced by

both private and public policies at all levels. Advanced Generalists discern emerging trends, anticipate consequences, apply their understanding of the myriad influences that impact policy, and actively engage in change strategies to help shape efforts to provide for the common good. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Develop, implement and evaluate policies at the organizational level;
- Provide leadership in shaping emerging organizational policies that impact systems and constituents; and
- Integrate into practice the connection between social welfare policies, human rights, and social and economic justice.

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

Advanced Generalist social workers engage with, and on behalf of, diverse constituencies as a fundamental component of autonomous social work practice. Engagement with constituents based upon strengths and excellent professional judgment forms a critical underpinning to successfully address issues or problems. An understanding of systemic barriers, oppression, and often conflicting interactions between multiple systems is critical to the ability of the advanced generalist practitioner to effectively engage with others. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Develop professional relationships to engage with constituents in a collaborative, strengths based approach; and
- Adapt best practices to engage key stakeholders across all systems.

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

Advanced Generalist social workers design and utilize interactive assessment processes grounded in collaboration and partnership with constituents. They understand constituents are multidimensional and that change emanates from a holistic, culturally-grounded, empowering assessment. Advanced Generalists differentiate their assessments through an examination of human behavior in the social environment, and include a variety of perspectives from significant others involved with the constituent. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Analyze constituent issues from a multi-systemic framework and mutually identify goal areas and best practice intervention strategies; and
- Design and implement evidence-based assessments that embody holistic and culturally grounded approaches.

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

Advanced Generalist social workers are autonomous professionals who develop interventions using knowledge of human behavior and the social environment as well as evidence-based/best practice approaches to advocate and intervene for various constituencies. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Autonomously plan and intervene with constituents in practice settings, utilizing interprofessional approaches; and
- Utilizing advanced practice roles implement evidence-based practice approaches to intervene with constituencies.

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

Advanced Generalist social workers embrace formative and summative evaluation as critical to effective and efficient service delivery. They design and/or apply models of research and evaluation and select appropriate processes to evaluate engagement, assessment and/or interventions. Advanced Generalists demonstrate understanding and self-awareness of their socialization to various beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes, and biases that may affect their professional judgment about research and evaluation. Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- Analyze and implement evaluation instruments;
- Apply evidence-based methodologies to evaluate efficacy and efficiency of practice outcomes; and
- Integrate evaluation outcomes into practice to continuously improve effective approaches with constituents.

## **Appendix D: Performance Improvement Plan**

A performance improvement plan may be developed at any point in field education where additional supports are necessary to assist and guide a student in developing core social work competencies. A performance improvement plan is required if a student receives scores of 1 “unacceptable competence” or 2 “minimal competence” on an end of the semester field evaluation.

1. Identify the specific skill (s) or behavior (s) that needs improvement including goals to promote improvement with corresponding competency/behavior (s).
  
2. Identify the specific actions that the student will take with time frames.
  
3. List the supports that the Field Supervisor, Task Coordinator, or Faculty Field Liaison will provide.
  
4. Identify the time frame and process for review (face to face, phone, email, other).
  
5. Indicate how the plan will be measured to determine if the student was successful in developing the needed skills/behaviors.
  
6. Potential next steps if skills/behaviors are not remediated.

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Student Signature and Date

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Field Supervisor Signature and Date

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Faculty Field Liaison Signature and Date