



*The* UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA  
*Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work*



# ONLINE FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

REVISED MARCH 2023

*Anne and Henry Zarrow Hall- Norman, Oklahoma*

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## CONTACT US

<http://www.ou.edu/content/cas/socialwork>

### ONLINE FIELD PROGRAM

**Tiffany Adamson, MSW, LCSW**  
**Director of Field Education**  
Field Education Coordinator  
[\(918\) 660-3358](tel:(918)660-3358)  
[tadamson@ou.edu](mailto:tadamson@ou.edu)

**Rachel McBride, MSW, LCSW**  
**Field Education Coordinator**  
[r.mcbride@ou.edu](mailto:r.mcbride@ou.edu)

**Natalie Stout-Tucker**  
**Field Support Specialist, Online  
MSW Program**  
[nstout@ou.edu](mailto:nstout@ou.edu)

**Michae Haas**  
**Field Education Support Specialist -  
Online MSW Program**  
[mdhaas@ou.edu](mailto:mdhaas@ou.edu)

### Faculty & Staff

<https://www.ou.edu/cas/socialwork/about/faculty-and-staff>

### Field Education Webpage

<http://www.ou.edu/content/cas/socialwork/field-education.html>

### Student Performance Policy

[https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/cas/socialwork/docs/policies-and-procedures/2022-2023%20Student%20Performance%20Policy%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/cas/socialwork/docs/policies-and-procedures/2022-2023%20Student%20Performance%20Policy%20(2).pdf)

## **FIELD PRACTICUM PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **Mission Statement**

The Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work advances relevant and high-quality knowledge and values of social work practice useful in preparing competent social workers who can elevate the status of people, populations, and communities that experience considerable vulnerability and injustice within Oklahoma and the broader society.

### **The University of Oklahoma and the School of Social Work**

The University of Oklahoma Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work has been continuously accredited since accreditation of social work programs in higher education became possible, first by the American Association of Schools of Social Work and later by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The MSW program at the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, offered both in Norman, Tulsa and Online, is the longest established accredited MSW program in the state and includes full, part time, and advanced standing enrollment options. The Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work is a program of the University of Oklahoma Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences.

### **The Role of the Field Practicum in Social Work Education**

Field education (or Practicum) is the cornerstone of social work education and allows social work students to integrate classroom learning with social work practice. The Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work partners with well over 600 affiliated agencies and facilities across Oklahoma and the world to offer social work students direct learning experiences with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. On-site social work field education is provided by field instructors who are affiliated with practicum sites and serve in both an instructional and a mentoring role for students. Faculty assigned to the Field Education Program serve as Faculty Liaisons and work with sites and instructors to ensure high-quality experiences for both undergraduate and graduate students.

In all accredited programs in social work, field education is a major part of the curriculum. At the University of Oklahoma, students in social work earn more of their credit hours in field education than in any other curricular area.

The Council on Social Work Education refers to field education as the ‘signature pedagogy’ of social work. As the Council (2008) notes, *“The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies”* (CSWE, 2008).

This manual highlights the policies that guide the online field education program. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.ou.edu/cas/socialwork/>.



## FIELD EDUCATION CURRICULUM

### Practicum Courses

Each practicum is divided into two developmentally linked courses. Because of the cumulative and developmental nature of the practicum learning experience, and assessments of student performance involved in a practicum, to complete Foundation Year or Concentration Year practicum requirements, students complete both courses during a practicum placement that is two consecutive semesters in length.

#### **Graduate Foundation Year - SWK 5413 and SWK 5423**

Foundation year students must accumulate a minimum total of 400 hours in their practicum, earning a total of 6 credit hours.

#### **Graduate Concentration Year - SWK 5816 and SWK 5826**

Concentration year students must accumulate a minimum total of 500 hours in their practicum, earning a total of 12 credit hours. SWK 5826 serves as the Comprehensive Master's Thesis course for degree completion.

## PRACTICUM OPTIONS: HOURS & ENROLLMENT

### **Graduate Practicum: Foundation Year**

Foundation year students accumulate a minimum total of **400 hours in practicum**, earn 6 credit hours total (3 credit hours in SWK 5413 & 3 credit hours in SWK 5423) and enroll in practicum courses.

Students will be placed in Field Units which provide students the opportunity for multiple exposure within different areas of practice, such as: *Children and Families, Community-Based (homelessness and youth), Corrections/Forensics, Healthcare, Mental Health, and School Social Work*. Specific information on the field units are provided at the mandatory Foundation Year Practicum Orientations.

**Concurrent across 2 Semesters:** Enroll in 3 credit hours each semester (SWK 5413 & SWK 5423) along with foundation coursework and complete **a minimum of 13-16 hours** each week in practicum, depending on the semesters enrolled. Foundation year students must accumulate a minimum of **200 practicum hours each semester** for the total 400 hours of practicum that are required.

**Foundation Year Practicum: CONCURRENT - SWK 5413 & SWK 5423**

<b>Number of Hours:</b>	<b>400 Total Practicum Hours - Minimum 200 Hours each semester</b>
<b>Hours per Week:</b>	<b>13-16 hours/week minimum requirement</b>
<b>Credit Hours:</b>	<b>3 Credit Hours each semester, (6 hours total)</b>
<b># of Weeks</b>	<b>Dependent on the # of weeks per semester (No Spring Break)</b>
<b>Enroll In:</b>	<b>SWK 5413 (3 hours) and SWK 5423 (3 hours)</b>

**Graduate Practicum: Concentration Year**

Concentration year students accumulate a minimum of **500 hours in practicum** and earn 12 credit hours total and conduct practicum typically in their last two semesters of the program and after successful completion of all pre-requisites. Students enroll in 6 credit hours each semester (SWK 5816 & SWK 5826) and complete a minimum of **16-20 hours** each week in practicum, dependent upon the semesters enrolled.

**Concentration Year Practicum: CONCURRENT - SWK 5816 & SWK 5826:**

<b>Number of Hours:</b>	<b>500 Total Practicum Hours Minimum</b>
<b>Hours per Week:</b>	<b>16-20 hours/week minimum requirement</b>
<b>Credit Hours:</b>	<b>6 Credit Hours each semester, (12 hours total)</b>
<b># of Weeks:</b>	<b>Dependent on the # of weeks per semester (No Spring Break)</b>
<b>Enroll In:</b>	<b>SWK 5816 (6 hours) and SWK 5826 (6 hours)</b>

## **PRACTICUM READINESS STANDARDS**

### **Practicum Readiness Assessment Process**

#### **Co-requisites, Pre-requisites, and Academic Standing: Foundation Year**

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites for SWK 5413: Graduate standing in Social Work; Permission of Field Education Coordinator;

- SWK 5403 (Professional Social Work),
- SWK 5333 (Human Diversity and Societal Oppression),
- SWK 5433 (Human Lifespan Development),
- SWK 5373 (TPE I: Individuals),
- SWK 5083 (Social Work Research Methods),
- SWK 5313 (Policy Practice in Social Work)

Pre-requisites/ Co-requisites for SWK 5423 (continuation of SWK 5413): Graduate standing in Social Work; Permission of Field Education Coordinator;

- Pre-requisite: SWK 5413 (Practicum I),
- SWK 5403 (Professional Social Work),
- SWK 5333 (Human Diversity and Societal Oppression),
- SWK 5433 (Human Lifespan Development),
- SWK 5373 (TPE I: Individuals),
- SWK 5083 (Social Work Research Methods),
- SWK 5383 (TPE II: Families and Groups),
- SWK 5393 (TPE III: Communities & Organizations),
- SWK 5313 (Policy Practice in Social Work)

Students must meet all designated course requirements to enroll and/or remain in practicum courses. Foundation Year students must have completed their first year of coursework or be concurrently enrolled in required foundation year courses to be enrolled in practicum. Foundation Year students may proceed with practicum planning while they are re-taking a failed required course. Foundation Year students may not move into concentration year courses until their foundation year coursework, including the foundation year practicum, has been successfully completed.

Foundation Year students on academic probation (below a 3.0 GPA) may proceed or continue with practicum; however, students are advised that a practicum grade will not affect, i.e. raise, their GPA, since practicum courses are graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. Students are also advised to consider the cost of practicum courses in making decisions about whether to proceed with practicum while attempting to raise their GPA.

#### **Co-requisites, Pre-requisites, and Academic Standing: Concentration Year**

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites for SWK 5816: Graduate standing in Social Work; Permission of Field Education Coordinator; Successful completion of all Foundation Year coursework or BASW equivalent curriculum, including Practicum I & II:

- SWK 5523 (Macro Systems in Practice)
- SWK 5513 (Client-Centered Direct Practice)

Pre-requisites/ Co-requisites for SWK 5826 (continuation of SWK 5816): Graduate standing in Social Work; Permission of Field Education Coordinator;

- SWK 5816 (Practicum III),
- SWK 5523 (Macro Systems in Practice),
- SWK 5513 (Client-Centered Direct Practice)
- SWK 5973 (Advanced Integrative Seminar)

Concentration Year students must have completed or be concurrently enrolled in required concentration year courses to be enrolled in practicum. Concentration Year students may proceed with practicum planning while they are re-taking a failed required course. The Graduate College requires Concentration Year students to have a 3.0 GPA to enroll in the second half of practicum (SWK 5826). The second Concentration year practicum courses, SWK 5826, is designated as the comprehensive exam course and students must have a 3.0 GPA to be enrolled in the comprehensive exam.

### **Academic and Professional Behavior Standards in Student Performance Policy**

Due to the nature of professional social work practice, schools of social work have different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. The goals of the School are to provide top quality professional preparation for our students. Academic standards for the Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work are set forth in the *Student Performance Policy*. All social work students are introduced to this policy during the admissions process. The ultimate goals of the standards in this policy are to monitor and assist students in their pursuit of a successful academic experience. The standards are linked to students' abilities to become effective social work professionals and are provided so that students and faculty can be clear about expectations and procedures to address academic difficulties. Through the practicum, student performance standards are subsequently linked to the well-being of clients served by students both during their educational experience and after they graduate from school.

### **The Student Performance Policy and Practicum Readiness**

Practicum is an academic experience that seeks to develop, but also depends upon the student's ability to interact in a competent and professional manner with clients, supervisors, work colleagues and community professionals. The Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work is bound by the NASW Code of Ethics in its responsibility to protect the best interests of people with and for whom social work students have professional responsibility.

If, in the academic judgment of school faculty, a student does not demonstrate basic skills and abilities which are set forth in the *Student Performance Policy*, skills which are necessary to acquire and perform professional practice skills, the student will not be allowed to go forward with a practicum experience until those skills or abilities have been developed and those basic requirements are met. (See: *Student Performance Policy*.) Depending upon the circumstances involved, in accordance with the *Student Performance Policy*, a Level I, II or III Review may be

set, and the student may be allowed to develop a plan to address the skills and abilities in question. That plan must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the academic and professional judgment of the social work faculty that:

- 1) The student has identified and is committed to the necessary corrections they must make to meet basic requirements, and
- 2) The student has reasonable prospects of both successful performances, and the safeguarding of the best interests of the people for whom the student will have responsibility in the practicum.

In a Level III Review, the student must demonstrate the following:

- Reflection upon and acknowledgement of the problems which have been identified
- Description of the cause or nature of the difficulties involved
- Identification of the student's contribution to the problems
- Evidence that the difficulties are no longer a problem in the classroom or in other environments
- Development of a realistic strategy to prevent the identified difficulties from interfering with performance in a practicum placement
- A plan for using practicum supervision to monitor and support this strategy

If, in the judgment of faculty, the student has not been successful in developing a workable plan to meet basic requirements, the faculty may recommend disenrollment from the program in accordance with applicable policy.

If the student is permitted to proceed with planning for a practicum, to lend support to the student's prospects for a successful practicum, prospective practicum sites may receive information from the school relevant to the faculty decision to allow the student to go forward, along with any identified special placement considerations. For the same reason, the school may reserve the right to select the practicum site for the student.

Although it is the school's responsibility to make every reasonable effort to help the student secure a placement, the school cannot require a site to accept a student. All practicum students must successfully interview and be accepted by a school-approved site that fulfills the educational requirements of the practicum, within the timeframe noted on the practicum calendar for that semester and within the planning policies of the student's online MSW program. It is the student's responsibility as an emerging professional to assume the professional responsibility of successfully securing a practicum placement. If the student is unsuccessful per the online Field Education program's requirements, the student will not be allowed to go forward with a practicum placement and will be required to postpone continuation in the Field Education program until an upcoming semester.

A student who cannot fulfill the field education requirement in social work cannot continue in the social work program. If the student is not successful in his/her efforts to either begin or successfully complete a practicum, he/she will be dismissed from the social work program in accordance with University policy.

## **Physical and Mental Health**

When students indicate, or their behavior demonstrates, that personal difficulties or challenges are not sufficiently resolved to allow them to work effectively with others, in accordance with the *Student Performance Policy*, the school may conduct a Level Review and students may be delayed in enrollment in the Practicum or withdrawn from enrollment in the Practicum.

Field practicum courses offer applied experiential learning in actual practice settings. These learning contexts are very different from classroom settings. Social work practicum courses offer students an opportunity to work with distressed people from diverse backgrounds who are experiencing a wide range of difficulties. Practicum students work with real clients.

Social work is a demanding profession. It can be physically demanding, mentally confusing, intellectually challenging, personally and interpersonally conflictual, socially uncomfortable and emotionally upsetting. The practicum can present a challenge for students experiencing limitations in the emotional and physical resources needed to meet these challenges, while maintaining the highest level of academic and professional performance and providing appropriate and effective assistance to clients.

The School of Social Work makes every effort to ensure that the physical and emotional challenges of students do not interfere with meeting the challenges of the profession and the protection of clients' best interests. It is critical that social work students not allow personal problems, medical conditions, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, cognitive impairment or mental health difficulties to jeopardize their work with clients. Students who have personal problems or challenges that may affect their ability to assume the professional roles, demeanor, boundaries and responsibilities involved in practicum should discuss these concerns with the Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible before or during the practicum planning process. Students already placed in practicum settings should discuss these concerns with their faculty liaison as soon as problems emerge.

When students indicate, or their behavior demonstrates, that personal difficulties or challenges are not sufficiently resolved to allow them to work effectively with others, in accordance with the *Student Performance Policy*, the school may conduct a Level Review and students may be delayed in enrolling in the Practicum or withdrawn from enrollment in the Practicum.

## **Student Impairment**

911 will be called if at any point during the practicum, or during the planning process leading up to the practicum, a student appears to be an immediate threat to themselves, or someone else, or is incapable of caring for themselves.

## **Disabilities**

Challenges related to a disability that would require accommodation to meet practicum standards must be identified before or during the practicum planning process. The University of Oklahoma is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities. Students may register with the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) in Norman. This office will consult with the student to determine appropriate accommodation for both classroom/didactic settings and practicum settings. The instructor of record for the

practicum courses (the Field Education Coordinator) must receive notification of the two types of reasonable accommodation(s), classroom and practicum site, from the ADRC office to facilitate the accommodations in the practicum planning process. The Field Education Coordinator will share these reasonable practicum site accommodation requests with the Faculty Liaison and practicum site.

To discuss potential accommodation, please contact the ADRC at 730 College Avenue, (ph.) 405.325.3852, or [adrc@ou.edu](mailto:adrc@ou.edu).

### **Ethical Standards**

The National Association of Social Workers is a professional membership organization that works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members; to create and maintain professional standards; and to advance sound social policies. Among the academic standards set forth in the *Student Performance Policy* are the ethical standards embodied in the *NASW Code of Ethics*.

Practicum students must exhibit a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics. Students must demonstrate commitment to the essential values of social work, including respect for the strengths, dignity and worth of every individual and his/her rights to self-determination and a just share of society's resources (social and economic justice).

Students must demonstrate active engagement with the learning process. Behavior, classroom and practicum performance must demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, or students may not be allowed to participate in practicum.

Behavior and statements contrary to ethical standards as prescribed in the NASW Code of Ethics may be cause for denial of admission to or continuance in programs of the School of Social Work. See <https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics> for a copy of the NASW Code of Ethics.

### **Spoken and Written Language Requirements**

Written communication: Students must demonstrate sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and to adequately complete all written assignments, as specified by faculty.

Oral communication: Students must demonstrate sufficient skills in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, complete all oral assignments, and meet the objectives of practicum experiences, as specified by faculty. (See the Student Performance Policy and Practicum Readiness).

### **Practicum Readiness and Academic Information Sharing**

All faculty members are involved in students' academic performance and the formation of students' professionalism and are responsible for reporting concerns to the Director /Associate Director of the school, and other faculty as appropriate to assure professional behavior, ethical practice and academic achievement. Information disclosed during student meetings or

correspondence with faculty, faculty advisors, field coordinators, faculty liaisons, field instructors or school administrators will NOT be kept confidential if the information raises concerns about the student's professional and/or academic performance. Faculty, Field Education Coordinators, school administrators and field instructors will share pertinent information with each other and the student for the professional purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns.

The practicum agency serves as the academic setting for the field internship course. The Field Instructor, Field Education Coordinator, along with the overall academic program and Faculty Liaison, collaborate to support and guide the student's development as a professional social worker. To work together effectively, it is essential that relevant information be shared between the parties involved. This information will be shared to protect clients as well as students, and to facilitate placement and learning in all aspects of field education.

Information is relevant when it affects the student's work relationships, the learning process, or has potentially negative impact on clients, field instructors, agency staff, faculty, and/or student colleagues. Relevant information can originate as student disclosures and/or faculty and field instructor/preceptor observations. Relevant information can include student records maintained by the School, including both written and/or digital communication and documentation of verbal interactions. Relevant information can also include that which may arise while resolving concerns and issues, as well as problem solving in the field or the classroom.

When formally considering a specific field placement, the School of Social Work has a responsibility to share relevant information about previous internship experiences with prospective field instructor(s). This will be accomplished by providing prospective field instructors with relevant field education documentation, which may include completed evaluations of the student's practicum performance, Field Education Contracts and Evaluations, Performance Improvement Plans, and practicum documentation.

In determining the types of information that warrant sharing among involved parties, faculty and field affiliates will subscribe to the existing policies of the School and the larger University, as well as adhere to the guidelines stipulated in the NASW Code of Ethics, and they will follow University procedures related to student performance issues.

## **ESTABLISHING THE PRACTICUM PLACEMENT**

### **Email Notifications**

Students in practicum, or preparing for practicum coursework, will be held responsible for checking their OU email account regularly for vital information. The University of Oklahoma has established email as an acceptable means of official communication. All OU students, faculty, and staff have assigned OU email accounts. All communication from the Field Education Program will be sent to students at their OU email account or through their canvas course. Email sent to this account is expected to be read in a timely manner. Students are advised to use their OU email accounts exclusively when sending email correspondence to OU faculty. On occasion, messages and/or attachments sent from personal addresses are filtered out by the



OU system. Students who choose to have email forwarded to another email address do so at their own risk.

Students must be aware that if they do receive an email message from a faculty member at a personal non-OU email address, it may be a result of the faculty member using the “reply” function, or the writer’s email program “remembering” the student’s personal address.

In keeping with University policy, a student’s failure to receive or read communication from the Field Education Program in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing about or complying with the content of the official communication.

### **Adherence to Deadlines**

Students who do not comply with established deadlines in practicum planning may be required to defer their practicum to a future semester. Once placed in practicum, students who do not comply with established deadlines may be suspended from practicum.

### **Practicum Planning Considerations**

Students’ individual interests, career goals, educational needs, previous experience, and current life situation are all considered when making practicum placement assignments. Students provide information about past work, internship and volunteer experiences, and include pertinent personal information, learning needs, concerns and desires through the practicum application process. In making student assignments, the Field Education faculty considers the learning and personal needs and interests of the student, the learning opportunities available at practicum sites, and the experience and expectations of site Field Instructors. When applicable, consideration is also given to traineeships, stipends, paid practicums, and scholarships. The Field Education Coordinator makes the final determination concerning each student’s practicum placement.

Practicum placements are also dependent on the availability of sites. The School cannot guarantee placements that meet the specific interests or time constraints of individual students. For example, placements with weekend or evening hours are rare as most sites do not provide active program activities and degreed social work supervision after 5:00 PM and on weekends.

By School policy, students are expected to identify a practicum site within a 50-mile radius of their home. When established sites are not available, for example in a rural area, students are expected to explore and network in their own or nearby communities with health and social service providers to identify site and Field Instructor possibilities. In these situations, the Field Education Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the identified placement possibility is developed to: 1) meet the needs of the individual student; and 2) meet all structural and academic requirements of the Field Education Program. If these criteria cannot be met, a student cannot be placed at that site.

### **Practicum Scholarships/Stipends**

Occasionally practicum sites offer students either stipends or financial compensation (paid practicum) for work as a practicum student. These placements are short-term internship positions that typically do not continue after the completion of the practicum. In some cases,

the site provides the funding for the student placement and in others the funding comes from an outside source, such as AmeriCorps, City Year, or other grant-type programs. Sites and organizations that provide payment of any kind for students determine which students will be awarded the stipend, the amount of the compensation, the requirements for receipt of payment, and the payment schedule. Students who enter this type of paid arrangement with an agency/program will need to complete all necessary paperwork per agency standards. The University will not participate in the exchange of finances during the practicum experience and does not assume any financial responsibility.

Practicum scholarships that have been provided to the School of Social Work for practicum placements are administered by the School. Notices are sent to all qualifying students announcing applicable School and donor requirements, course and practicum placement requirements, and the application process and interviewing schedule for these stipends.

It is important that educational considerations not be compromised whenever financial compensation becomes part of the practicum. Both students and practicum sites must cooperate to protect the educational nature of the practicum. The focus should always be on an ongoing process of increasing range and depth of practice knowledge and developing related skills. There must be time allowed to reflect upon and analyze practicum experiences; obtain systematic and regular feedback related to performance; and receive structured formal weekly supervision.

If at any point during the student's practicum process, a paid practicum opportunity becomes available, the student may need to submit a new Practicum Proposal that must reflect the most up to date plan. The student must be in communication with the Field Education office regarding these changes upon notification of the proposed changes.

### **Student Safety During Practicum**

Maintaining the safety of students in practicum placements is a primary concern of the School of Social Work. In required training, Field Instructors are advised to provide for practicum students written policies, guidelines, procedures and training that is pertinent to staff and client safety at the practicum site. In Practicum Orientations or seminars, students are advised to secure their personal safety through adherence to reasonable precautions, and adherence to practicum site policies, training, procedures and guidelines. Students are instructed to consult with their Field Instructors and practicum sites about all safety and liability concerns. They are further instructed to notify their faculty liaison should their safety concerns not be addressed in this process.

### **Home Visits During Practicum**

If home visitation is customary to the role of the social worker at the practicum site, practicum students are permitted to make home visits. Students who are expected to make home visits must receive site training pertaining to high-risk or potentially volatile home visits prior to making the first home visit. Students may make home visits in the company of agency staff, or unaccompanied, provided they have received thorough training and have immediate access to support from their Field Instructor or a designated preceptor at the practicum site. No student

is permitted to make home visits unless the student has been adequately trained and fully informed of safety procedures.

### **Hotline/On-Call Coverage During Practicum**

If hotline/on-call coverage is a customary social work role at the practicum site, or an expected part of a social work practicum, or it is an essential learning activity for students, this should be discussed at the time of the pre-placement interview. When hotline/on-call coverage is an expected part of a social work practicum, it should be a very limited part of the practicum experience. When it is an expected part of a practicum, students who do not want to provide hotline/on-call coverage during their practicum should seek a different placement.

Practicum students may provide hotline/on-call coverage only after they have completed site-appropriate training during the practicum, and only if they have access to immediate support from their Field Instructor or a designated preceptor at the practicum site. No student is permitted to provide hotline/on-call coverage unless the student has been adequately trained and fully informed of safety procedures.

### **International Placements language**

Requests for International Placements: It is the student's responsibility to initiate communication regarding an International (outside of the United States) placement.

Students must email the Field Education Coordinator to schedule a meeting in order to initiate exploration of an international placement prior to the time planning for their upcoming practicum begins.

Due to the increased resources necessary to ensure that international placements meet the expectations of the Field Education program, international placements will only be approved when a student can demonstrate that degree completion will not be possible without such a placement. Further, students must meet the following criteria to be considered for an international placement:

- Scope of work – The work of the agency must provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the social work competencies and support new MSW level learning for the student.
- Supervision –The agency must have a social worker(s), therapist(s), counselor(s), and/or another helping professional who is fluent in English and willing to complete the required trainings and who is available and recommended by the agency and approved by the University to supervise and support as either the Field Instructor or Preceptor for the student onsite. If there is not a Field Instructor onsite, there must be both an approved Preceptor onsite and an identified and approved Field Instructor offsite.
- Facilities – The student must have access to the technology and supports that allow for meeting course assignments and deadlines.
- Safety provisions – Student safety is a top priority of our program; The student must work with the agency-based Field Instructor and Preceptor to identify plans for any safety concerns (see: Safety in Practicum).

- **Student Professional Liability Insurance.** Student professional liability insurance is a requirement for all students. For students placed outside of the United States of America, American-based companies insurance coverage is not typically recognized, and it will be on the student to identify the appropriate insuring practices of the local practitioners and to communicate their plan for meeting this requirement to their Field Education Coordinator.

Approval by the Field Education Coordinator is contingent upon the student securing a course appropriate practicum placement; a social work degreed Field Instructor; and satisfaction/completion of all practicum requirements, including the completion of the practicum proposal. In addition, a meeting between the Field Education Coordinator, student, and proposed Field Instructor may be held via a web-based meeting space.

### **Third Party Placement Companies**

The Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work's Practicum Program does not collaborate with or financially support third party placement companies.

## **PRACTICUM PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES:**

### **Mandatory Practicum Planning Orientations**

Students must participate in the Practicum Planning course and meet all required deadlines during the semester prior to their planned Practicum courses. Students who do not participate in this Practicum Planning course or meet required deadlines will not be allowed to go forward with planning a practicum placement. These students will be required to defer their practicum until a future semester. This may cause delays in completing the MSW program; these students should meet with the appropriate person(s) to revise their degree plan.

### **Mandatory Foundation Year Field Units**

A field unit is a small group of students who are required to meet synchronously at least two times each semester and are led by a Faculty Liaison.

Field unit students must coordinate their concurrent classroom schedules with their assigned field unit schedule. During Field Unit meetings, the Faculty Liaison will facilitate a supportive, educational forum in which students can grow in their application of social work knowledge, skills, and behaviors as related to practicum experiences. Missed Field Unit meetings will require completion of a make-up assignment.

### **Planning Agreement**

The *Planning Agreement* is issued to students via the field software system during Practicum Planning. Students must fully complete and submit all practicum materials by the date which is indicated on the Practicum Calendar. Students who do not comply with the application deadline may be required to defer their practicum until a future semester. This will cause delays in completing the MSW program; these students should meet with appropriate person(s) to revise their degree plan.

### **The Practicum Calendar**

The practicum calendar is an appendix to the syllabus for all practicum courses. Practicum calendars can be found on the canvas course. Students are cautioned to consult the correct Practicum Calendar for all information and practicum requirement deadlines.

### **Field Education Office Hours**

Students can make use of field education office hours (via phone, web-based video conferencing software, or in person) as needed to keep the planning process moving - for ongoing questions, referrals to sites for placement interviews, verification of site appropriateness, and consultation about practicum proposal development. Office hours can be scheduled with the Field Education Coordinator, faculty, or staff.

### **Pre-placement Interviews and Placement Acceptance**

Regardless of the planning pathway involved, most students will be involved in pre-placement interviews at practicum sites. Although it is the School's responsibility to make reasonable efforts to help students secure a placement, the School cannot require a site to accept a student. Ultimately students must successfully interview and be accepted by a school-approved site that fulfills the school's educational requirements to do a practicum. To accomplish this goal, students interview with prospective Field Instructors. Students may explore practicum possibilities with site instructors on their own or be referred to practicum sites for pre-placement interviews. Students must secure a placement within the timeframe noted on the practicum calendar for that semester. Students who do not successfully interview and become accepted by a practicum site are required to postpone continuation in the social work program until an upcoming semester.

### **The Practicum Proposal**

Once students know where they will be placed for their practicum, they begin the process of developing a practicum proposal. The *Practicum Proposal & Approval* form is issued to students in the field software system and asks the student to outline how the structural and academic requirements of the practicum will be met. For many students, several people will be involved in this process. Most important, all students will require the direct assistance of their prospective Field Instructors in completing the proposal requirement. Students with a designated preceptor will need the assistance of this person as well.

Students may obtain general guidance from the Field Education Coordinator during office hours at all stages of proposal development. Guidance and assistance may also be provided, and is sometimes required, by faculty liaisons representing specific areas of social work practice.

When a placement needs to be significantly changed while a practicum is in progress, for example, the site wants to hire the student in a different program, the student may be required to submit a new proposal.

### **Practicum Proposal Approval**

During development, depending upon the type of placement involved, the proposal may require review by a series of designated faculty. The Practicum Proposal must be completed

and submitted by the date indicated on the Practicum Calendar. The Field Education Coordinator gives final approval of the practicum being proposed.

Practicum Proposals are not approved until they meet all basic academic and structural requirements of the Field Education Program. In addition to meeting these basic requirements, students who are pursuing the possibility of an employment-based practicum must observe all guidelines which are outlined in *Employment Based Practicum Placements* in the Online Field Education Manual.

### **Practicum Placement**

Students must fully complete and submit all practicum placement material by the date which is indicated on the *Practicum Calendar*. These requirements include securing an active *Practicum Site Affiliation Agreement*; securing a successful *Practicum Site Application*, if needed; securing, verifying and maintaining student professional liability insurance; completing and verifying current HIPAA Training; and, completing a *Request for Modified Practicum*, if needed. Students must also begin/continue the process of completing all Site-Specific Requirements, i.e. requirements which have been imposed by the practicum site, and which must be met before the practicum may begin.

## **EMPLOYMENT-BASED PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS (EBPP)**

### **EBPP Considerations**

Many students enter the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work with considerable experience in social, health and human services employment and volunteer organizations. These experiences can be invaluable in creating a base of understanding that will serve a student's development as a social worker and may have inspired the student to pursue a degree in social work.

The practicum requires that experienced students devote themselves to expanding and advancing their scope of social work practice. Prior employment and volunteer or other life experiences are not allowed to be credited toward practicum requirements. Recognizing the importance of field in the educational experience of social work students, the practicum stands as a substantial part of the curriculum. The practicum must offer students ample social work opportunities for expanding and integrating their experiences with new knowledge, and for developing the competencies they need to practice and advance in the social work profession.

It is important that these educational considerations not be compromised whenever financial compensation becomes part of the practicum. Both students and practicum sites must cooperate to protect the educational nature of the practicum. The focus should always be on an ongoing process of increasing range and depth of practice knowledge and developing related skills. There must be time allowed to reflect upon and analyze practicum experiences; obtain systematic and regular feedback related to performance; and receive structured formal weekly supervision.

In keeping with these objectives, an important requirement of the field education program is to secure for students who have worked, or who are currently working, a practicum experience that is different from the social service experiences they have acquired in their past or current

jobs and organizational settings. However, when special circumstances exist; the School's requirements are met; and required policy and procedures are followed, viable **Employment-Based Practicum Placements (EBPP) proposals** may be considered. Since employment-based practicum placements are naturally vulnerable to compromising forces and conflicts of interest that can cloud the learning objectives of the practicum, EBPP proposals will not be considered unless the employer, work supervisor, Field Instructor and student can ensure that the student will benefit from educational experiences in the place of employment in the following ways:

- The student is offered relevant and challenging social work educational experiences that are different and separate from job responsibilities
- The planned practicum experiences represent new learning
- The student can achieve and demonstrate the learning requirements of the field education component of the School
- The site offers field instruction/supervision that is separate and distinct from the supervision the student receives as an employee
- The job responsibilities of the student will not compromise the amount of time invested in the practicum and the fulfillment of the Field Education Contract; nor will the job responsibilities create a weekly schedule that compromises the student's chance of successful performance in the practicum
- The student's performance will be evaluated in terms of Field Education Contract criteria and practicum learning, as opposed to employee evaluation criteria.

## **Guidelines for EBPP**

### **Student Requirements and Responsibilities**

- All EBPP proposals must meet the criteria outlined above.
- Students who desire to be considered for EBPP must complete the Practicum Proposal application as obtained from the Field Education office. This must be submitted if the student intends to complete any portion of the practicum in his or her current place of employment or contract work, even if the student's practicum responsibilities will be significantly different from the work for which the student is paid, and even if the student will not be paid for time spent in the practicum.
- A Practicum Proposal must be submitted if the student will be doing a paid practicum at a site where they are not an employee.
- To ensure the investment of the employer in the student's educational experience, it is preferred that students document at least six months employment at the practicum site.
- The school reserves the right to request job performance evaluations during the practicum from students who have been hired by the practicum site during the practicum.
- The student must submit a current job description.

- The student's job performance evaluations must be satisfactory and must be confirmed in writing by the student's employment supervisor. Approval of a placement for a student in a position of authority (e.g. CEO, director, site administrator) will be granted only if the site has sufficient resources and structure to assure unbiased practicum supervision.
- If the EBPP proposal involves adding hours to the student's work week to engage in practicum activities, the plan must be realistic in terms of the total number of hours per week the student will be engaged in both job, practicum activities, and enrolled courses.
- The Practicum Proposal must be submitted by the established deadline.
- If a student's EBPP proposal is denied for any reason, including failure to comply with established deadlines, the student may be at risk of delaying practicum until a future semester.
- If a student is terminated from a job or resigns and is unable to complete their practicum during an employment-based practicum, the student will be assigned a grade of 'Unsatisfactory' for the practicum which may initiate a Level meeting per School policy. Should the student be allowed to pursue the possibility of repeating the practicum, this information will be shared with prospective practicum sites, along with information about the efforts the student has taken to correct the problems that lead to their termination.

#### **EBPP Site Requirements and Responsibilities**

- The site must demonstrate knowledge and approval of the student's EBPP through the provision of required signatures on the student's Practicum Proposal and Student Placement Form.
- The practicum site at which a student proposes an EBPP must have an active formal affiliation agreement with the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work.
- The site must offer diverse learning opportunities that meet the educational requirements of the student's practicum course. Practicum assignments must be significantly and qualitatively different from the student's current and past employment duties, represent new learning for the student, and offer the opportunity to advance the student's knowledge and practice skills. Sites may find it useful to assign a student to a different department, unit, division, or program within the site.
- The workload of the student in practicum must be significantly less than that of regular employees of the site to provide time for application and integration of classroom knowledge, further development of social work skills, supervision and reflection.
- EBPP practicum activities may include some billable services. **However, EBPP's may not incorporate a minimum billable service hours' requirement, or job pay based upon the amount of reimbursable activities performed.**
- The site must identify and appoint an appropriately degreed social worker to serve as Field Instructor. This social worker must meet the criteria set by the School for all Field



Instructors. The site must permit the Field Instructor to meet with the student a minimum of one hour per week throughout the practicum for an integrative supervisory conference

- If the site does not have an employee who qualifies, or who is available to function in the Field Instructor role, the site may elect to use a Field Instructor from outside the site. The off-site instructor must be well-grounded in the work of the site and in social work education. The site must authorize the off-site Field Instructor to come onsite to perform the necessary on-site duties of a Field Instructor, e.g. shadowing the student, reviewing client records, communicating with the on-site preceptor, etc.
- If the site arranges to have an off-site Field Instructor, the site must designate an on-site Preceptor who will be responsible for the student's day-to-day practicum activities and learning experiences.
- If financial compensation is necessary to provide field instruction, the site, not the student, is responsible for the payment. Students may not pay for field education instruction and supervision.
- The student's current employment supervisor may not serve as the student's Field Instructor; and, the assigned Field Instructor may not be assigned the role of employment supervisor during the practicum.
- A work supervisee of the student may not serve as the student's Field Instructor or Preceptor.

### **EBPP Field Instructor Requirements and Responsibilities**

- The Field Instructor must meet the criteria set by the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work for all Field Instructors.
- The Field Instructor must assume the roles and responsibilities required of all School Field Instructors.
- The practicum site must agree to the use of the social worker who has been identified in the role of Field Instructor.
- The identified Field Instructor must demonstrate knowledge of, and agreement to the student's EBPP through the provision of required signatures on the student's *Practicum Proposal and Approval Form*.
- The identified Field Instructor must be able to distinguish the student's job responsibilities from the student's practicum activities.
- The identified Field Instructor must not be the person who is currently providing employment supervision for the student, nor may the Field Instructor be assigned the role of employment supervisor during the practicum.
- The identified Field Instructor may not be the student's work supervisee.

- The Field Instructor must agree to meet with the student a minimum of one hour per week throughout the practicum semester for a formal integrative supervisory conference.
- Off-site Field Instructors must secure site authorization to perform the necessary on-site duties of a Field Instructor, e.g. shadowing the student, reviewing client records, communicating with the on-site preceptor, etc. In addition, off-site Field Instructors must ensure that the on-site Preceptor is taking responsibility for the student's day-to-day practicum activities and learning experiences.

### **EBPP School Responsibilities**

- The Field Education Coordinator will approve a site prior to use as a practicum site for an EBPP. Emphasis will be placed on determining the designated Field Instructor's ability to assist with the development of a Field Education Contract which meets practicum course requirements, and which clearly distinguishes employment tasks from educational practicum assignments.
- Faculty Liaisons will directly assist the student and Field Instructor with developing a Field Education Contract which incorporates the practice competencies required by the School.
- Faculty Liaisons will monitor the placement through visits to the site, and communication with the student, Field Instructor, and site administration. If through the course of the practicum semester it becomes apparent that the student is not fulfilling the School's expectations of the EBPP as outlined in the approved proposal and in the Field Education Contract, the placement may be terminated immediately.
- The School has no obligation to find, pre-authorize, or assure EBPP's or paid placements for practicum students.

### **Oklahoma Human Services (OKDHS) Child Welfare (CW) Employment-Based Practicum (EBP), Including CWPEP and non-CWPEP**

- Prior to the practicum semester, OKDHS CW employee students (CWPEP and non-CWPEP) are expected to give careful thought and inquiry regarding possible practicum placements and instructors within the agency.
- All OKDHS, CW practicum placements and instructors must be approved by CWPEP staff prior to the Employment Based Practicum Proposal (EBPP) being submitted to the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work Field Education Coordinator.
- CWPEP staff will consult with all OKDHS CW employee students (CWPEP and non-CWPEP) and who are planning employment-based practicums at OKDHS to assure that all OU School of Social Work and Title IV-E, when applicable, practicum requirements have been met.

- As necessary, CWPEP staff will contact potential OKDHS staff to locate placements and/or qualified Field Instructors and will refer CW employee students (CWPEP and non-CWPEP), as appropriate. Efforts will be made to honor students' preferences regarding practicum focus and instructors.
- CWPEP staff provides training and assistance to both OKDHS CW employee students (CWPEP and non-CWPEP) and Field Instructors on practicum requirements, deadlines, and forms, including the Field Practicum Contract. CWPEP staff serve as Faculty Liaisons for all OKDHS CW practicum placements and are available for consultation with OKDHS CW employee students and instructors regarding all practicum issues.
- OKDHS Child Welfare practicums may be possible for non-employee students based upon approval by OKDHS and CWPEP, as well as the availability of social work degreed instruction. CWPEP staff are available to consult and assist non-employee students who are interested in OKDHS CW practicum placements.

#### **Procedure for Student Request of an EBPP**

- 1) The process of requesting and obtaining approval of an EBPP can take several months; students are encouraged to complete and submit proposals and applications early.
- 2) Before beginning, read in its entirety *Employment-based Practicum Placements* in the Online Field Education Manual.
- 3) Begin negotiating the possibility of an employment-based practicum; share all relevant information regarding EBPP requirements.
- 4) Identify a person at the practicum site who has the experience and the authority necessary to assist you in developing an EBPP and in securing employer approval.
- 5) Work with the practicum site to prepare the written EBPP proposal. The written proposal must outline how the site will meet the conditions of the proposed agreement; how the activities of the student will meet the requirements of the practicum course and differ from regular employment duties; and how the student's current job duties will be covered while the student is in the practicum.
- 6) Regard the initial EBPP proposal as a "starting point" that will initiate the placement development and approval process. This process could entail the incorporation of school-required modifications to the original proposal to fulfill field education requirements.
- 7) Complete and submit all requirements of practicum planning, including the EBPP proposal, by the established deadline.
- 8) Include the student's current job description, the proposed practicum position or activities and a copy of the most recent job performance evaluation with the EBPP proposal. If the site does not use a formal performance evaluation form, a letter from the employment supervisor will be accepted.

- 9) Obtain written agreement from the student's current work supervisor, the identified Field Instructor, and the most relevant Agency Administrator through their signatures on the EBPP proposal. Such agreements may involve the administrator or department, unit, division, or program director. Signatures indicate that all parties have read and understand all stated requirements and activities indicated in the proposal. No application will be accepted without all required signatures.
- 10) Assure that the Field Instructor has been approved by the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work to serve as a Field Instructor. To apply for Field Instructor status, the identified degreed social worker must complete and submit a Field Instructor Application and submit a copy of their resume. All field instructor appointments must be approved by the Field Education Coordinator.
- 11) Assure that the site has an active formal Affiliation Agreement with the University of Oklahoma Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work. The student may make inquiry with the Field Education Office regarding site status and may assist in the process of securing such an agreement if none exists.

### **EBPP Approval Process**

EBPP proposals are reviewed and approved by the Field Education Coordinator. Any deviation from standard guidelines is at the discretion of the Field Education Coordinator.

While there **is no guarantee that requests for EBPP will be approved**, when students are approved for such a practicum, the site, not the School or the Field Education Program, is responsible for the individual's compensation and benefits while the student fulfills the requirements of the practicum.

If during the practicum it becomes apparent that an approved EBPP does not meet the School's expectations, or if the student does not comply with the expectations of the course or placement, approval of the EBPP may be withdrawn.

### **SITE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Student Responsibility**

Site specific requirements are requirements of the practicum site, not the School of Social Work. Students must comply with all additional requirements of the practicum site to begin and complete a placement at that site. These additional requirements may include, at the student's own expense, providing proof of student automobile insurance, immunizations records, obtaining medical tests and vaccinations, obtaining a legal background check, drug testing, etc. In addition, students are required to comply with all dress and appearance requirements of their assigned placement. Placement sites may have specific regulations about dress, body and facial piercings, facial hair, hair length, jewelry, tattoos, etc. It is the student's responsibility to learn these expectations and requirements of a site at the pre-placement interview and to consider this information when committing to a placement site.

## **Legal History/Background Checks**

The School of Social Work requires that students comply with all additional requirements of the practicum site to be placed in practicum. Most agencies affiliated with the School of Social Work require that students obtain a criminal background check to be placed at their site. Most of these sites require the student to obtain and pay for the background check themselves.

During a student's tenure at the University of Oklahoma and School of Social Work, students are required to self-report their personal legal history at three specific points: 1) admission to the University; 2) admission to the School of Social Work; and 3) in their practicum application with the Field Education Program. Further, the University requires students report additional legal issues/history that should occur.

Students may access information about whether sites included in the field software database will consider accepting students with misdemeanor and/or felony offenses. There are sites that will not permit a student with a legal background to be placed for an internship. There are many sites that will consider placement, and they vary greatly in their approach to handling the felonies, misdemeanors, or any other legal charges of prospective practicum students.

A legal record may present difficulties for students in both practicum placement and in employment and professional licensing upon graduation. Although the School does not conduct or review background checks, to assist students with practicum planning and future career considerations, the School does require that students indicate legal history on the *Planning Agreement* in the field software.

## **Travel, Transporting Clients, and Automobile Insurance**

Students must have dependable means of transportation and are responsible for their transportation to and from the practicum site, as well as for travel connected with the placement.

Many sites require that staff and students travel to field appointments. Some also expect students to transport clients. Student expectations for travel or transport of clients should be clarified during the pre-placement interview, as should explanations for reimbursement for travel, access to agency vehicles, and insurance coverage for students who are required to transport clients. While time spent commuting to the practicum site may NOT count as practicum time, time spent in travel while carrying out official practicum duties, such as transporting clients, travel to site visits, and travel to meetings, may be counted toward total practicum hour accumulations.

Students are not insured by the University of Oklahoma for accidents that might occur while traveling as a part of practicum responsibilities; this includes transporting clients. The School does not require auto liability coverage for students in practicum placement, and the School accepts no liability for injury to students or their placement site clients or staff pursuant to transporting them. Students who are engaged in transporting clients and staff do so at the discretion of the assigned site. The site may require the student to provide evidence of sufficient liability coverage. Expectations of the student regarding field activities and insurance coverage should be stated in the Field Education Contract.

## MODIFIED PRACTICUM

### The Practicum Semester

The practicum is an educational experience which is designed to unfold over an extended period and is so structured to protect the educational integrity of the practicum learning experience. The official practicum semester always includes a set number of weeks and starts on a date corresponding with the first day of the University's academic calendar for that semester. These dates can also be found on the Practicum Calendar for each student group.

Without formal approval for modification, no student may start a practicum early or accumulate excessive hours during any practicum week to end the practicum early, decrease the total number of weeks, take a break during the practicum, or stockpile hours in case of a future shortage.

A Modified Practicum is a practicum that is approved to begin before or end after the official practicum semester. To complete a practicum course in a modified format, students must submit a *Request for Modified Practicum* and receive approval. To modify a practicum, students must meet university criteria for accommodations and/or demonstrate significant and compelling need that requires modification. No modifications will be approved that include the last two weeks of December.

Modifying a practicum to allow for an early start can create serious problems for the student, the field instructor and the faculty liaison. Because of the significance of the information and practicum training provided to both students and instructors before the start of a practicum, some requests to begin a practicum early will not be approved.

Beginning the practicum early, or extending the practicum beyond the close of the practicum semester, will not be approved unless:

- A Faculty Liaison is available for the duration of the practicum
- There is appropriate field instruction and supervision for the duration of the practicum being requested
- There are suitable practicum activities which span the duration of the practicum being requested
- The Field Instructor has already attended or will be attending a current competency-based Field Instructor Training

\* If a student is permitted to begin the practicum early, the student will be required to complete Practicum Orientation modules and course expectations in order to continue in the practicum.

### Guidelines for Modified Practicum

- The modified practicum cannot compromise agency services or the needs of clients in any way.
- The designated Field Instructor must be fully informed and in total agreement with the proposed practicum modification and all its implications.

- Proposals for modified practicum must include at least as many weeks as the official practicum semester. The fall and spring semesters are 16 weeks in length and the summer semester varies in length from year to year, but on average, is 13 weeks in length.
- Placement modifications must protect the educational integrity of the practicum by ensuring that the learning experience does not devolve into a collection of hours; modified placements must structure an agreed-upon weekly schedule.
- To begin a practicum early, the student, Field Instructor, and Preceptor will need to complete all the online training modules prior to beginning on-site.
- If the modified placement is beginning early, the student will be required to develop the *Field Education Contract* within the number of weeks allowed in the Practicum Calendar.
- To ensure liaison approval of early practicum activities, the Field Education Coordinator may require that the student and instructor develop the Field Education Contract in advance of approving the modified request.
- Student's professional liability coverage needs to extend for each day that they are on-site at the practicum placement.

### **Procedure for Requesting a Modified Practicum**

To request a modified practicum, students must request and submit a *Request for Modified Practicum* by the date specified by the Field Education Office. All modified Practicum requests are reviewed by relevant faculty and all must be approved by the Field Education Coordinator.

### **Modified Practicum - Grades**

Students who are approved for a modified practicum and do not complete the practicum course by the end of the practicum semester may be assigned a grade of Incomplete. See: *Grade Assignment of Incomplete*.

## **DEFERRAL OF PRACTICUM**

### **Election to Defer**

Students may decide for a variety of reasons to defer the practicum course to a later semester. Students who do this must be mindful of the implications of this decision in terms of the next available time to enroll in the required practicum course, and in terms of delaying graduation. Students making this decision should immediately consult with their relevant advisor and work with the Online Graduate Coordinator to develop a revised Degree Plan.

### **Deferral by Default**

Students who do not complete required practicum planning modules; successfully interview and be accepted by a practicum site; complete all School and practicum site requirements; and/or submit all practicum planning documentation by the due dates which appear on the Practicum Calendar may be denied enrollment in the practicum course for the upcoming semester. These students will be required to defer the practicum to a later semester and should immediately

- Consult with their relevant advisor; and
- Work with the Online Graduate Coordinator to develop a revised Degree Plan

## **PRACTICUM HOURS: REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION**

### **Overview of Practicum Hours**

The practicum is an educational experience designed to unfold over an extended period. All students must complete the hours per week expected for their specific practicum course and be in practicum for the total number of weeks included in the practicum semester and accumulate the total number of practicum hours required by that course. Students must submit documentation of these requirements.

The practicum semester is structured to protect the educational integrity of a learning experience that unfolds over a span of time. Students must be in their practicum placements on the days and at the times designated in their approved practicum plan. No student may start practicum early or accumulate excessive hours during any practicum week to take a break or end the practicum early, decrease the total number of weeks, or stockpile hours in case of future shortage. All students must complete all time and documentation requirements for the practicum in which they are enrolled. Practicum hours not adequately and accurately documented will not be counted towards accumulated practicum hours.

### **The Practicum Calendar**

The Practicum Calendar is an Appendix to the syllabus for every practicum course. Practicum calendars contain all relevant practicum dates beginning with the completion of practicum planning requirements and extending through the practicum to the final evaluation of the student. Practicum Calendars are available and posted in all relevant Canvas courses. Holidays, and the rules for accumulation of practicum hours for each one, are included in each calendar. Students are expected to follow the correct practicum calendar as published unless specific alternative arrangements have been made in advance and approved by the Field Education Coordinator.

Minimum Hours of Field Experience Required:

<b>PRACTICUM</b>	<b>HOURS</b>
<b>Foundation Year</b>	<b>400 hours</b>
<b>Concentration Year:</b>	<b>500 hours</b>

### **The Student's Practicum Schedule**

Students must set a weekly practicum schedule with their Field Instructors before the practicum begins. This may need to occur at the time of the placement interview to secure that the scheduling needs of both student and instructor can be met in the prospective placement. Students must find out where and when to arrive the first day of the practicum, as well as establish arrival and departure times for the remainder of the practicum. The practicum



schedule must secure for the student the accumulation of the minimum hours required for each practicum course.

All practicum activities and the student's practicum schedule must be approved by the Field Instructor. The School expects students to be in their practicum placements on the days and at the times that have been agreed upon by the student and the Field Instructor. During the practicum, any scheduling changes or needs that arise should be worked out between the student and the Field Instructor. Students are expected to notify the Field Instructor immediately of any absences or departures from the agreed upon schedule. Students who fail to demonstrate punctuality and professional behavior around practicum schedules may risk termination from the practicum placement.

Students required by their sites to begin practicum ahead of the practicum semester, or after the semester has begun, or to remain in practicum during Winter Break, are required to submit a *Request for Modified Practicum*. (See: Modified Practicum)

### **The Practicum Site's Core Activities**

Practicum schedules must provide for the inclusion of **core site activities**, i.e. the scheduling of activities without which the educational integrity of the practicum experience at that site would be compromised. These activities typically involve orientations, trainings and group meeting venues in which important professional conversations are taking place regarding the site, the work of the site, clients, the community, etc. Besides helping the student to more fully enter the life of the practicum site, attendance at these events is critical to the student's integration of the learning that is taking place at the practicum site. All students are required to arrange practicum schedules that incorporate critical site core activities. This requirement pertains to daytime core activities at sites where students are in placement during non-traditional hours.

### **Non-Traditional Practicum Hours**

Students should ask about practicum activities and expectations for scheduling practicum time in the placement interview. Placements involving practicum activities during non-traditional hours are rare. Students are expected to be able to fulfill all the requirements of the practicum. Most placements require practicum students to be at the site during traditional hours.

Students may not be in placements during non-traditional hours unless there is

- Program activity which is taking place during those hours
- On-site supervision and field instruction that is available during those hours
- Practicum attendance at site core activities during daytime hours (See: The Practicum Site's Core Activities)

Students are advised that although most sites are in operation between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, many settings have found it essential to conduct some activities during evenings or on weekends to meet client needs. Practicum students may be expected to be in their placements during such hours as a condition of placement. Site expectations for evening or weekend practicum hours should be included in the *Practicum Proposal* and *Field Education Contract*.

The use of students to cover after-regular working hours, over weekends, or during holiday periods to permit time off for regular site staff is considered an inappropriate use of students, unless such coverage can be demonstrated to have educational value and can therefore be included in the *Field Education Contract*.

### **Practicum Hours Guidelines**

- Students must complete the minimum number of hours required for the practicum in which they are enrolled, 400 in the MSW foundation year and 500 in the MSW concentration year.
- Most students will complete more than the minimum required number of practicum hours.
- Students may not stockpile hours and finish early in any placement. This includes modified placements.
- Students may not miss field practicum to do classroom homework.
- Students who have enrolled in a two-semester placement will be expected to complete two full semesters. This includes Fall-Spring, Spring-Summer and Summer-Fall placements.
- Students must observe the guidelines set forth in the official Practicum Calendar and the course syllabus which establish the rules for inclusion of practicum hours accumulated during specific National and University holidays.
- Students are allowed **16 personal hours per semester** and may count the number of hours which would have been accumulated if they had been in attendance on those days.
- For guidance on absences which result from inclement weather, car and travel trouble, or childcare, see the respective sections below on *Inclement Weather* and *Car Trouble; Child Care*.
- The use of students to cover for regular staff after regular working hours, over weekends, or during holiday periods to permit time off for regular site staff is considered an inappropriate use of student time, unless such coverage can be demonstrated to have educational value and be included in the *Field Education Contract*.
- No more than 15% of the required number of practicum hours may be spent in non-practice-related learning activities. Such activities must be referenced in the contract and would include formalized classrooms, specialized training, attending conferences and workshops, etc. Students must document attendance at these events by submitting verifications of attendance, for example **CEU verification of attendance** forms. Students may not count travel time as accumulated practicum hours for these activities.
- Students who serve on Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, University, or professional committees with recognized stature are granted eight (8) hours of excused

absence during the practicum semester for such activities and may count this time toward accumulated practicum time.

- OKDHS students who are involved in CORE training during the practicum may count 114 of these training hours as practicum hours. These hours are in addition to the CORE on-the-job training week, which is included in site-based practicum activities. Students may also count preparation and completion of Hands on Testing (HOT), which is an interview with simulated clients.
- Students must submit their documentation during practicum. All supervision meetings, days and hours must be appropriately accounted for, including personal days and holidays.
- Missed supervisory conferences must be made up. Students must document missed supervision in their practicum documentation, including when the supervision session was or will be made up.
- A grade of *Incomplete* will be awarded to students who have achieved a grade of *Satisfactory* for the practicum, but who have not completed and submitted the required number of practicum hours, or the required number of practicum weeks, or the required number of supervisory conferences. Students must be in good standing to pass the course and meet 70% of course requirements to be eligible for an Incomplete.
- Only under rare and exceptional circumstances may any hours accumulated in a placement that has been terminated be counted toward total practicum hours. (See: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance)

**Hours that Count/Hours that Don't**

HOURS THAT COUNT	HOURS THAT DON'T
Approved <i>Field Education Contract</i> activities, on and off site. All practicum activities must be approved by the Field Instructor and faculty liaison.	Practicum activities done at home without Field Instructor & liaison approval. Just as with any university course, students do not get credit for completing their homework.
Brief trainings/orientations that have been required may be included in practicum documentation.	Lengthy training/site orientations that occur in advance of the practicum are cause for requesting a modified practicum. See: Modified Practicum
OKDHS Core training which takes place during the practicum: see above.	Covering for regular staff after regular working hours, over weekends, or during holiday periods unless such coverage can be demonstrated to have educational value and can therefore be included in the <i>Field Education Contract</i> .
Travel time from practicum site to another site for required practicum activities, field unit or	Travel from home to practicum site and return to home are considered "commute" time. Also,

field seminar meetings or trainings, etc. Transporting clients.	travel to field unit meetings to or from home. Extreme travel to practicum site might be negotiated.
Holidays: all holidays appear on the practicum calendar, along with the rule for accumulation of practicum hours for each one. (See Inclement Weather/Holiday guidelines.)	Absences due to inclement weather may need to be made up; student should reference the Inclement Weather/Holiday guidelines in this manual.
Workshops & conferences: only if approved by Field Instructor; only the time spent in venues; students must submit verifications of attendance for each session.	Travel to and from workshops or conferences that have not been pre-approved.
Illness: up to 16 personal hours are allowed for each practicum semester and students may count the number of hours regularly accumulated had they been in attendance on those days.	Illness: more than 16 personal hours, whether the student has a physician's note to validate the illness these hours still must be made up.
Completion of mandatory Practicum modules, assignments and web-based meetings that are approved as documented practicum hours.	Mandatory practicum orientation modules that are prior the practicum semester or conducting interviews for securing the practicum placement.
Committee work: serving on Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, University, or professional committees with recognized stature and that are included in the <i>Field Education Contract</i> . Students are allowed eight (8) hours of excused absence during the semester for such activities and may count this time toward their practicum hours.	Classroom homework: unless the homework is directly tied to the practicum and approved by the Field Instructor and faculty liaison.  Students may not miss field practicum to do classroom homework.
Readings assigned by Field Instructor.	Unassigned readings or completion of "homework."
Research assignments initiated by the Field Instructor.	Unassigned research or completion of "homework."
Lunches that are considered "working lunches," i.e. meetings, conferences, staffing while eating, etc.	Meeting colleagues or practicum agency staff for a lunch that is social, not work oriented.
On-call, or extended-care hours, when the student serves clients outside of their regular practicum schedule. Starts when the call or request begins, and service concludes.	On-call hours that are in-active even though the student is responsible and ready for the event of a call or request, including travel to or from home.

## **Personal Leave Time**

The School expects students to be in their practicum placements on the days and at the times agreed upon by the student and field instructor. If students need to be absent from their sites for any reason, the policies below apply. Students must immediately report any absences to the field instructor. Students are allowed 16 hours of personal leave during the practicum semester. If a student requires more than 16 hours of personal leave, the faculty liaison must be contacted immediately. Any additional time lost must be made up. Arrangements for make-up time are made with the field instructor and may require approval by the faculty liaison. The Field Education Coordinator will be notified of the plan. Students who, due to illness or family emergencies, miss extensive amounts of practicum time may be required to withdraw from the practicum course, or may be awarded an Incomplete in the practicum course. See: Practicum Disruptions and Grade Assignment of Incomplete.

## **Inclement Weather**

Our Field Education program is committed to protecting the integrity of your educational experience. We recognize that students anticipate active learning and professional development during practicum. In keeping with this commitment, the following guidelines will inform decisions regarding attendance at practicum and accrual of hours during inclement weather. When inclement weather impacts practicum attendance, the following guidelines should be observed when determining whether missed practicum hours must be made up. If the agency is closed, students may count any regularly scheduled hours they would have acquired had they been in attendance on that day or days up to a max of 16 hours per semester. As a note: Agency closed means all agency activities ceased amid the inclement weather. If the agency's staff are working from home/remote, the agency is not closed and you are expected to participate in practicum remotely as well. If the missed hours exceed 16 hours, then an individualized plan will need to be developed and approved by the Field Education Coordinator for completion of hours. If the agency is open, students may opt not to attend, but must make up the regularly scheduled hours they would have acquired if they had been in attendance on that day. The School expects students to be in their practicum placements on the days and at the times agreed upon by the student and field instructor and designated and outlined in the student's Field Education Contract. Students who will be absent are responsible for communicating these absences to the field instructor in a timely manner and, when possible, preparing clients for the absence. Students must make up any supervision conferences they have missed due to any absence. Students are responsible for and expected to do whatever is necessary to successfully complete all tasks within the Field Education Contract, regardless of missed hours due to holidays or weather.

## **HOLIDAY GUIDELINES**

### **University and National Holidays**

Students may only count the regular or typically scheduled hours they would have been in agency for University holidays. These dates will be posted on the Practicum Calendar. Some sites may require that students be present during part or all the University recognized holidays

as a condition of placement at that site. Such requirements and arrangements must be stated in practicum documentation (i.e. the Field Education Contract). For other University non-recognized national and cultural holidays, students may, with prior approval of the Field Instructor, make the time up or use personal leave time.

### **Religious Observance**

It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and required class work that may fall on religious holidays.

Adherence to this policy will make it possible for students who wish to observe religious holidays to do so without adverse effects on their academic progress. Any missed hours will either need to be made up or students may use their personal leave time.

### **Spring Break**

There is no break in practicum for Graduate students. The week of spring break is counted towards both cumulative and weekly supervision hours. In situations where the agency is closed for any period and /or the Field Instructor is out of office:

- The student is required to submit documentation for the week.
- Any missed supervision time must be made up.
- If the Field Instructor is unavailable during the scheduled practicum hours, they are expected to identify a plan that includes approved activities and who will be providing oversight of the student.

As a reminder, the University is open during spring break and the Field Education office is available to assist, as needed.

### **Illness and Emergencies**

The School expects students to be in their practicum placements on the days and at the times agreed upon by the student and Field Instructor. If students need to be absent from their sites, the policies below apply. Students must immediately report any absences to the Field Instructor. Students are allowed to use personal leave during the practicum semester. (See: Personal Leave Time)

Time lost because of unanticipated personal emergencies, such as the death of a member of the family, or a personal illness, must be made up. Arrangements for make-up time are made with the Field Instructor and may require approval by the Faculty Liaison. The Field Education Coordinator will be notified of the plan. Students who, due to illness or family emergencies, miss extensive amounts of practicum time may be required to withdraw from the practicum course, or may be awarded an Incomplete in the practicum course. (See: Practicum Disruptions and Grade Assignment of Incomplete)

### **School, University, and Professional Organization Involvement**

Participation in School or professional governances should be discussed and addressed in the *Field Education Contract*. Students who serve on Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, University or professional committees with recognized stature are granted eight (8) hours of

excused absence during the practicum semester for such activities and may count this time toward accumulated practicum time. These activities must appear in the *Field Education Contract* and on the student's practicum documentation.

### **Car Trouble, Child Care**

Students are expected to be in their practicum placements on the days and at the times agreed upon by the student and the Field Instructor. Students must immediately report any absences to the Field Instructor. Absences because of car trouble or childcare issues must be made up.

### **Workshops and Conferences**

Attendance at workshops and conferences is not automatically treated as an excused absence from the practicum or as a practicum activity for which practicum hours may be accumulated. The Field Instructor has the authority to decide whether the nature of the outside activity is sufficiently related to the student's learning objectives and field contract to warrant treating it as a practicum activity. The Field Instructor may use *Field Education Contract* criteria to make these determinations.

The Field Instructor must approve workshops and conferences in advance for the student to:

- Be away from the practicum site; and
- Include workshop and conference activities as part of the practicum.

For workshops and conferences to count toward the accumulation of practicum hours, these events must be incorporated into the *Field Education Contract*. See: *Hours That Count/Hours That Don't* to determine how much time can be counted towards practicum.

### **Missing Other Courses for Practicum and Counting Other Courses as Practicum**

Any absence from another regularly scheduled course should be discussed with the professor or instructor of that course. Students are not permitted to miss other courses for practicum activities. Students are not permitted to miss other courses to interview at practicum sites or to meet with any of the Field Education Faculty. Students are not permitted to count time spent on other courses activities as practicum hours.

### **Absences and the Accumulation of Practicum Hours**

If during the practicum semester a student misses **more than 16 hours** of practicum, they must contact their Faculty Liaison and work with the Liaison and the Field Instructor to develop a plan to make up the missed time. Students who miss extensive amounts of practicum time may be required to withdraw from the practicum course or may be awarded an Incomplete in the practicum course. (See: Practicum Disruptions, and Grade Assignment of Incomplete)

### **Suspension of Practicum and the Accumulation of Practicum Hours**

Practicum placements may be suspended, i.e. temporarily stopped, when a student is not meeting practicum requirements. During the time a placement is suspended, the student shall not accumulate practicum hours. When it is determined that the placement can resume, the student may then begin again to accumulate practicum hours but may be delayed in completing the practicum. If it is determined that the placement can resume, the student will resume

accumulating practicum hours, but may be delayed in completing the practicum course. (See: Suspension of Practicum in Practicum Placement Monitoring)

### **Practicum Hours Audit**

Students are responsible for submitting practicum documentation on a weekly basis. Hours are audited on a regular basis by the Field Education Program. Throughout the practicum, students will be notified when there is a pattern of missing hours, so corrections can be made as soon as possible, and students won't fall further behind in accumulating practicum hours. Faculty Liaisons are notified when a student is falling behind. Students are responsible for working out a plan to make up and meet practicum hour requirements. Failure to submit weekly documentation may result in a suspension of the practicum placement. A final audit takes place at the time of the student's evaluation. If the student is still missing hours, both the student and the Faculty Liaison are notified of the missing requirements. Students are responsible for making up missing requirements and meeting all practicum deadlines. (See: Grade Assignment of Incomplete)

## **BEGINNING THE PRACTICUM**

### **Mandatory Practicum Orientation Modules for All Students**

All students must complete Practicum Orientation Modules by the assigned due date. The Practicum Orientation Modules are focused on the educational experience of the student in the practicum. The course syllabus is reviewed, and students are trained in the development of the *Field Education Contract* and how to properly use the School's web-based documentation system. Students who do not complete Practicum Orientation Modules will not be allowed to proceed with a practicum placement.

### **Mandatory Foundation Year Practicum Labs**

All Foundation year students are required to complete Practicum Labs throughout their 5413 and 5423 courses. These labs can be found within the modules of the Canavs courses and due dates are listed in the Practicum Calendar.

### **Mandatory Foundation Year Field Unit Meetings**

Once Foundation year students solidify placements, they will be organized into field units. Foundation year students are required to meet with their Faculty Liaison using a web-based meeting space monthly. At the beginning of the semester, the Faculty Liaison will notify students of options for meeting days and times. These meetings are counted towards practicum hours.

### **Mandatory Concentration Year Field Unit Meetings**

Once Concentration year students solidify placements, they will be organized into field units. Concentration year students are required to meet with their Faculty Liaison using a web-based meeting space monthly. At the beginning of the semester, the Faculty Liaison will notify students of options for meeting days and times. These meetings are counted towards practicum hours.



## REQUIRED PRACTICUM DOCUMENTATION

Students are responsible for completing weekly documentation in the field software system. The Weekly Practicum Report form incorporates accountability for the required weekly supervision with the Field Instructor; the student's daily/weekly activities that correspond to their contract work plans for competency development; and the accumulated practicum hours that have been accomplished each week and throughout the practicum semester. Each weekly report is to be reviewed and signed by the Field Instructor to indicate approval for content and hours, and as a tool for enhancing communication with the Field Liaison who serves as a monitor for the student's progress. If a student is assigned a Preceptor, the Preceptor may have access to weekly documentation to review to monitor and provide evaluation feedback. Any student who does not submit *Weekly Practicum Reports* in a timely manner, or neglects to convey their activities or hours accurately, may be subject to a suspension of their practicum.

## DEVELOPING THE FIELD EDUCATION CONTRACT

### The Development Process

Practicum assignments are uniquely created at each practicum site through the development of the *Field Education Contract*. This education contract is a teaching and learning plan which outlines a developmentally graduated description of the Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work program competencies which must be incorporated into the practicum experience and addressed at each site. The first major practicum assignment at all sites is the development of the contract.

The primary intent of this assignment is to create an arc of understanding which spans the duration of the practicum and helps the student bring the world of the practicum site and the world of the School together. This confluence of the education contract and the practicum site offers the student a way to tie the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom to the practicum experience through required program competencies and behaviors. This confluence creates a learning process in which the student can view the site through the lens of the social work perspective and apply social work values and knowledge to the development of professional skills in actual social work practice.

At the practicum site, during the first weeks of the practicum, the student works with the Field Instructor to identify or create practicum activities and assignments which can be incorporated into each competency area of the contract. These activities are recorded in the *Work Plans* feature of the contract. *Work Plans* are a practicum "game plan." To identify site activities, the student follows the directives of the *Behaviors* feature which is linked to each *Work Plan*. The student must come to understand why each set of *Behaviors* is bundled together under each competency area of the contract; how the behaviors are relevant to the competency; and how they are related to each other. Then, through the guidance of the Field Instructor, the student develops *Work Plans* describing how they will go about acquiring and demonstrating program competencies while engaging in assignments and activities which are grounded in the mission, context, culture, and work of the practicum site.

Following the practicum orientation, during the early weeks of the practicum, the Faculty Liaison assists students with the development of *Work Plans*, with an emphasis on tying

practicum activities directly to program competencies, ensuring that practicum assignments, in addition to being instructional, are designed to create opportunities for the student to acquire program competencies, and receive instructive feedback and evaluation of their competency performance. As the contract is being developed, the faculty liaison may review drafts as requested, and require revisions as needed, to ensure student demonstration of program competencies in the practicum.

The *Field Education Contract* is a working document. Revisions can take place throughout the course of the practicum in response to ongoing feedback about student performance, instructor suggestions, new opportunities that come along, or changes taking place at the practicum site. Students and instructors together can develop “*Strategies to Increase Competence*” throughout the practicum, i.e. ways in which competency practice behaviors can be further improved. In this way, feedback and improvement planning are structured into ongoing development of the education contract.

*Work Plans* must be developed as fully as possible during the first weeks of the practicum. During this time, the student is responsible for:

- Attending any required meetings or seminars with the Faculty Liaison (liaisons schedule and notify their students about these meetings)
- Initiating contract development discussions with the Field Instructor
- Utilizing contract development aids which are posted on the school website
- Requesting Liaison assistance as needed
- Completing and submitting *Work Plans* for each competency area of the contract by the date which appears on the *Practicum Calendar* for each practicum course.

By the end of the semester, the *Field Education Contract* should reflect all the learning experiences which have been incorporated into the practicum.

### **Field Education Contract Approval**

The initial *Field Education Contract* is approved and signed by both the Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison and must be submitted by the due date which appears on the *Practicum Calendar* for each practicum course. Students may not continue in the practicum course without submission and approval of the contract. A student who fails to develop a *Field Education Contract* which directly ties practicum activities at the site to program competencies and ensures that these assignments are designed to create opportunities for instructive feedback and assessment of performance, will be awarded a grade of Unsatisfactory and will not continue in the practicum course.

There are no guarantees, that if a student is hired by the practicum site during the practicum, that this new position will be considered as a practicum placement. If so, the student may need to submit a new *Proposal and Approval* form and/or a revised or new *Field Education Contract* to reflect new activities and assignments which will now be incorporated into the practicum learning experience.

## **FIELD INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICUM SUPERVISION**

### **Field Instructors**

Students may not begin a practicum placement unless the Field Education Program has secured the identification and commitment of a designated Field Instructor. The Field Instructor is the social worker who has responsibility for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the practicum student's educational experience at the practicum site. The Field Instructor provides oversight of any non-social work professional (Preceptor) or task supervisor who is involved in the student's learning process. The Field Instructor works with the student to plan the day-to-day learning activities and assignments which comprise the practicum. The Field Instructor provides mentoring, instruction, professional guidance, practice and practicum supervision, and oversight and documentation of the student's practicum experience. The critical matrix of all practicum activities and assignments is focused, integrative discussions between the student and the Field Instructor. (*See: Field Instructor and Preceptor Roles and Expectations*)

### **Field Instructor Training**

In 2008, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the School's accrediting body, joined a national movement in professional schools by embracing a competency-based model of professional education. To help new Field Instructors structure, or current Field Instructors re-structure their approaches to practice learning, the School of Social Work developed a basic competency-based training for Field Instructors. Field Instructors are required to complete this training and the most recent training attendance dates for all Instructors are noted on their field software page. A student may not proceed with a practicum that involves a Field Instructor who has not completed the most current version of this training.

### **Practicum Preceptors**

Preceptors and mentors have enriched our students' field placements for a long time. Setting up a supervisory structure that includes the incorporation of Preceptors to lead practicum activities that offer needed opportunities for students is a very important supervision planning responsibility for many Field Instructors. Preceptors may be professionally trained social workers, members of other professions, or paraprofessionals. Although Preceptors may not be utilized in place of field instruction provided by someone who holds a social work degree, they may be utilized to broaden the range of learning opportunities available to students. Many Preceptors provide short term, specific learning opportunities, both on and off-site, that expand the student's learning. Some Preceptors work with students for longer stretches of time providing training and day-to-day instruction. Some students have multiple Preceptors.

When Preceptors are incorporated into the teaching and learning process in a practicum, the extent of Preceptor responsibility is determined by the Field Instructor and approved by the Field Education Coordinator at the time of placement approval. When Preceptors are incorporated after the practicum has begun, the extent and type of Preceptor responsibility is determined by the Field Instructor and approved by the Faculty Liaison.

When a Field Instructor is incorporating other professionals into the instructional plan or sharing instructional responsibilities with another MSW instructor or with Preceptors, the Field Instructor must provide supervision which focuses on integrative and reflective discussions which help the student integrate preceptor contributions to the overall learning experience. When utilizing Preceptors, it is the Field Instructor's responsibility to develop clear lines of responsibility, authority and feedback about the student's performance in preceptor-supervised activities. It is the Field Instructor's responsibility to check frequently with the student and Preceptor to monitor the effectiveness of the supervisory structure. Preceptors participate in the overall evaluation of the student's progress consistent with the amount and type of responsibility they have had for the student's learning. They provide feedback about the student's field performance to the Field Instructor, who has final responsibility for the student's evaluation and for recommending the student's final grade. See Preceptor Roles and Responsibilities

### **Responsibilities of the Field Instructor in Relationship to Practicum Preceptors**

- Designate and monitor Preceptors involved with the student's educational experience
- Orient Preceptor(s) to practicum course requirements, the social work perspective, the *Field Education Contract* and the attending learning processes and procedures
- Collaborate with preceptors in the development of the learning experience; determine the extent of Preceptor responsibility; designate practicum activities and assignments which will be Preceptor supervised
- Assure that practicum activities and assignments follow the requirements of the *Field Education Contract*; are in keeping with the perspective and practices of the social work profession; and are based on the student's skill level, knowledge and experience
- Help students integrate the Preceptor's contribution with the social work perspective and with the overall learning experience
- Check frequently with the student and preceptor to monitor the effectiveness of the Preceptor plan
- Develop ways the Preceptor can share ongoing feedback with the student
- Obtain feedback from the Preceptor regarding the student's performance in task supervised activities
- Ensure that the student is open about any conflict arising from different perspectives, or supervision or management styles; help the student focus on the positive aspects of learning from other professions
- Obtain ongoing feedback from the Preceptor regarding the student's performance in task supervised activities
- Consult with the Preceptor regarding the student's final evaluation
- Assume final responsibility for the student evaluation

### **Student Remuneration of Field Instructor**

No student will be permitted to make separate monetary payments for supervision in relation to his or her field placement. If the site does not have an employee who qualifies, or who is available, to function in the role of Field Instructor, the School may allow the site to identify a Field Instructor from outside the site. Also, in situations where a site does not have a staff member available who qualifies as a Field Instructor, the site may, at its discretion and at its expense, contract with a qualified social worker outside the site to provide the necessary field instruction.

### **Off-Site Field Instructors**

The Council on Social Work Education requires that all social work practicum students have a Field Instructor who holds a social work degree. Social work-degreed Field Instructors are typically employed by the practicum site. If the site does not have an employee who qualifies, or who is available, to function in the role of Field Instructor, the School may allow the site to identify a Field Instructor from outside the site. Although this practice is not allowed in all types of placements, there are some practicum placements that depend upon the willingness of an off-site Field Instructor to oversee a student's practicum. When this instructional/supervisory arrangement is allowed, the off-site Field Instructor must be well-grounded in the work of the practicum site or willing to increase competence in the field of practice and in social work education. The site must authorize the off-site Field Instructor to come onsite to perform the necessary on-site duties of a Field Instructor, e.g. shadowing the student, reviewing client records, communicating with the on-site preceptor, etc.

When the Field Instructor is NOT working at the practicum site, there MUST be a designated onsite Preceptor who will assume responsibility for the day-to-day practicum activities and learning experiences of the student. This Preceptor must agree to provide structure, instruction, support and ongoing supervision to the practicum student. This Preceptor must agree to work with the off-site social work degreed Field Instructor towards the student's integration of social work practice learning.

In these placements, the Field Instructor is responsible for maintaining the influence of the social work perspective in the supervisory arrangement. The Field Instructor must provide weekly supervision for the student which focuses on integrative and reflective discussions which help the student integrate the preceptor's contribution to the overall learning experience. The Field Instructor must be available to the student on a supervisory basis and to the Preceptor on a consulting basis. The Field Instructor must incorporate feedback from the Preceptor in the evaluation of the student.

Before this supervisory arrangement - off-site Field Instructor & on-site Preceptor - can be approved for any placement, the student being placed must identify learning needs and conduct that align with managing this structure and navigating between the two instructors during the practicum.

## **Student Responsibilities in Supervision**

Students are responsible for communicating their needs for instruction and supervision at three checkpoints:

- 1) Planning Agreement
- 2) When interviewing for placement
- 3) The first supervisory conference with their Field Instructor

During the first supervisory conference, the Field Instructor and student should discuss the student's *Planning Agreement* and develop a plan for practicum supervision. This discussion is the culmination of a reflection process which was initiated by the student in the planning process. The plan for supervision is recorded in the first competency's work plan section of the *Field Education Contract*.

Students are required to meet with their Field Instructors for one hour each week in a regularly scheduled, uninterrupted, integrative supervisory conference. When appropriate, Instructors who are working with multiple practicum students at one time can supervise their students in a group format. In these instances, the Instructor must be available to process more personal and sensitive issues with students on an individual basis.

All students must work with their Field Instructors to set regular, weekly supervisory conference times.

- Students are responsible for finding out from their Field Instructor what is expected in these conferences and how to prepare.
- Students are responsible for obtaining Field Instructor signatures on all practicum documentation in the field software system.
- Missed supervisory conferences must be made up; missed supervision can be documented in the field software system for both the missed week and for the week that supervision is made up, with clarifying notations in each report.

Students are responsible for understanding the importance of the supervisory structure and roles that are involved in their practicum placements.

- When Field Instructors have incorporated Preceptors into the student's supervisory structure, students are responsible for understanding and managing the roles and relationships involved in this arrangement.
- Students are expected to immediately report to the School any problems or obstacles that interfere with practicum supervision.

## **PRACTICUM PLACEMENT MONITORING**

### **Multiple Forms of Practicum Monitoring**

Placement monitoring is an on-going process that begins the first day of the placement and continues throughout the entire practicum. Student performance is monitored by all parties involved with the Practicum placement, including but not limited to Field Instructors, all

Preceptors, Faculty Liaison, classroom faculty at the School, the Field Education Faculty and Staff, and by practicum students themselves.

### **Academic Information Sharing**

All faculty members are involved in students' academic performance and the formation of students' professionalism and are responsible for reporting concerns to the Director /Associate Director of the school, and other faculty as appropriate to assure professional behavior, ethical practice and academic achievement. Information disclosed during student meetings or correspondence with faculty, faculty advisors, Field Education Coordinators, Faculty Liaisons, Field Instructors or school administrators will NOT be kept confidential if the information raises concerns about the student's professional and/or academic performance. Faculty, Field Education Coordinators, school administrators, and Field Instructors will share pertinent information with each other and the student for the professional purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem-solving about the concerns.

The practicum agency serves as the academic setting for the field practicum course. The Field Instructor, along with the overall academic program and Faculty Liaison, collaborate to support and guide the student's development as a professional social worker. To work together effectively, it is essential that relevant information be shared between involved parties. This information will be shared to protect clients as well as students, and to facilitate placement and learning in all aspects of field education.

### **The Practicum Supervisory Structure**

Student performance is monitored by the Field Instructor and any Preceptors when they have been incorporated into the supervisory structure of the practicum placement.

### **The Field Education Contract**

After the *Field Education Contract* is completed, it becomes an evaluative tool, which reviews the specific practicum assignments for each student. Students are evaluated by the Field Instructor at the end of each practicum course. The *Field Education Contract* incorporates an evaluation feedback feature, *Evidence to Support the Rating*, which is utilized by the Field Instructor to provide feedback about the student's performance of competency-based behaviors documented in the *Field Education Contract*.

### **Student Self Evaluation**

Student performance is monitored by the student through the field supervision process, Instructor and Preceptor feedback, *Field Education Contract*-required student self-reflection and evaluation of one's own practice.

### **Faculty Liaison**

Faculty Liaison serve as co-educators with Field Instructors, assisting students and Instructors with the development of the *Field Education Contract* which guides the course of each student's practicum experience; and, conducting field seminars when incorporated into the practicum. Faculty Liaisons monitor practicum placements and student performance in multiple ways. Liaisons maintain close contact with students and Field Instructors at each site during the

practicum through virtual visits to the site, group and individual meetings with students, ongoing review of student documentation and weekly practicum documentation, and telephone and email contacts.

### **The Field Education Office**

Practicum placements and student performance are monitored by the Field Education Office through regular communication with Faculty Liaisons, and through weekly student documentation in the Field software system.

### **Performance Improvement Plans**

When significant student performance difficulties develop, placements are monitored through written Performance Improvement Plans (PIP's), developed through consultation between the student and Field Instructor that has been facilitated by the Faculty Liaison.

### **Level Reviews**

When significant student performance difficulties develop, placements may be monitored through the Level Review process. The Level Review process is incorporated into the *Student Performance Policy*. It is a process whereby the student and relevant parties come together to address concerns about the student's performance and work to identify barriers to success and, if possible, formulate plans to support success. For more information about the Level Review process, see the Student Performance Policy that can be found on the School's website.

### **Placement Monitoring and Suspension of Placement**

Practicum placements may be suspended, i.e. temporarily stopped, when a student is not meeting practicum requirements. During the time a placement is suspended, the student does not go to the practicum site, or accumulate required practicum hours. If it is determined that the placement can resume, the student will resume accumulating practicum hours, but may be delayed in completing the practicum course.

The practicum may be suspended for many reasons including the following:

- The student is failing to communicate with the School during the practicum, for example, is not submitting practicum documentation, or is not responding to requests to set up a virtual site visit using web-based technology, or is not communicating with the Faculty Liaison as needed or requested
- The student is failing to comply with practicum stipend requirements
- The student is having excessive absences from practicum
- The student is not attending practicum required meetings
- The student has not complied with important deadlines, for example, submission of the *Practicum Proposal* or *Field Education Contract* at the beginning of the practicum, or the Student Evaluation at the end of the practicum course
- Practicum placements may also be suspended by the agency when there are student performance difficulties and/or agency requirements are not being met



These placements may remain suspended while the School investigates and Level III Review of the student’s practicum situation to determine whether the placement can resume or will be terminated.

## **EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN PRACTICUM**

### **Evaluation of Competency Performance**

Each practicum is divided into two courses. Each student is evaluated by their Field Instructor at the end of each practicum course. The first evaluation occurs at the end of the first semester. The mid-point of any practicum is always referred to as “mid-practicum.” In all placements, the second evaluation occurs at the end of the practicum and is always referred to as the “final” evaluation.

Field Instructors will complete evaluations of student performance of social work competencies and practice behaviors in the *Field Education Contract*. *Field Education Contracts* incorporate competency-based performance criteria which progress developmentally and establish rising expectations both within and across the span of graduate foundation year and concentration year field practicum. The table below is the scale used to rate performance on EACH of the behaviors included in the *Field Education Contract*.

When completing evaluations, Field Instructors provide a narrative description of “evidence to support” each rating. At mid-practicum, Instructor ratings are based on performance of the criteria indicated and not on anticipated progress during the remainder of the practicum. At the end of the practicum, Field Instructors recommend final grades of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory to Faculty Liaisons and the Field Education Coordinator.

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<b>PRACTICUM EVALUATION SCALE</b>
<b>AC: Advanced Competence</b> Expertly demonstrates awareness, knowledge and skills as a social work practicum student
<b>C: Competence</b> Consistently demonstrates awareness, knowledge and skills as a social work practicum student
<b>EC: Emerging Competence</b> Inconsistently demonstrates awareness, knowledge and skills as a social work practicum student
<b>IP: Insufficient Progress</b> Rarely demonstrates awareness, knowledge and skills as a social work practicum student
<b>UP: Unacceptable Progress</b> Does not demonstrate awareness, knowledge and skills as a social work practicum student

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### **DEVELOPMENTAL NATURE OF PRACTICUM**

In the Foundation Year and Concentration Year Practicum, students will complete practicum requirements by demonstrating the acquisition and mastery of mandated competencies. This mastery is cumulative in character and developmental in nature and includes a sequence of planned learning experiences and competency demonstrations that span enrollment in two

linked courses spanning two consecutive semesters. Because of the cumulative nature of the learning experiences and the assessments of student performance, to complete the Foundation Year or Concentration Year practicum requirement, students must complete both linked courses with a satisfactory grade during a practicum placement. This means that a student who does not satisfactorily complete the requirements of SWK 5423 may have to start over again with SWK 5413, regardless of the grade awarded in SWK 5413. Similarly, a student who does not satisfactorily complete the requirements of SWK 5826 may have to start over again with SWK 5816 regardless of the grade awarded in the first six (6) hours.

### **Practicum Grading**

To receive a grade of Satisfactory for the **mid-practicum evaluation**, students must:

- Achieve a minimum rating of *Emerging Competence* on all the behavior criteria for a minimum of 7 of the 9 Competencies indicated on the student evaluation;
- Achieve no rating of **UP for any criteria** indicated for the mid-practicum evaluation.
- Students who receive a rating of **Unacceptable Progress** at mid-practicum on any criteria will receive a grade of Unsatisfactory in the practicum.

Students who receive ratings of **Insufficient Progress** at mid-practicum must develop a **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** in consultation with their Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison. Field Instructors and Faculty Liaisons will monitor student progress on the PIP.

To be awarded a final grade of Satisfactory for the **final evaluation**, students must:

- Achieve a minimum rating of *Emerging Competence* on the behavior criteria for all 9 Competencies indicated for the final evaluation, and
- **Achieve no rating of IP or UP for any criteria** indicated for the **final evaluation**.
- Students who receive a rating of **Unacceptable Progress** on the final evaluation for any criteria will receive a grade of Unsatisfactory in the practicum.

### **Practicum Grade and Field Education Contract Approval**

Practicum assignments are created at each practicum site through the development of the Field Education Contract. This education contract outlines a developmentally graduated description of the Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work program competencies which must be incorporated into the practicum experience and addressed at each site. The first major practicum assignment at all sites is the development of the contract. The initial Field Education Contract is approved by both the Field Instructor and the faculty liaison and must be submitted by the due date which appears on the Practicum Calendar for each practicum course. Students may not continue in the practicum course without approval and then submission of the contract. A student who fails to develop a Field Education Contract which directly ties practicum activities at the site to program competencies and ensures that these assignments

are designed to create opportunities for instructive feedback and assessment of performance, will be awarded a grade of Unsatisfactory and will not continue in the practicum course.

### **Practicum Grade & the Foundation Year - Foundation Curriculum Assessment**

During SWK 5423, Foundation year students will be required to complete the Foundation Curriculum Assessment. This instrument will assess the foundation year knowledge of each of the nine competencies for each student to provide data for programmatic analysis. There will not be a grade assigned to this instrument, but completion will be a requirement for each student before the end of the SWK 5423 course. The due date for completion of the Foundation Curriculum Assessment will be communicated on the practicum calendar.

### **Practicum Grade & the Concentration Year Comprehensive Exam**

The second course of the concentration year practicum is linked to the comprehensive exam, as required by the Graduate College. Students may not take the comp exam, specifically the Field Education Contract, unless they have a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

### **Practicum Grade of Incomplete**

A grade of Incomplete will be assigned to students who have not met the following practicum requirements: (this includes pre-approved Modified Practicum students who have not met practicum requirements by the end of the semester)

- The total number of practicum hours required
- The total number of practicum weeks required
- The total number of supervisory conferences required
- Completion and submission of all required practicum documentation
- Completion and submission of the Student Survey of Educational Experience, Parts I & II

A grade of **Incomplete** may NOT be assigned unless the student:

- Has completed 70% of the practicum course
- Has demonstrated good progress and performance in all criteria
- Is expected to achieve a grade of Satisfactory for the practicum course

A grade of **Incomplete** will NOT be given:

- To extend time to improve practicum performance
- For any reason not listed above

Students who have been assigned a grade of **Incomplete** are immediately required to sign and return to the Field Education Office the *University Agreement to Complete a Course after the End of Term*, i.e. an “Incomplete contract.” The ‘I’ Contract will outline:

- Requirements which are missing

- Final date (determined by the school) for submission of missing requirements, after which, if the missing requirements are unfulfilled, the grade of Incomplete will become a grade of Unsatisfactory

When a student does not fulfill the conditions and requirements outlined in the I Contract, the student will be assigned a grade of Unsatisfactory for the course.

When the grade of Incomplete occurs in the first course of a practicum, the student may not begin the second course until all conditions and requirements which have been set forth in the I Contract are satisfactorily met. If the student does not fulfill the conditions and requirements outlined in the I Contract, the student will be assigned a grade of Unsatisfactory.

The second course, SWK 5826, of the concentration year practicum is linked to the comprehensive exam. *A student cannot receive an Incomplete for the comprehensive exam.* When the grade of Incomplete is anticipated in a concentration year practicum, the student will immediately consult with the Field Education Coordinator.

## **UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE: FAILING PRACTICUM AND TERMINATION OF PRACTICUM**

### **Practicum Standards**

The goals of the School are to provide the best professional preparation for our students, to assure that both our students and our graduates provide professional services of the highest quality, and to assure that our educational programs do not place clients and/or other members of the public at risk. Academic and professional standards for the School are set forth in the *Student Performance Policy*. Standards for professional behavior outlined by the policy are incorporated in the *Field Education Contract* as a competency which is evaluated by Field Instructors over the course of the practicum. Field Instructors are made aware of the *Student Performance Policy* in Instructor Training. Students should be familiar with the *Student Performance Policy* and its contents and will abide by the standards contained in the policy. At that time students also agree to adhere to the Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work policies, University of Oklahoma policies, the NASW Code of Ethics, and to uphold the rules and procedures of assigned practicum placement agencies.

### **Unsatisfactory Performance**

There are three (3) ways a student might receive a grade of Unsatisfactory in a practicum course:

- 1) The student might complete the first half of the practicum and, due to unresolved insufficient performance, be awarded a grade of Unsatisfactory.
- 2) The student might complete the entire practicum and, due to unresolved insufficient performance in the second part of the practicum, be awarded a grade of Unsatisfactory.
- 3) The school or the practicum site might terminate a practicum placement if it becomes evident to the practicum site, Field Instructor, faculty liaison, Field Education Coordinator, or the School, that the student is unable to successfully complete the practicum. The practicum will be ended and a grade of Unsatisfactory assigned.

### **Level III Review**

Whether the practicum has been completed or terminated, in accordance with *The Student Performance Policy*, the school will investigate the student's practicum placement situation and a Level III Review of the student's unsatisfactory performance. This investigation may be conducted by the Field Education Coordinator, Director or Associate Director of the school. The investigation may include but is not limited to a thorough review of all practicum documentation, a meeting with the student, the Academic Advisor, and consultation with both the Faculty Liaison and Field Instructor and/or Preceptor or other relevant agency staff.

Based upon the investigation, the Level Review, and the academic judgment of relevant social work faculty, including but not limited to the Graduate or Undergraduate Coordinator, the Director or Associate Director, the Field Education Coordinator, the Faculty Liaison and the student's Academic Advisor:

- The student may receive a final grade of Unsatisfactory for the practicum course and be terminated from the program.
- The student may receive a final grade of Unsatisfactory for the practicum course and be allowed to develop a plan to repeat both courses of the practicum.

In accordance with the *Student Performance Policy*, a student who is permitted proceed with possible repetition of the practicum must develop a plan that realistically addresses the performance issues involved in the failed practicum and demonstrate that the past performance difficulties will not be a problem in a subsequent practicum placement. The plan must demonstrate that the student has reasonable prospects of improved performance or the student will not be allowed to repeat the practicum, and the grade of Unsatisfactory will stand. Included in a plan to repeat the practicum, the student must demonstrate the following:

- Reflection upon the failed practicum experience
- Acknowledgement of the student's problems with performance
- Description of the cause or nature of the performance difficulties involved
- Identification of the student's contribution to the performance problems
- Development of a realistic strategy to prevent the identified difficulties from interfering with practicum performance

The social work faculty will exercise academic judgment in reviewing the above criteria and in determining whether the plan is sufficient to warrant repeating the practicum. The plan must demonstrate that the student has reasonable prospects of improved performance. If the criteria listed above are judged to be insufficient, the student will not be allowed to repeat the practicum and the student will be terminated from the program in accordance with Graduate College policy. If the criteria listed above are judged to be sufficient, the student will be allowed to plan a repeated practicum and the school will establish a date by which the practicum must be completed.

### **Repeated Practicum Process**

- Students may not be permitted to repeat their practicum in the semester immediately following the Unsatisfactory practicum
- Prospective sites may be notified of the student's previous attempt to complete the practicum, and made aware of the student's efforts to improve the prospect of satisfactory performance
- It is the student's responsibility to secure a practicum site that has the approval of the school; however, the School reserves the right to select the practicum site
- A school approved practicum site must be willing to place the student during the timeframe allowed, or the student will not be allowed to repeat the practicum and will be terminated from the program in accordance with Graduate College policy

### **Unsatisfactory Performance in a Repeated Practicum**

A student who cannot fulfill the field education requirement in social work cannot continue in the social work program. If the student is not successful in his/her efforts to either begin or successfully complete another practicum, they will be recommended for dismissal from the social work program to the Graduate College.

## **PRACTICUM PLACEMENT INTERRUPTIONS**

### **Placement Reassignment**

Students complete practicum requirements by demonstrating the acquisition and mastery of mandated competencies. This mastery is cumulative in character and developmental in nature and includes a sequence of planned learning experiences and competency demonstrations that span enrollment in two, linked courses. Because of the cumulative nature of the learning experiences and the assessment of student performance involved, to complete the Foundation Year or Concentration Year practicum requirement, students must complete both linked courses with a satisfactory grade during a practicum placement, within two consecutive semesters. Once placed at a specific practicum site or within a field unit, each student is expected to complete both practicum courses within that placement.

Considerable School, practicum site and Field Instructor efforts go into securing the commitment of placement resources to students for practicum. This commitment of resources does not end with student placement; Field Instructors have the continuing responsibility of planning and managing developmental learning experiences for students across placement semesters.

Practicum placements are intended to provide students with in-depth exposure to professional social work practice. Once the placement begins, it takes considerable time for a student to develop both an understanding of the role the site plays in meeting the needs of an identified population, and adequate skills to provide site services. Students are expected to invest themselves in making their practicum a successful experience. Therefore, students may not "try out" practicum placements. All placements provide a learning experience for students even if the learning acquired is not what the student expected. After a placement has begun, site or

instructor changes are made only in rare and unusual circumstances. Changes are allowed only after every effort has been made to resolve whatever problem has developed in the placement.

### **Protocol for Addressing Placement Difficulties**

Only after the following protocol has been observed; and it has been determined by the faculty liaison that the problems involved cannot be resolved, and are not linked to deficiencies in student performance, may a student submit a request for change in placement.

Protocol for student identified difficulties:

- Depending upon the nature and extent of the problem(s), the student must first discuss his/her concerns with the Field Instructor and attempt to resolve the difficulties which have emerged. During this discussion, the student must state the concerns respectfully, honestly and openly and be open to feedback from the Field Instructor.
- The student must also alert their Faculty Liaison to the concerns and to the efforts that are being made to resolve the problem with the Field Instructor.
- If the problem is not resolved because of the student-initiated conference, the student or Field Instructor must contact the Faculty Liaison and request a site visit conference.
- In this conference, the student should state his or her concerns respectfully, clearly and honestly; provide evidence to document these concerns; and, be open to suggestions from both the Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison. The Faculty Liaison will assist the student and the instructor in developing further efforts to resolve the problem and may require that they develop a written contract to address the concerns.
- If the Liaison determines that the problems which have been identified are the result of deficiencies in student performance, the Liaison may request that the School conduct a Level Review in accordance with the School's Student Performance Policy.
- If the Liaison determines that the practicum situation is untenable and is not reflective of deficiencies in the student's performance, he or she will advise the student to request a change of practicum placement and will inform the Field Education Coordinator of this recommendation. See: Disruption of Practicum Placement.

Protocol for Field Instructor identified difficulties:

- If a Field Instructor identifies difficulties with an assigned student, believes the student would benefit from a change of placement, and/or would like for the student to be re-assigned, he or she should request a conference with the assigned Faculty Liaison to discuss the issues and concerns.
- The Faculty Liaison will thoroughly consider the concerns and discuss with the Field Instructor possible actions to support and maintain the student's current placement.
- If the Liaison determines that the problems which have been identified are the result of deficiencies in student performance, the Faculty Liaison may request that the School conduct a Level Review in accordance with the School's Student Performance Policy. The School may request that the Field Instructor complete and submit an evaluation of the student within five (5) days.

- If the Liaison determines that the practicum situation is untenable and is not reflective of deficiencies in the student's performance, the Liaison will recommend a change of placement and advise the Field Education Coordinator. See: Disruption of Practicum Placement.

### **Requesting a Change of Placement**

Only after the forgoing communication and problem-solving process has been followed; it has been determined by the faculty liaison that the problems cannot be resolved; and, it has been determined that the problems are not the result of deficiencies in student performance, may the student request a change of practicum placement.

A change of practicum request is reviewed by the Field Education Coordinator, who will consult with the Faculty Liaison and may request a meeting with any of the parties involved before deciding that a change of placement is warranted. A decision to change the student's placement will be made primarily on the following factors: 1) the nature and severity of the problem; 2) the outcome of prior efforts to address the concerns; and 3) the willingness of the Field Instructor to continue working with the student.

If a decision is made to change the placement, the student is responsible for working with the Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison to develop a plan for appropriate termination with clients and the site. This plan should address transfer of responsibilities and clients to other service providers; completion of documentation; and, observation of checking-out procedures at the site.

Only after the change of placement is approved will the Field Education Coordinator begin working with the student to identify a new practicum placement. Every attempt will be made to re-place the student at a site that provides as much continuity as possible in the student's learning experience. The student must meet all planning and practicum requirements that apply. See: Disruption of Practicum Placement.

### **Suspension of Practicum**

Practicum placements may be suspended, i.e. temporarily stopped, when a student is not meeting practicum requirements. During the time a placement is suspended, the student shall not accumulate practicum hours. When it is determined that the placement can resume, the student may then begin again to accumulate practicum hours but may be delayed in completing the practicum course. If it is determined that the placement can resume, the student will resume accumulating practicum hours, but may be delayed in completing the practicum course.

The practicum may be suspended for the following reasons:

- The student is failing to communicate with the School during the practicum, for example, is not submitting weekly practicum documentation, or is not responding to requests to set up a site visit, or is not communicating with the faculty liaison as needed or requested
- The required supervisory structure is not in place
- When the academic requirements of the practicum are not being met in the placement
- The student is having excessive absences from practicum



- The student is not attending practicum required meetings
- The student is not complying with stipend requirements
- The student has not complied with important deadlines, for example, submission of the Field Education Contract or associated Mid-Practicum or Final Evaluation
- The Practicum may also be suspended when there are student performance difficulties. These placements may remain suspended while the School investigates and Level III Review of the student's practicum situation to determine whether the placement can resume or will be terminated.

### **Disruption of Practicum Placement**

In both the Foundation Year and Concentration Year practicum, students will complete practicum requirements by demonstrating the acquisition and mastery of mandated competencies. This mastery is cumulative in character and developmental in nature and includes a sequence of planned learning experiences and competency demonstrations that span enrollment in two, linked courses. Because of the cumulative nature of the learning experiences and the assessment of student performance involved, to complete the Foundation Year or Concentration Year practicum requirements, students must complete both linked courses with a satisfactory grade during a practicum placement, within one, or spanning two consecutive semesters, depending upon the practicum format.

Occasionally practicum placements are disrupted due to **circumstances involving the practicum site or the supervisory arrangement of the field placement**. For example, the Field Instructor might become ill or leave the employment of the practicum site; or, the site might lose funding for the program where the student is placed. These circumstances are beyond the control of the School, and beyond the control of the student. Students are responsible for notifying the Faculty Liaison and the Field Education Program office at the first sign of potential placement disruption. When placements have been disrupted due to circumstances not connected to the student or the student's practicum performance, the school will make reasonable efforts to assist the student with continuation of their current practicum course. However, planning for the practicum, including the commitment of practicum site resources, is a process that typically unfolds over the course of several months.

Because of the time-consuming complexity of the process involved, the school cannot guarantee any of the following:

- That the current field education contract can be completed
- That the existing practicum placement can proceed following the disruption
- That a new abbreviated placement can be arranged at another site
- That all, or even some, of the accumulated practicum hours can be transferred to another placement

Depending upon the situation involved, the student may have to be reassigned to a new placement site and start the practicum over. Even when the school's efforts to reassign are immediately successful, disruption will likely delay the practicum and as a result may potentially

delay the progress of the student in the social work program. When these delays occur in the Foundation Year, students will not be allowed to enroll in concentration year courses which have as prerequisite a successfully completed foundation year practicum when they have not completed these practicum courses.

Practicum placements can also be interrupted by **circumstances directly related to the student**. These circumstances may involve the academic performance of the student, or the personal circumstances of the student, and prevent the student from continuing in the practicum.

Here are some examples:

- The student chooses to drop the second half of the practicum
- The student fails to successfully complete prerequisite coursework
- The student drops practicum co-requisite coursework
- The student is placed on academic probation
- The student has an unresolved grade of Incomplete in the first part of the practicum (See: Grade Assignment of Incomplete)
- The student takes medical leave
- The site limits the student's participation in practicum activities due to the student's medical or personal circumstances
- The student accepts a job at the practicum site in a program that cannot accommodate the continuation of the practicum
- The student loses a job during an employment-based placement
- The student encounters personal difficulties that make the existing practicum placement untenable

Because of the developmental and cumulative nature of the practicum, if it is not possible for a student to progress from a successfully completed first half of the practicum to the second half, the student will be required to repeat the entire practicum when the time comes.

Each practicum is comprised of two practicum courses. When the practicum is interrupted between practicum courses by circumstances directly related to the student, depending upon the student's academic situation, the school reserves the right to initiate communication with the practicum site and Field Instructor/or field unit that hosted the student for the first half of the practicum to request that the student be allowed to return at a later time to complete the second half of the practicum. While efforts might be made to allow for resumption of the practicum in this way, the school cannot guarantee that resumption of the placement will be possible. The decision to extend a previous commitment to a student is made by the practicum site and/or Field Instructor and not by the School. If the student can return to the original placement to resume the practicum, the student must be enrolled in the remaining half of the practicum within two semesters of the practicum interruption. Even if the site is initially willing to extend their commitment to the student, by the time the student is ready to resume the practicum, circumstances may have developed that make this plan impossible. Because of the

developmental and cumulative nature of the practicum, if the student is not allowed to return to the original placement site or unit, the student will be required to complete the entire practicum, i.e. both practicum courses, at a new placement site.

Practicum sites and Field Instructors must commit time and resources to meet our school's requirements and plan for a student to be placed. Therefore, to either resume an interrupted practicum, or repeat an entire practicum, students must satisfy all practicum readiness requirements, as well as all academic requirements which are linked to the practicum course(s) before entering the practicum planning process. As with all practicum placements, students must participate in all established planning procedures and meet all placement requirements.

### **Termination of Placement**

The School or the practicum site may terminate a practicum placement if it becomes evident to the practicum site, Field Instructor, Faculty Liaison, Field Education Coordinator, or the School, that the student is unable to successfully complete the practicum and a grade of Unsatisfactory will be assigned. See: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance.

## **OTHER POLICIES**

### **Confidentiality**

Social work students are expected to become familiar and comply with local, state, and federal mandates governing privacy and confidentiality, as well as with the policies and guidelines of their practicum site. Students should also become familiar with exceptions to confidentiality, such as mandates to report. Students are expected to consult with their Field Instructors regularly on the ethical responsibility of social workers regarding standards of confidentiality.

Confidentiality is a basic principle of social work intervention. All social workers are expected to maintain adequate safeguards for the private nature of the professional client relationship. Students must hold confidential, both during and after the practicum, all identifiable information about persons served by the agency or facility where they are placed. Students must also maintain adequate safeguards when engaging with social media, by refraining from referring, even in the most general way, to their work with clients or client populations at practicum sites.

## **ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**

The practicum experience is a learning opportunity with responsibility shared by the School, the site, and the student. However, as with all coursework, the primary responsibility for satisfactory completion of the course belongs to the student. Students are expected to fulfill the expectations of both the School and the site. Student expectations specific to field education policies, guidelines and procedures appear throughout the *Online Field Education Manual*. Below are listed some general student responsibilities which are fundamental to success in the field placement.

### **Practicum Planning**

- Observe all practicum planning procedures and meet all requirements of the planning process

- Conscientiously and honestly participate in the practicum planning process
- Notify the Field Education Coordinator of any special needs, financial issues, work relationships, and practice preferences that might influence practicum planning
- Participate fully in all voluntary venues offered to assist with the practicum planning process

### **Practicum Meetings, Documentation & Deadlines**

- Conscientiously prepare and submit all required practicum documentation by the deadlines indicated
- Provide documentation as necessary to demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of work in the practicum setting
- Attend all required orientations and meetings, field seminars, practicum labs, contract development sessions, etc.

### **Communication with the Field Education Program**

- Contact the Field Education office if problems arise in the field that may need support, clarification, and/or resolution
- Communicate problems and concerns to the faculty liaison
- Notify the faculty liaison of any difficulties encountered which interfere with meeting practicum expectations
- Regularly read all email notices sent from the Field Education Program
- Initiate scheduling of faculty liaison site visits

### **Practicum Hours**

- Maintain agreed upon practicum schedule and report absences to the Field Instructor
- Conscientiously report practicum activities and the accumulation of practicum hours

### **Practicum Supervision**

- Arrange for and maintain a schedule for weekly field supervision conferences
- Find out from Field Instructor what is expected in supervision conferences and what to prepare
- Prepare weekly for supervision with questions, cases, concerns, and issues to discuss
- Report to the Faculty Liaison any disruptions or anticipated disruptions in field supervision
- May meet weekly with onsite preceptors when Field Instructor is off-site
- Utilize supervision for ongoing development of the *Field Education Contract*
- Use supervision to develop, monitor and revise learning goals and plans

- Communicate with the Field Instructor regarding their approach to field instruction, overview of the placement, and expectations for the student
- Communicate to Field Instructor, through the supervision planning process, past experiences, learning needs and interests, conflicts regarding field instruction, and struggles to develop as a professional social worker
- Participate in a supervisory relationship with the Field Instructor in which self-assessment and openness to evaluation are an integral, ongoing process. Utilize supervision to assess personal and professional strengths and challenges. Use supervision to develop an awareness of personal values and sort out personal biases. Use supervision to clarify conflicting values and ethical dilemmas
- Use supervision to explore differential use of self in professional relationships
- Know when to seek out supervision and feedback. Actively seek out and utilize supervisory feedback to evaluate and improve practice
- Use supervision to integrate classroom learning in the practice setting
- Use supervision to appropriately discern and use power and authority in professional relationships
- Use supervision to ascertain/confirm statutes and regulatory standards that apply to practice at the practicum site
- Use supervision to enhance professional development

### **Field Education Contract**

- Assume responsibility for demonstrating all required competencies
- Development and composition of Field Education Contract Work Plan sections; contributor to the Field Education Contract Evaluation in collaboration with the Field Instructor
- Engage in meaningful and challenging work
- Apply classroom knowledge in the field

### **Student Safety**

- Secure personal safety through adherence to reasonable precautions; and adherence to practicum site policies, training, procedures and guidelines, and to University policies
- Consult with Field Instructor and site about all safety and liability concerns

### **Practicum Policies, Guidelines and Procedures**

- Become familiar with practicum policies, guidelines, and procedures outlined in the *Online Field Education Manual*.
- Become familiar with the School's *Student Performance Policy*

### **Site Specific Requirements**

- Adhere to the expectations of the practicum site
- Adherence to agency dress code
- Arrange for dependable transportation available for practicum activities, including getting to and from the placement site

### **Professional Liability Insurance**

- Secure and maintain student malpractice insurance for the duration of the practicum placement

### **Professional Conduct**

- Conduct oneself in a professional manner that is consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, the Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work *Student Performance Policy* and the best interest of clients
- As much as possible, become part of the practicum site
- When possible and compatible with the demands of achieving the educational objectives of the practicum course, participate in the same expectations as site employees
- Identify yourself as a “student” to clients and staff at the practicum site
- Let clients know how long you will be at the site
- Be reliable, dependable and responsible

### **Evaluations**

- Fully participate in all practicum evaluations of student performance and educational experience
- Fully participate in all practicum evaluations of student performance according to the expectations and requests of the Field Instructor and/or Liaison
- Fully participate in all student evaluations of educational experience

## **PRACTICUM ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

The Field Instructor is the social worker who has the responsibility for development, implementation, and evaluation of a student’s educational experience in the practicum placement; and as such, they are co-educators with the School in professionally developing our social work students.

### **Required Qualifications for Field Instructors**

- A degree in social work from an accredited program. Field Instructors in the graduate program must have an MSW degree.
- At least two years of supervised post-degree experience in social work practice is required for those providing field instruction for students.

- At least six months experience in current social work position
- If financial compensation is necessary for a site to provide field instruction, the site, not the student, is responsible for this payment. No student may pay for field instruction.

### **Preferred Qualifications for Field Instructors**

- A license to practice social work in the State of Oklahoma or the state in which they are employed.
- Membership in NASW
- Evidence of continuing professional development through reading, workshops, courses, conference attendance, and participation in professional organizations
- A demonstrated interest in professional social work education and a willingness to work cooperatively with the School to accomplish educational objectives
- Demonstrated capacity for supervision or evidence of potential as an instructor
- Knowledge of the practice setting, the community within which the site functions, and the needs of the clientele served by the site
- Demonstrated knowledge of the current state of social work practice and its relation to the knowledge base of the profession
- Ability and sufficient time to carry out the responsibilities of the Field Instructor

### **Procedure for Selection and Appointment of Field Instructors**

Potential Field Instructors may submit their application for Field Instructor status to the campus of their choice by submitting a *Field Instructor Application* and professional vita to the Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work. Application information can be found on the School's website.

### **Verification of Field Instructor Credentials**

As a part of the application process, applicants submit a copy of their resume. Credentials of social workers applying for Field Instructor status are verified using the state licensing databases and the School alumni database. Applicants who do not carry an Oklahoma social work license and did not earn a social work degree from the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work may be asked to provide additional documentation in support of their candidacy.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Field Instructors**

The Field Instructor is the person who plans the day-to-day learning activities and assignments which comprise the practicum; provides mentoring, instruction, professional guidance, practice supervision and oversight of the student experience; and provides oversight of any non-social work professionals (preceptors) who are involved in the student's learning process. The Field Instructor is crucial to the success of the overall learning experience. If the Field Instructor is not "on-site," the site must designate an on-site preceptor who will be responsible for the day-to-day activities and learning experience of the student. See: Field Instruction and Practicum Supervision for more information.

## Expectations of Field Instructors

- Attend Field Training and/or Field Instructor Training as required
- Become familiar with field education policies, guidelines, and procedures outlined in the *Online Field Education Manual*.
- Demonstrate professional conduct which supports the educational mission of the School, its Field Education Program, and the overall process of developing professionals for social work practice
- Conduct an initial interview and educational assessment of the prospective student prior to placement; and, explain to the student the structure, function, and requirements of the site, as well as expectations for a student in that placement
- Provide an overall structure for the student placement by creating a well-thought-out learning experience that “starts where the student is” and progresses in an educationally graduated manner to advance the student’s knowledge, practice skills, and professional autonomy
- Assure that employment-based practicum students are offered relevant and challenging social work educational experiences that represent new learning and are different and separate from past job responsibilities
- When incorporating preceptors into the plan for student supervision, include preceptors in the development of the Field Education Contract; develop clear lines of responsibility, authority, and feedback about the student’s performance; and, ensure the influence of the social work perspective in this supervisory arrangement See: *Responsibilities of the Field Instructor in Relationship to Practicum Preceptors*
- Plan and schedule student orientation to the practicum site, to the agency, and the community setting
- Provide for practicum students written policies, guidelines, procedures, and training pertaining to staff and client safety at the practicum site.
- Work with the student and faculty field liaison as needed, to develop a written, individualized *Field Education Contract* that is based on the student’s learning needs and the School’s outcome requirements and reflects a planned learning experience.
- Provide, at minimum, a weekly one-hour integrative supervisory student conference. More supervision time is preferred, but not required.
- Ideally, group supervision, is an accompaniment to individual supervision. However, when appropriate, instructors who are working with multiple social work students can supervise their students in a group. In these instances, the instructor must be available to process more personal/sensitive issues with students on an individual basis.
- Inform students about how to best prepare for and utilize supervision conferences
- Arrange times for make-up supervision conferences whenever regularly scheduled conferences have been canceled.



- Assist students in integrating practicum learning with the broad signature perspective of the social work profession
- Meet with the faculty liaison as needed to coordinate between the School and the site and attend meetings as necessary to resolve issues that arise during the practicum placement
- Notify the faculty liaison promptly if problems, including problems in student performance, arise in the placement
- Develop, in conjunction with the Faculty Liaison, a plan to address performance concerns that have been identified
- Complete documentation about practicum and student performance problems as requested by the Faculty Liaison
- Review and sign weekly practicum reports prepared by the student
- Complete student evaluations at both mid-practicum and at the end of the practicum, and review these evaluations with the student
- Recommend a grade for the student at the completion of the grading period
- Participate in appropriate training sessions, orientations, field workshops, and meetings conducted by the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work's Field Education Office.

## **ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR PRECEPTORS**

### **Practicum Preceptor Roles**

Preceptors may be professionally trained social workers, members of other professions, or paraprofessionals. Although preceptors may not be utilized in place of field instruction provided by someone who holds a social work degree, they may be utilized to broaden the range of learning opportunities available to students. Some preceptors may work with students providing day-to-day supervision, with the Field Instructor available on a consulting and supervisory basis. Other preceptors provide short term, specific learning opportunities and task supervision, both on and off-site, that expand the student's experience. Preceptors participate in the overall evaluation of the student's progress consistent with the amount and type of responsibility they have had for the student's learning. They provide feedback about the student's field performance to the Field Instructor, who has final responsibility for the student's practicum evaluation.

When preceptors are incorporated into the teaching and learning process in a practicum, the extent of preceptor responsibility is determined by the Field Instructor and approved by the Field Education Coordinator at the time of placement approval. When preceptors are incorporated after the practicum has begun, the extent and type of preceptor responsibility is determined by the Field Instructor and approved by the faculty liaison.

See: *Field Instruction and Practicum Supervision* for more information about preceptors.

### **Expectations of Practicum Preceptors:**

- Become familiar with the School's field education policies, guidelines, and procedures outlined in the Field Education Manual
- Complete the online Field Instructor Training (required for Preceptors)
- Demonstrate professional conduct which supports the educational mission of the School, its Field Education Program, and the overall process of developing professionals for social work practice
- Assist in the development and planning of learning experiences that will advance the student's knowledge, practice skills, and professional autonomy
- Assist with integrating the social work perspective into learning experiences
- Assist as needed in the development of an individualized student Field Education Contract
- Review the student's documentation for accountability
- Provide guidance, direction, and training for the student as assigned
- Provide feedback about the student's performance to the Field Instructor
- Report concerns about student performance or educational needs to Field Instructor promptly.

### **Responsibilities of Field Instructors in Relationship to Practicum Preceptors**

The site-based instructor provides mentoring, instruction, professional guidance, practice supervision and oversight of all preceptors designated to be involved in the student's learning process. Setting up a supervisory structure that includes the incorporation of on-site preceptors, and even off-site preceptors, to lead practicum activities that offer needed opportunities for students will be a very important supervision planning task for some Field Instructors. When a Field Instructor is sharing instructional responsibilities with preceptors, the instructor must provide supervision which focuses on integrative and reflective discussions which help the student integrate the preceptor's contribution to the overall learning experience. When utilizing preceptors, it is the affiliated Field Instructor's responsibility to develop clear lines of responsibility, authority and feedback about the student's performance in these activities. In placements involving off-site Field Instructors, it is the affiliated Field Instructor's responsibility to designate an on-site practicum preceptor to provide day-to-day supervision for the student. In these placements, the Field Instructor must be available to both the student and the preceptor on a consulting and supervisory basis. When the preceptor is not a social worker, the school affiliated Field Instructor is responsible for maintaining the influence of the social work perspective in this supervisory arrangement.

- Designate and monitor preceptors involved with the student's educational experience
- Orient preceptor(s) to practicum requirements, the social work perspective, the Field Education Contract and the attending learning processes

- Collaborate with preceptors in the development of the learning experience; determine the extent of preceptor responsibility; designate practicum activities and assignments which will be preceptor supervised
- Assure that practicum activities and assignments follow the requirements of the Field Education Contract, are in keeping with the perspective and practices of the social work profession, and are based on the student's skill level, knowledge and experience
- Help students integrate the preceptor's contribution into the overall learning experience
- Check frequently with student and preceptor to monitor the effectiveness of the plan
- Develop ways the preceptor can share ongoing feedback with the student
- ensure that the student is open about any conflict arising from different perspectives, supervision or management styles; help the student focus on positive aspects of learning from other professions
- Obtain ongoing feedback from the preceptor regarding the student's performance in task supervised activities
- Consult with the preceptor regarding the student's final evaluation
- Assume final responsibility for the student evaluation

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACULTY LIAISON**

### **The Faculty Liaison Role**

Faculty Liaisons link the School of Social Work program with practicum sites. Faculty Liaisons from the Anne and Henry Zarrow School have responsibility for maintaining a continuing relationship with the practicum setting, Field Instructor, and students in practicum placements, and for providing feedback to the Field Education Coordinator regarding changes, progress, and/or problems encountered in the practicum setting. A Faculty Liaison is assigned to each student in a practicum placement. Liaisons assist with the development of the education contract which guides the course of each student's practicum experience, and monitors student performance and progress through virtual visits to the site, group and individual meetings with students, ongoing review of student documentation, supervisory reports and telephone and e-mail contacts. Faculty Liaisons conduct field unit seminars when incorporated into the practicum.

*See: Practicum Placement Monitoring*

### **Responsibilities of the Faculty Liaison**

Faculty Liaisons serve as the primary link between the practicum setting and the Field Education Program by building, promoting, and maintaining relationships with practicum students, Field Instructors, practicum preceptors and site officials; by informing students about potential practicum opportunities; and, by assisting with the identification and development of placement sites.

The Faculty Liaisons participate in Field Instructor training; support the students and Field Instructors in the early weeks of each field placement; assist students and Field Instructors with

the development of practicum experiences which meet program competency requirements; assist with the development of a practicum supervisory structure when needed; construct and support the resolutions of student performance problems; and, assist Field Instructors with feedback to and evaluation of students.

The Faculty Liaison monitors and documents each field placement as needed throughout the course of the practicum through site visits and regular review of online student documentation; and through a variable combination of ongoing telephone and email communication, group and individual meetings with students, and field seminars when incorporated into the practicum. When applicable, Faculty Liaisons may be assigned to manage Field Unit(s). This would include the facilitation and coordination of regular field unit meetings.

The Faculty Liaison intensifies monitoring during work plan development and evaluation periods of the practicum to ensure that all students are given opportunities to acquire, and have demonstrated, program required competencies; reviews and approves Field Education Contracts and instructor evaluations of students.

The Faculty Liaison acts as an administrative resource and consultant to students and Field Instructors by clarifying academic and professional standards, ethical and values considerations, policies, guidelines, practices, and documentation requirements; and, by problem-solving and negotiating site/agency difficulties as they arise.

The Faculty Liaison supports students and Field Instructors when there are student performance concerns, ensuring due diligence in the resolution of difficulties, and documenting and participating in the Level Review process when needed.

The Faculty Liaison supports fellow liaisons through consultation, participation in liaison meetings and the mentoring of new liaisons.

The Faculty Liaison provides ongoing feedback and formal evaluation to the Field Education Program regarding practicum sites, placements, instructors and students.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIELD EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

Field Education Coordinators are responsible for the development, implementation, management, coordination, and evaluation of field education curriculum within the School curriculum. Field Education Coordinators work with the Director of the School, the Associate Director, Online Graduate Coordinator, concentration and curriculum content chairpersons, classroom faculty and Faculty Liaisons. In addition, Field Education Coordinators work with practicum site administrators and Field Instructors who are teaching field curriculum at practicum sites.

### **Program Responsibilities of the Field Education Coordinator**

- Development, implementation, and coordination of the Field Education Program
- Development and articulation of philosophy, curriculum, policies, guidelines, and procedures within the Field Education Program
- Coordination of all faculty liaison educational roles, student placement and placement monitoring activities

- Collaboration and communication with all Faculty Liaisons
- Preparation and distribution of documents needed for the Field Education Program, including student learning contracts and practicum course syllabi
- Development and ongoing revision of field policy
- Development and ongoing revision of the *Online Field Education Manual*
- Development and oversight of the Online Field Education webpage
- Development and oversight of the various Canvas courses related to practicum courses
- Oversight of the field software program
- Management of all field education funding and budget expenditures
- Establishment and monitoring of practicum educational outcomes ensuring consistency with the overall objectives of the School and its components
- Assurance of compliance with the requirements of the Council on Social Work Education
- Preparation of documents required by the Director or Associate Director of the School
- Coordination and collaboration with other Field Education Coordinators
- Membership on Executive Committee, campus specific Administrative Committee, Field Education Committee, and Curriculum faculty committees
- Participation in national social work field educator venues, conferences, list serves, etc.

#### **Practicum Placement and Student Monitoring Responsibilities of the Field Education Coordinator**

- Identification and approval of appropriate practicum sites
- Development of new practicum sites to meet student needs
- Selection and approval of qualified Field Instructors and preceptors
- Orientation, placement, and assignment of students to practicum sites
- Securing authorization of Community Faculty appointments as needed for faculty liaison duty
- Negotiation of working agreements with practicum sites and Field Instructors
- Negotiation of University-Practicum Site Affiliation Agreements with practicum sites
- Development and implementation of curriculum for students, Field Instructors, and Faculty Liaisons

#### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRACTICUM SITES**

Practicum agencies and facilities serve as practicum sites for field experiences in which students are provided the opportunity to work directly with individuals, families, groups, and communities.

## Responsibilities of Practicum Sites

- Enter into a memorandum of understanding with the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents and the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work by providing required signatures on the Practicum Site Affiliation Agreement
- Provide supervision and oversight of the student activities within the site
- Designate a staff member who meets the School's qualifications to serve as field instructor and supervisor of students placed. Designate preceptors to support as needed or required
- Provide learning experiences and an atmosphere for learning that facilitates student achievement of mandated field competencies
- Maintain the integrity of the student's educational experience by not utilizing students to fill the role of staff vacancies
- Provide students with appropriate orientation to the site and its mission and goals
- Provide for students the policies, rules, regulations, and expectations which are pertinent to the student role
- Provide for students the adequate work resources, including materials and space, to function effectively
- Arrange student schedules that will not conflict with those of the University and the School of Social Work
- Provide adequate time for the field instructor to hold individual conferences with the student for at least one hour each week
- Accommodate regular meetings with field instructor and students during faculty liaison site visits
- Agree to permit, upon reasonable request, the inspection of clinical and related practicum facilities by the University, and by those agencies charged with accreditation of the University and the School of Social Work
- Consult immediately with the School if circumstances arise which require the site to ask that the student be withdrawn from the practicum
- Demonstrate support for the School in fulfilling its educational mission
- Allow field instructors to participate in appropriate training or meetings conducted by the School of Social Work
- Provide for adequate safeguarding of confidential materials
- Comply with all relevant federal, state, and local laws and the School's policies concerning non-discrimination

### **Identification of Practicum Sites**

The process of affiliation with the School for student field education may begin in one of three ways:

- 1) Agencies and sites may indicate interest by contacting the Field Education program at the School
- 2) The School may initiate interest by contacting a prospective site and exploring the site as a possible placement for social work students
- 3) A student may recommend an agency or facility as a possible placement site with the site or the School contacting the other party to begin the process of affiliation

### **Practicum Site Application to the School**

Qualified staff from potential practicum sites must be designated to complete an online *Practicum Site Application*. The application is reviewed by the Field Education Coordinator and/or Field Office staff. Students may be placed only at sites that have a formal affiliation agreement on file with the School.

### **Criteria Considered for Approval of Practicum Sites**

- Mission of the site and the consistency of that mission with professional social work
- Evidence of sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity and nondiscriminatory practices in staffing and service delivery
- Commitment of the site to education for professional social work practice
- Commitment of the site to employees who are social work students, to protect their learning experiences and their roles as learners
- Creation and maintenance of a learning environment consistent with the educational expectations of the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work
- Availability of qualified social work staff to serve as field instructors
- Physical resources to assure that the student has necessary space, materials, and support to function in a manner conducive to effective practice and optimal learning
- Ability of the site to offer students professional social work learning opportunities that align with the acquisition of School required competencies
- Ability of the site to offer students professional social work learning opportunities that fit with the program level of students considered for placement
- Programs at the site that offer exposure to a range of clientele and to the development of required social work competencies
- Willingness to allow students to function and progress as independently as skills permit and to take part in site decision-making when appropriate

- Willingness on the part of site administration to permit additional off-site learning experiences if areas of student need are identified that cannot be met within the programs and practices of the site
- Accreditation by appropriate organizations

### **Formal Practicum Site Affiliation**

When a potential site has been reviewed and approved, the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work develops an affiliation agreement using a standard University of Oklahoma *Practicum Site Affiliation Agreement* to designate the site as a practicum affiliate of the School. Affiliation agreements are reviewed every three years unless the site requests more frequent review. If a site requires that the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work accept an agreement other than that developed by the University of Oklahoma, the site must submit an electronic copy of that agreement to the Field Education Office for review by the University's legal division.

The Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work Field Education Program, as part of the University of Oklahoma, subscribes to the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Titles VI and VII), Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1072, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 402 of the Readjustments Assistance Act of 1974, and other federal laws and regulations which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services and extends to all activities related to student practicum. In addition, by special action of the faculty of the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, discrimination against students or clients by reason of individual sexual orientation is prohibited. As extensions of the School for educating social work students, all practicum sites must adhere to the policies, practice, and procedures. In addition, practicum sites are encouraged to promote opportunities for students to work with groups distinguished by age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and culture.

### **REFERENCES**

- Council on Social Work Education. (2008). Educational policy and accreditation standards. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Council on Social Work Education. (2015). Educational policy and accreditation standards. Alexandria, VA: Author.

### **UPDATE TO CSWE EPAS 2022 AND ADD STUDENT PERFORMANCE POLICY**