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PURPOSE OF PRACTICUM

The minimum 400-hour field practicum is a central component of the Concordia University Social Work Program. Having completed liberal arts and foundational social work courses, students have the opportunity to integrate theory, knowledge, practice skills, and values within an approved social service agency. Under the close supervision of an experienced social worker, students gain entry-level competencies in generalist social work practice. Concordia’s Social Work Program uses the following definition of generalist social work practice from the Council on Social Work Education’s 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards:

*Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.* (CSWE, 2015, p. 11)

In addition to the actual practice of entry-level generalist social work, students in practicum begin to develop a professional social work identity and a commitment to lifelong learning, informed by an increasing awareness of one’s own strengths and weaknesses.

Students must complete Social Work Practicum (SCW 491) concurrently with Practicum Seminar (SCW 492). The academic assignments of Practicum Seminar are designed to parallel the field learning experience, and thus need to be completed in proportion to the hours completed at the practicum site.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PRACTICUM

Over the course of two or three semesters working at a practicum site, students are expected to develop basic social work competencies, as reflected in the practicum learning goals and objectives listed below. Students also identify their own personalized learning goals and negotiate steps for achieving those goals through the completion of a Learning Agreement with their field instructor.

**Student Adaptation to and Understanding of Agency**  
*This set of learning objectives is unique to practicum.*

Students are able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the agency purpose, goals, history, funding, programs, staffing roles, and organizational structure.
• Understand and facilitate the flow of work in the organization, including a realistic perception of one’s own role.
• Relate professionally with the client or consumer system, co-workers, and community stakeholders, establishing and maintaining constructive working relationships.
• Demonstrate knowledge of relevant community resources.

**Social Work Competencies and Behaviors**
*(These goals and learning objectives are representative of the goals and objectives of the entire social work curriculum, including practicum. They reflect the accreditation requirements of the Council on Social Work Education.)*

Preparation of students to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior. Students are able to:
• Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, and a model for ethical decision-making
• Use self-awareness and self-regulation to recognize and reduce the influence of personal bias, privilege, and participation in systems of oppression
• Work effectively as a member of a team, including taking responsibility for one’s own behavior, reliable and timely completion of work, maintaining confidentiality, and inter-professional collaboration as appropriate.
• Adapt professional behavior and communication to work effectively across various settings and cultural contexts.
• Demonstrate professional written communication.
• Seek out and welcome constructive feedback (i.e. supervision and consultation) to guide professional judgment and behavior.
• Develop and engage in a practice of self-care, which recognizes the impact of exposure to people and communities experiencing trauma.

Preparation of students to engage diversity and difference in practice. Students are able to:
• Demonstrate cultural humility by approaching clients as a collaborator, empowering them as the “experts” in their own lives.
• Demonstrate cultural empathy by seeking to understand the thoughts and feelings of others given their cultural context, and effectively communicating this understanding.
• Tolerate ambiguity when resolving ethical conflicts and interacting with clients, colleagues, and constituencies (e.g. comfort with discomfort).

Preparation of students to advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. Students are able to:
• Understand the dynamics of prejudice, discrimination, oppression, and privilege and potential strategies for interrupting those.
• Work with and in the service of clients to advance social, economic, and environmental justice (in both direct and macro-level practice).
Preparation of students to engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice. Students are able to:
  
  • Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry.
  • Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, service delivery, and research.

Preparation of students to engage in policy practice. Students are able to:
  
  • Identify social welfare and economic policies that impact human well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.
  • Apply critical thinking and strategies for policy practice to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human well-being and social justice.

Preparation of students to engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students are able to:
  
  • Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to build on client strengths and effectively engage diverse clients, colleagues, and constituencies.
  • Attend to professional roles and boundaries when engaging diverse clients, colleagues, and constituencies.

Preparation of students to assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students are able to:
  
  • Collect and organize relevant data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients, colleagues, and constituencies.
  • Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients, colleagues, and constituencies.
  • Develop mutually agreed-upon goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients, constituencies, and their environments.

Preparation of students to intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students are able to:
  
  • Select appropriate intervention strategies that build on client strengths, based on a systematic assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.
  • Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies.
  • Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies.
  • Facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Preparation of students to evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students are able to:
  
  • Understand the difference between practice and program evaluation.
• Select and use appropriate methods for practice evaluation and research.
• Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness.

Supplemental Learning
If it is necessary or ideal for a student to engage in activities apart from the agency in order to best achieve a particular learning goal, this can be incorporated into the Learning Agreement as long as it meets the following criteria:
• It is related to achievement of a learning goal.
• It is discussed with and approved by both the field instructor and the faculty liaison.
• It is supervised by a social worker or closely allied professional with at least two years of experience in the field of social services.
• It does not involve more than approximately 10% of a student’s practicum hours (i.e. not more than 40 hours over the course of 400 hours).
• The student brings the experience and lessons learned back into supervision with one’s field instructor.

ADMISSION INTO, CONTINUANCE IN, AND TERMINATION OF PRACTICUM

In order to be admitted into Social Work Practicum (SCW 491) and Practicum Seminar (SCW 492), a student must:
• Have completed an Application for Advancement to Practicum and been approved. (See Concordia’s Social Work Program Student Manual for details related to the Application for Advancement to Practicum.)
• Be senior status (having successfully completed 90 credits).
• Have successfully completed (with a grade of C or higher) the following core social work courses:
  o SCW 251, Introduction to Social Work
  o SCW 321, Social Work Interviewing
  o SCW 351, Human Behavior in the Social Environment
  o SCW 352, Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups
  o SCW 353, Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations
  o SCW 354, Spiritual and Cultural Diversity in Social Work Practice
  o SCW 363, BSW Skills in Addiction, Mental Health, Interpersonal Violence, and Crisis
  o SCW 391, Pre-Practicum Seminar
  o WR 308, Advanced Research Writing
  (Students who entered the program with an earlier curriculum can stay with those previous requirements.)
• Have an overall GPA of 2.5 or higher, as well as a minimum GPA of 2.5 in courses required for the social work major.
• Be in good academic standing (not on probation).
In order to continue in practicum, a student must:

- Successfully meet all requirements specified in the Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) syllabus and on the student’s Practicum Seminar assignment schedule.
- Meet expectations regarding hours of placement, promptness, and completion of work.
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner, adhering to the NASW Code of Ethics (http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp) and the Social Work Program’s behavioral expectations as outlined in the Concordia Social Work Program Student Manual. These include working effectively with others, identifying and resolving personal issues which may impact professional behavior, managing strong emotions, showing respect to all people, accepting and utilizing constructive feedback for the sake of professional development, taking personal initiative, treating others with warmth and genuineness, setting appropriate boundaries with others, and being self-reflective.
- Continue to be in good academic standing.

Termination of Practicum:

- Successful termination of practicum occurs when a student satisfactorily completes all course requirements for SCW 491 and SCW 492, as outlined in the Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) syllabus, including demonstration of the required entry-level BSW competencies.
- More than 400 hours of practicum may be required for successful termination of practicum, if a student:
  - Has consistently met the expectations for continuance in practicum,
  - Has developed and demonstrated most of the required BSW competencies, but
  - Has not demonstrated all of the required entry-level BSW competencies by the 400-hour mark. The student’s faculty liaison is responsible for determining and communicating when extended hours are necessary, in consultation with the student, the field instructor, and the Practicum Program Director. In such cases, a revised learning agreement will be created that outlines a specific plan to provide the student an opportunity to develop and demonstrate the competencies not yet achieved. Continued attendance at Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) may be included in such plans. The first 100 additional hours of practicum (above 400 hours) can be included within the required eight credits of SCW 491. If more than 100 additional hours are required, the student will need to register for additional credits of SCW 491.
- Unsuccessful termination is when a student:
  - Decides to discontinue practicum,
  - Fails to meet expectations for continuance in practicum, as outlined above, or
  - Does not complete all course requirements for SCW 491 and SCW 492, as outlined in the Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) syllabus. This may include an inability to demonstrate the required entry-level BSW competencies.
The process of placing a student in a practicum site occurs during the Pre-Practicum Seminar (SCW 391), which is taken the semester prior to beginning Social Work Practicum (SCW 491) and Practicum Seminar (SCW 492). In the Pre-Practicum Seminar, students assess their academic and professional goals, explore their learning style, research potential practicum sites, and participate in interviews with potential field instructors. Pre-Practicum Seminar students also complete their Application for Advancement to Practicum during the first half of the semester. After receiving approval to advance to practicum from the Social Work Program Director, students work with the Practicum Program Director to identify potential practicum sites and request interviews with potential field instructors. Students are supported by the Practicum Program Director in finding a practicum site in which they can receive an entry-level generalist social work experience consistent with their own interests and goals. Concordia cannot, however, guarantee a specific type of practicum placement or a placement within a given period of time. Interviewing skills, criminal records, and other factors may influence the practicum placement process in ways outside of the Social Work Program’s control.

Release of Information
In order that Concordia University faculty may comply with the Family and Education Rights Act of 1974 while developing practicum placements, all Pre-Practicum students will be required to sign a release of information form giving permission to Concordia University’s Social Work Program faculty to furnish any relevant information about the student to prospective agencies and field instructors as part of the practicum placement process.

Learning Disabilities and Accommodations
Any student with a documented learning, physical or mental disability who feels their disability may impact academic success, including completion of a required social work practicum placement, may be qualified to receive accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students needing academic adjustments related to practicum should contact Liisa Ferguson, Concordia’s Learning Services Coordinator, no later than a week after the first Pre-Practicum seminar. Liisa’s office is located in Student Services; she can be reached by calling (503) 280-8512 or by e-mailing lferguson@cu-portland.edu. Documentation of a student’s required accommodations must be provided to the Practicum Program Director prior to the student indicating their first preference for a practicum placement. The student will then discuss necessary accommodations with the Practicum Program Director and their proposed field instructor, in order to determine if such accommodations are available within that particular agency setting. If not, the Practicum Program Director will work with the student to identify a more appropriate placement.

Agency Screening Form
As soon as a student satisfactorily completes the Pre-Practicum Seminar requirements and identifies their preference for a practicum site and field instructor, the Practicum Program Director will request that an Agency Screening Form be completed by the prospective field instructor, in order to confirm that both the agency and field instructor meet the necessary criteria as outlined in this manual. Upon
satisfactory completion of the Agency Screening Form and confirmation that the necessary criteria are met, the Practicum Program Director will formally approve the practicum site and field instructor.

**Additional Requirements of Agency**

If an agency requires fulfillment of additional requirements in order for students to work at the agency (e.g. a criminal background check, drug screening, medical tests, HIPAA certification), the student is responsible for arrangement of and payment for those requirements. The Practicum Program Director can offer information and referral to relevant resources.

**Criminal Background Checks**

Students should be aware that some crimes on a criminal background check will preclude them from being placed in practicum sites which serve vulnerable populations such as children, disabled individuals, and older adults. These crimes are likely to preclude them from working in these same fields after graduation, and may negatively impact their eligibility for registration or licensure as a social worker.

**PRACTICUM SITE AND FIELD INSTRUCTOR CRITERIA**

When a Pre-Practicum student has identified their preferred practicum site and field instructor, the Practicum Program Director will mail the prospective field instructor the Concordia Social Work Program’s Agency Screening Form. Completion of this form will assist the Practicum Program Director in confirming that the agency and field instructor meet the criteria outlined below.

**Agency Selection Criteria**

*An appropriate placement agency for a social work practicum will:*

- Be a recognized social service organization with programs that enable a variety of learning opportunities appropriate to generalist, entry-level social work practice. This includes three primary components: (1) professionalism, (2) involvement at multiple systemic levels (i.e. working with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations), and (3) working across the “planned change” process (i.e. engagement, assessment, planning/contracting/goal-setting, intervention, evaluation, and termination).
- Have appropriately credentialed and experienced staff to provide the student with quality social work field instruction.
- Be willing to commit necessary resources to the student learning experience (e.g. adequate orientation and training, supervisory time, physical space, desk, and supplies).
- Be prepared to adequately train and provide the necessary supplies for student safety. Specifically, if a social work practicum student will be conducting home visits or meeting clients in the community, the practicum agency is required to provide relevant safety training. Students are not allowed to engage in home or community visits with clients without
Field Instructor Selection Criteria

An appropriate field instructor will:

• Possess either a graduate or undergraduate degree from a CSWE accredited social work program.
  o If a social work educated professional is not available to supervise in the agency, the agency and field instructor meet all other selection criteria, and the proposed field instructor possesses appropriate education and experience in an allied profession, an exception may be considered.
  o In such exceptional cases, a social work faculty member or other social work professional will be asked to provide supplementary supervision in order to reinforce a social work perspective. This may include assisting the student in the application of human behavior theories, identifying ways in which diversity impacts the client and/or target systems, making ethical decisions through the application of the National Association of Social Workers’ Code of Ethics, and being mindful of ways in which social justice might be enhanced in their practicum site. The “supplemental social work supervisor” will be responsible for contributing to and signing off on both the Learning Agreement and Evaluation of Student Learning. A specific plan for supplementary supervision needs to be approved by the Practicum Program Director before a student begins their practicum work.

• Have at least two years of experience in social work or a closely allied profession, and possess a thorough knowledge of the agency’s mission, policies, programs, and procedures, as well as the network of community services of which the agency is a part.

• Have sufficient time, commitment, and agency support for quality student instruction, including the following:
  o Knowledge, time and resources for providing a comprehensive orientation, including safety and risk management training.
  o A minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision with the student. (Group supervision of practicum students may be provided in place of individual supervision no more than twice a month.)
  o Three site visits with the student and their faculty liaison over the course of the student’s practicum experience.
  o An orientation meeting with the Practicum Program Director prior to the student beginning practicum, if the field instructor has not supervised a Concordia social work student in the past two years.
  o An annual Field Instructor Training provided by the Concordia Social Work Program (typically held on a Friday morning in August; free CEUs are available).

• Possess requisite skills for sharing in the formulation of a Learning Agreement and providing ongoing supervision.
• Be willing and able to engage in a collaborative learning experience that includes oneself, the student, the faculty liaison, and the Practicum Program Director.
Completion of Practicum at a Student’s Place of Employment

Most practicum placements take place in a setting separate from a student’s paid employment. Students who are currently employed in social service agencies are encouraged to seriously consider completing their practicum in another setting, both to expand their professional experience and to reduce the likelihood of conflicts of interest. However, if a student is employed at a social service agency and determines that their learning goals can be satisfactorily met there in a way consistent with the following policies, an exception can be made.

If a Concordia University social work student is interested in doing a practicum at an agency where they are a paid employee, the following additional policies must be adhered to:

- The student must have a field instructor who is different from their paid work supervisor.
- The student’s learning goals must be achievable at the student’s place of employment.
- The student’s practicum responsibilities must be significantly different from what they have been doing in their regular employment, and be completed during separate hours.
- The student’s employing agency must meet all the criteria for a practicum agency.
- The student’s paid work supervisor must agree that such an arrangement is in the student’s and the agency’s best interest.
- The student’s paid work supervisor and field instructor must be willing to ensure that other relevant staff members understand the arrangement and the different expectations for the student’s paid work and practicum work. This may require providing a separate workspace for practicum responsibilities.

The Practicum Program Director is responsible for evaluating and approving all practicum placements. In order to do so in circumstances where a student is employed at the anticipated practicum site, the student must submit a proposal to the Practicum Director before an Agency Screening Form will be sent to the prospective field instructor and the placement potentially approved. The proposal should include the following:

Proposal for Practicum Placement in Agency of Employment

1. Student
   - Name
   - During which semesters do you intend to complete your practicum work?
   - What are your learning goals for practicum, as you currently envision them?

2. Current Employment Site
   - Agency Name and Division/Program
   - Street and Mailing Address
   - Name and Job Title of Employment Supervisor
   - Phone and E-mail Address of Employment Supervisor
   - Function/Goals/Mission of the Agency
   - Has the agency had social work student interns before? Have they been from Concordia University? If so, when?
• Job Description (i.e. responsibilities and daily tasks) for Paid Position

3. Proposed Practicum Placement
  • Agency Name and Division/Program
  • Street and Mailing Address
  • Name and Job Title of Proposed Field Instructor
  • Phone and E-mail Address of Proposed Field Instructor
  • Experience and Education of Proposed Field Instructor (or attach a current resume)
    o Educational degree(s)
    o Years and type of social work experience
    o Years of supervisory experience
    o If the proposed field instructor does not hold an MSW degree, is there someone in the agency who does? If yes, would this person be able to provide supplemental guidance to the field instructor and the practicum student, in order to reinforce the social work perspective? If yes, please provide their name, job title, and contact information.
    o Would the proposed field instructor be supported by the agency in providing at least one hour of supervision per week?
  • Job Description for Proposed Practicum Position
    o What would you be learning and doing in your practicum role?
    o How does this relate to your practicum learning goals?
    o How does this differ from the duties and responsibilities for which you are employed?

4. Balancing and Separating Employment and Practicum Work
  • Create a chart that outlines the following:
    o The proposed days and times for your paid work.
    o The proposed days and times for your practicum work.
    o The suggested format for this chart is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Hours</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicum Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  • Describe how supervision would take place for your practicum work and how it would be separate from your employment supervision.

5. Are there any concerns or questions related to this proposal?
   (The Practicum Program Director would welcome an opportunity to discuss these and brainstorm possibilities.)
6. The signature of the student, the proposed field instructor, and the student’s Employment Supervisor.

If a Concordia University social work practicum student is offered paid work at the agency where they are a current practicum student, the student must either (a) wait to begin the paid work until after the practicum is complete or (b) submit a proposal to and receive approval from the Practicum Program Director before the job is accepted. If the student wants to begin paid work prior to completion of their practicum work, the following additional policies must be adhered to:

- The student must have a field instructor who is different from their paid work supervisor.
- The student’s practicum responsibilities must be significantly different from what they would be doing in their paid employment, and be completed during separate hours.
- The student’s field instructor must agree that such an arrangement is in the student’s and the agency’s best interest.
- The student’s paid work supervisor and field instructor must be willing to ensure that other relevant staff members understand the arrangement and the different expectations for the student’s paid work and practicum work. This may require providing a separate workspace for practicum and paid work responsibilities.

Proposal for Acceptance of Paid Employment at Current Practicum Site

1. Student
   - Name
   - When do you anticipate completing your practicum work?
   - When do you propose beginning your paid work at this same agency?

2. Practicum Site
   - Agency Name and Division/Program
   - Street and Mailing Address
   - Name and Job Title of Field Instructor
   - Phone and E-mail Address of Field Instructor
   - Attach a copy of your current Learning Agreement for practicum.

3. Proposed Employment
   - Agency Name and Division/Program
   - Street and Mailing Address
   - Name and Job Title of Proposed Employment Supervisor
   - Phone and E-mail Address of Proposed Employment Supervisor
   - Job Description (i.e. responsibilities and daily tasks) for Proposed Paid Position
   - Describe how this paid position involves different duties and responsibilities than those for which you are involved in your practicum work.
4. Balancing and Separating Employment and Practicum Work
  - Create a chart that outlines the following:
    - The proposed days and times for your paid work.
    - The proposed days and times for your practicum work.
    - The suggested format for this chart is as follows:

    | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
    |--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
    | Work Hours | | | | | | |
    | Practicum Hours | | | | | | |

  - Describe how supervision takes place for your practicum work and how it would be separate from your employment supervision.

5. Are there any concerns or questions related to this proposal? 
(The Practicum Program Director would welcome an opportunity to discuss these and brainstorm possibilities.)

6. The signature of the student, the field instructor, and the student’s proposed Employment Supervisor.

The proposal for acceptance of paid employment at a student’s current practicum site must be approved by the Practicum Program Director before paid employment begins. Otherwise, practicum hours completed after paid employment begins may not be accepted towards completion of the required Social Work Practicum credits.

Paid Practicum Placements
Occasionally, an opportunity arises for a paid social work practicum placement (or internship). In such situations, students are typically paid a stipend, though hourly pay is also possible. Paid placements must meet the same criteria as any other practicum placement. Each potential paid practicum placement will be reviewed by the Practicum Program Director to ensure that the position is designed for a social work student intern. In other words, there must be expectations and supports in place for learning, with the goal of achieving entry-level BSW competencies by the end of the practicum placement. The student must not be treated as an employee.

Completion of Practicum Abroad
If a student is interested in completing their practicum training while studying abroad, they need to initiate a conversation about this possibility with the Practicum Program Director at least two semesters in advance. Following this conversation, the student will be responsible for the research, application, planning, and preparation required for such an endeavor, including maintaining consistent communication with the Practicum Program Director. The Practicum Program Director and other social work faculty can provide information and referral to relevant resources.
The agency and field instructor criteria remain the same for all practicum placements, including those that are completed abroad. However, an exception to the requirement that practicum be completed over two or three semesters can be made by the Practicum Program Director for study abroad placements. Students who complete practicum abroad will be required to participate in Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) activities at Concordia, either remotely or upon return from the study abroad.

Prior to formal approval of a practicum placement abroad, a written agreement needs to be completed and signed by both the student and the Practicum Program Director. This agreement will include detailed information on the study abroad program, the practicum placement (e.g. agency mission and services, field instruction and supervision, learning goals, anticipated responsibilities), and plans for completion of required documentation and Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) participation. The Practicum Program Director will also need to communicate directly with the study abroad program prior to approving the placement. In such cases, the signed written agreement will substitute for completion of an Agency Screening Form.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Orientation and Training**
Agencies and field instructors are responsible for adequately training and providing the necessary supplies for student safety during practicum. Safety and risk management training of practicum students should be similar to that received by new employees of the placement agency. Specifically, students are not allowed to engage in home or community visits with clients without appropriate agency training and supervision.

**Cell Phone Usage in Practicum**
Social work practicum students are not allowed to use their personal cell phone to contact clients, for reasons of safety and appropriate professional boundaries. If cell phone contact with clients is necessary for students to gain a satisfactory learning experience, the practicum agency needs to provide the student with a cell phone for that purpose or let the student know prior to placement that the student will need.

**Transportation**
Social work practicum students are responsible for arranging and assuming the cost of transportation to and from their practicum placements. If considerable driving is involved as a part of the student’s practicum work, agencies are encouraged to provide mileage reimbursement whenever possible. Practicum students are not allowed to transport clients in their personal vehicles. Some agencies may provide a practicum student with use of an insured agency vehicle for transportation of clients.

**Social Media**
Social work practicum students are expected to practice in a professional and ethical manner, in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics. This includes responsible use of social media that protects client confidentiality, demonstrates respect for colleagues and programs, and minimizes risk. Students
should not refer to clients or client situations (even anonymously) on their personal social media sites. Students are also encouraged to use the highest privacy settings on their social media profiles.

**Professional Liability Insurance**
Professional liability insurance is provided for all Concordia students while acting within the course and scope of their academic studies. This includes the social work practicum requirement.

**Personal Safety Incidents**
Any personal safety incident must be reported in a timely manner to the student’s faculty liaison and the Practicum Program Director.

**CHANGES TO A STUDENT’S PRACTICUM PLACEMENT**

Practicum placements are selected and approved after a thoughtful process that includes the student, the agency, and faculty from the Social Work Program. Once a practicum placement has been approved by the Practicum Program Director, it is expected that the student will complete their entire practicum at that site. Remaining at one site for 400 hours allows for a minimum number of hours devoted to orientation, more trust to be developed between the agency and student, greater responsibility to be assumed by the student, and thereby a better opportunity to develop and demonstrate the required BSW competencies. Therefore, changes to a student’s practicum placement are only considered when serious circumstances that cannot be remedied within a reasonable timeframe justify such a significant disruption to the student’s experiential education. If a student’s practicum placement must be changed due to a staffing or programmatic change that has nothing to do with the student’s work, the problem-solving and reflective parts of the process outlined below will be skipped.

If there is a conflict or challenge at a student’s practicum site, those involved are encouraged to address the conflict or challenge with one another and to seek consultation from the faculty liaison and/or Practicum Program Director, as needed. In such circumstances, it may be important to remember that as social workers and social work students committed to the NASW Code of Ethics, we are expected to “treat colleagues with respect and ... represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.” We are also implored to “avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals.” When approached constructively, conflicts and challenges can offer a unique opportunity for professional growth and learning.

If a student wishes to initiate a change in practicum placement, they are expected to demonstrate the following professional behavior, consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics:

- Open and consistent communication with their field instructor and faculty liaison, including professional communication of concerns, openness to feedback, and a willingness to engage in problem-solving
- Substantial effort to complete a successful practicum at the current site.
However, if a student deems the supervisory relationship to be unsafe, they should consult immediately with their faculty liaison.

If an agency wishes to initiate a change in practicum placement, the agency is asked to constructively discuss any concerns with both the student and the student’s faculty liaison.

Regardless of who initiates a request to change a student’s practicum placement, the student’s faculty liaison will consult with the Practicum Program Director and facilitate a formal problem-solving process. If the student’s faculty liaison and Practicum Program Director determine that a student’s placement is not a suitable place for the student to develop and demonstrate BSW competencies, they will support the student in completing the termination process outlined below and work with the student to identify and approve a new placement.

An existing practicum placement must be completely terminated before a search for a new practicum placement is initiated. A primary goal of any practicum placement change is to maximize self-reflection and professional development. A change in practicum placement is considered “successful” if the student learns something about themselves, takes responsibility as appropriate for their actions, handles the change process in a professional way, and is able to generalize “lessons learned” into future practice. Therefore, the following five documents must be completed and submitted to a student’s faculty liaison before a search for a new placement can begin:

- A written termination plan that outlines how the student plans to professionally terminate with clients, their field instructor, and the agency. This termination plan should address how existing work at the agency will either be completed or transitioned to others prior to termination. This termination plan must be approved and signed by the student, field instructor, and faculty liaison.

- A written reflective statement addressing the following points:
  - What events led to this decision?
  - What is your rationale for leaving this internship?
  - What was your role in this situation?
  - What was your agency and field instructor’s role in this situation?
  - If there are specific BSW competencies/skills about which the field instructor and/or faculty liaison have expressed concern:
    - Describe each competency or skill that needs attention.
    - What specific feedback have you received regarding this competency or skill from your field instructor, faculty liaison, and/or others at the agency or university?
    - What steps did you take to address each concern?
    - What do you plan to do in the next practicum placement to address these concerns?
    - What do you think your next field instructor needs to know about these challenges, in order to support your professional development?
  - Summarize what you have learned about yourself through this practicum placement and request for change. How will these lessons inform your future social work practice?
• Signed documentation of practicum hours and activities.
• Signed documentation of supervisory sessions.
• If 50 or more hours were completed at the current practicum site, an Evaluation of Student Learning form needs to be completed by both the student and field instructor.

A copy of these placement change documents will be kept in the student’s Social Work Program file.

When a practicum placement change is requested by a student’s field instructor or faculty liaison due to concerns about a student’s professional behavior or competence, the Practicum Program Director will consult with the Social Work Program Director and take one of the following actions following the formal problem-solving process and submission of required documents:

• Approve a change of placement with a plan for addressing the concerns at the new practicum site, or
• Terminate the current placement and postpone a new placement, with a plan for addressing the concerns apart from practicum, or
• Terminate the student’s practicum without approval for a new placement. The professionalism, self-awareness, and insight demonstrated by a student’s termination plan and reflective statement will be important factors in the Social Work Program’s decision to approve a change of placement. A new practicum placement will not be approved if the concerns identified in the formal problem-solving process and/or submitted documents meet the established criteria for “unsuccessful termination” of practicum.

Students are not to initiate a search for a new practicum placement without the written approval and participation of their faculty liaison and/or Practicum Program Director. A change to a student’s practicum placement should be expected to take at least four to six weeks.

When a new practicum placement is initiated, both the student and the faculty liaison are expected to communicate with the potential field instructor about the reason for the prior placement being terminated and any plan developed to address identified concerns. Additional practicum hours (above the minimum 400 hours) are likely to be required as part of a student’s change in practicum placement, in order for the student to be able to develop and demonstrate the required BSW competencies.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Orientation of Field Instructors

• For field instructors who have not supervised a Concordia social work student in the past two years, an orientation session will be provided by the Practicum Program Director prior to the student’s initiation of practicum work. This meeting will orient the field instructor to Concordia’s Social Work Program and, in particular, the policies, procedures, and learning goals of the Social Work Practicum Program. Other topics discussed will include learning styles, supervision, effective use of the evaluation process, and gatekeeping. If a field instructor
cannot attend the required orientation session, the student’s faculty liaison will request extra
time at the first site visit in order to review the orientation material.

- Field instructors who have supervised a Concordia social work student within the past two
  years will have an opportunity to review the policies, procedures, and learning goals of the
  Social Work Practicum Program, as well as be updated on Practicum Program changes, at each
  new student’s initial site visit and at the annual Field Instructor Training. They are also welcome
to attend an orientation session any semester.

Training of Field Instructors
- Each August, Concordia University’s Social Work Program sponsors a Field Instructor Training
  for current, past, and potential field instructors. These trainings are offered jointly with other
  undergraduate social work programs in the Portland metropolitan area. Recent field instructor
  trainings have covered topics such as helping students navigate boundaries, incorporating
  ethics and ethical decision making into supervision, using learning contracts to support
  professional development, strength-based supervision, professional resilience and self-care,
  components of optimal supervisory relationships, and utilizing the student evaluation process
to facilitate learning.

Continuing Dialogue with Field Instructors
- The Practicum Program Director and faculty liaisons are readily available to field instructors for
  consultation.
- In addition to regular site visits, field instructors are contacted via phone or e-mail at the mid-
  point of each semester by each student’s faculty liaison.
- If there are concerns about a practicum placement, the faculty liaison and/or the Practicum
  Program Director will consult with the student and field instructor, in order to make a plan for
  addressing those concerns.
- Several field instructors are actively involved in Concordia University’s Social Work Program as a
  member of the Social Work Advisory Committee, an adjunct course instructor, and/or a guest
  speaker.

ROLES RELATED TO PRACTICUM

Student
The student's primary responsibility is to apply the knowledge, skills, and values of the social work
curriculum to a field instruction assignment at an approved social work site. In addition, the student is
expected to:
- Learn about and function responsibly toward the agency, its clients, its staff, and the agency's
  network of community human service agencies. This includes following the agency’s safety and
  risk management policies, as well as Concordia’s practicum policies.
- Interact in a competent and professional manner with both client systems and target systems,
  with an increasing level of knowledge and skills as the practicum placement progresses.
• Develop increased self-awareness of personal strengths and areas needing improvement, as they relate to professional social work practice.

• Identify with and apply professional values and ethical principles as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics (e.g. keeping client-related matters confidential, treating colleagues with respect) (http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp).

• Utilize supervision and other learning opportunities in an effective manner, including actively seeking out constructive feedback.

• Support the concept of a three-way partnership between the student, field instructor, and faculty liaison, in order to create an in-depth, effective, and comprehensive professional learning experience.

• Arrange three site visits between the student, field instructor, and faculty liaison to take place
  o During the first week of the student’s first semester of practicum,
  o At the completion of the first 200 hours of practicum, and
  o At the completion of the final 200 hours of practicum.

• Complete a Learning Agreement, in conjunction with the field instructor, and submit it to the faculty liaison (Practicum Seminar instructor) by the second practicum seminar of each semester during which the student is enrolled in practicum.

• Take initiative for meeting those learning goals.

• Complete a self-evaluation at the completion of each 200 hours of practicum using the Evaluation of Student Learning form. Discuss each completed evaluation form with the field instructor prior to the faculty liaison’s site visit.

• Complete all other course requirements as outlined in the Practicum Seminar syllabus including hour, activity, and supervisory session tracking forms.

• Openly address any concerns related to practicum in a timely manner with the field instructor, faculty liaison, and Practicum Program Director, as appropriate.

Field Instructor and Practicum Agency

• Provide the student with a thorough orientation to the agency, including adequate training related to agency guidelines and procedures for risk reduction and safety. Any personal safety incident must be reported in a timely manner to the student’s faculty liaison and the Practicum Program Director. For specific policies related to home visits, community meetings with clients, cell phone usage, transportation, and professional liability insurance, see Section VI.

• Provide a work area, furnishings, and supplies adequate for the student’s role and responsibilities as a beginning social work professional.

• Work with the student and the student’s faculty liaison to define learning goals and activities, which are consistent with both the mission of the agency and the practicum goals and objectives stated in Section II of this manual. A completed and signed Learning Agreement is due by the second Practicum Seminar of each semester.

• Meet with the student for a minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision. (Group supervision of practicum students may be provided in place of individual supervision no more than twice a month.)

• Provide the training and supervision necessary for a student to have a reasonable opportunity to develop and demonstrate the required entry-level BSW competencies.
• Work cooperatively with the faculty liaison and Practicum Program Director on behalf of the student’s learning, including site visits and other contacts as needed.
• If a “task supervisor” or “supplemental social work supervisor” is involved in a practicum placement, maintain regular communication with this person and ensure that they contribute to and signs off on both the Learning Agreement and the Evaluation of Student Learning.
• Evaluate the student at the completion of each 200 hours of practicum using the Evaluation of Student Learning form. Discuss each completed evaluation form prior to the faculty liaison’s site visit.
• Openly address any concerns related to the practicum placement in a timely manner with the student, faculty liaison, and Practicum Program Director, as appropriate.

Faculty Liaison (the student’s Practicum Seminar Instructor)
• Be available to students and field instructors throughout the practicum experience, both for planning purposes and consultation.
• Conduct the Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) and assign practicum grades.
• Work cooperatively with field instructors on behalf of students’ learning, including at least three site visits per student, a mid-semester check-in with all field instructors, and other contacts as needed.
• Monitor the practicum instruction process to assure that each student is receiving weekly supervision and on-going feedback.
• Monitor implementation of each student’s Learning Agreement and the practicum learning goals and objectives.
• Openly address any concerns related to a practicum placement in a timely manner with the student, field instructor, and Practicum Program Director, as appropriate.
• If a change in placement site becomes necessary, facilitate this process with support from the Practicum Program Director.
• Assist the Practicum Program Director in maintaining positive and effective relationships with appropriate agency sites and field instructors; this includes ensuring that an expression of gratitude and a stipend check is sent to each field instructor at the completion of each semester.
• Provide the Practicum Program Director with all relevant documentation at the completion of each student’s practicum experience.

Social Work Practicum Program Director
• Be available to students and field instructors throughout the agency placement process and practicum experience, both for planning purposes and consultation.
• Be available to faculty liaisons (Practicum Seminar instructors), both for planning purposes and consultation.
• Conduct the Pre-Practicum Seminar (SCW 391).
• Work together with the Academic Advising office to ensure that only those students who have met the program’s specified criteria for field education are admitted into Social Work Practicum (SCW 491) and Practicum Seminar (SCW 492).
• Actively recruit and maintain positive and effective relationships with appropriate agency sites and field instructors.
• Assure that agency sites and field instructors meet all criteria as stated in this manual.
• Provide orientation to Concordia’s Social Work Practicum Program and to practicum instruction for all new field instructors (i.e. those who have not supervised a Concordia social work student in the past two years).
• Coordinate and/or lead annual field instructor trainings.
• Assume overall administration of the Social Work Practicum Program, including responsibility for defining the educational objectives and programmatic policies.
• Monitor and evaluate the Social Work Practicum Program, ensuring that it meets the program’s learning goals and objectives, as well as the Council on Social Work Education’s Policy and Accreditation Standards.

EVALUATION OF THE PRACTICUM PROGRAM

Monitoring the Practicum Program
• The Practicum Program Director and faculty liaisons work cooperatively to ensure that the Social Work Practicum Program’s policies and procedures are consistently applied in the following ways:
• When a Pre-Practicum student has identified one’s preferred practicum site and field instructor, the Practicum Program Director will e-mail the potential field instructor the Concordia Social Work Program’s Agency Screening Form. Completion of this form will assist the Practicum Program Director in confirming that both the agency and the field instructor meet the necessary criteria as outlined in this manual.
• If an identified field instructor has not supervised a Concordia social work student in the past two years, the Practicum Program Director will invite the new field instructor to attend an orientation meeting. During that meeting, the policies and procedures of Concordia’s Social Work Practicum Program will be discussed and the most recent Practicum Manual distributed. If the new field instructor cannot attend the orientation, the student’s faculty liaison will provide an orientation during the first site visit.
• Prior to or during the first two weeks of practicum, the faculty liaison will conduct a site visit with the field instructor and the practicum student. During that visit, they will review the roles of each participant, discuss the student’s learning goals and activities, and distribute any necessary forms.
• Faculty liaisons meet regularly with all current practicum students each semester in the Practicum Seminar (SCW 492). In this course, students turn in written assignments, do case presentations, review and apply foundational social work curriculum content, and discuss issues occurring in practicum.
• Both the Practicum Program Director and faculty liaisons are available for consultation should issues arise for the practicum student or the field instructor.
At the end of the first 200 hours of practicum work, the faculty liaison conducts a second site visit with the field instructor and student. Progress on learning goals is discussed and the first practicum evaluation is collected. At the end of the final 200 hours, a similar site visit is made.

Regular communication is also encouraged through a mid-semester e-mail or phone call made by the faculty liaison to check-in with each current field instructor.

The Practicum Program Director and faculty liaisons meet at the end of each semester to review current placements.

Evaluating Student Learning and Practice

Social Work Practicum (SCW 491) is graded Pass/No Pass.
- In order to obtain a pass, students are required to satisfactorily meet all expectations as described in the Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) syllabus and this Practicum Manual.
- When assigning Social Work Practicum grades, faculty liaisons (Practicum Seminar instructors) will take into consideration both feedback from the Evaluation of Student Learning form and the extent to which the goals on each student’s Learning Agreement are met. However, the ultimate determination of each student’s grade is made by the faculty liaison.

Practicum Seminar (SCW 492) is graded based on an academic letter grade system (A-F). Expectations and standards for Practicum Seminar grading are included in the course syllabus.

Evaluating Practicum Sites and Field Instructors

Upon completion of practicum, students are required to evaluate their practicum agency and field instructor, using the Student Evaluation of Practicum Experience form. The Practicum Program Director will carefully consider student feedback related to practicum sites and field instructors when determining the suitability of agencies and field instructors for future social work practicum placements. These completed forms are also kept on file as a reference for future students who may consider a practicum placement at the same agency and/or with the same field instructor.

When the Practicum Director meets with faculty liaisons at the end of each semester, concerns and recommendations regarding the effectiveness of each field setting are discussed. Faculty liaisons work closely with each field instructor-student dyad, in order to ensure that the student’s Learning Agreement is reflective of a generalist practicum experience that will allow them (one?) the opportunity to develop competency in each of the Program’s objectives. The Evaluation of Student Learning form, which is discussed at both the 200-hour and 400-hour site visit, then asks the student and the field instructor to evaluate the student’s competency in each of the Program’s objectives, as well as the six unique competencies included for Social Work Practicum (SCW 491). If a student has not had an opportunity to practice and develop a particular competency, this concern will thereby be raised and explored at the site visit. Faculty liaisons are, therefore, in a prime position – along with students – to evaluate the effectiveness of field settings congruent with the Program’s goals and competencies.
STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Social work students have the right and responsibility to communicate concerns about and suggestions for improvement of the educational opportunities provided at Concordia University. In particular, social work practicum students have the right and responsibility to provide constructive feedback regarding their practicum experience. There are several ways in which students can make changes in the Social Work Program, the practicum experience, and the University as a whole.

Students are encouraged to communicate concerns and suggestions regarding the social work practicum experience, Practicum Seminar, practicum policies, and student affairs, in general. Such feedback may be provided to field instructors, faculty liaisons (Practicum Seminar instructors), the Practicum Program Director, the Social Work Program Director, and the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, as appropriate. Concordia faculty and staff are readily available to meet with individual students or groups of students. Appointments can be made through e-mail or telephone, or through the Program Coordinator of the College of Health and Human Services at (503) 280-8600. Students can also discuss concerns individually or in groups with the Social Work Program’s Academic Advisor.

Each semester, Concordia students have an opportunity to complete anonymous evaluations of each of their courses, including SCW 491 (Social Work Practicum) and SCW 492 (Practicum Seminar). Each faculty member reads evaluations of their own courses and thoughtfully considers student feedback. The Social Work Program Director reads all social work course evaluations and when students raise serious concerns about a course or faculty member, those concerns are addressed with the faculty member who teaches the course.

At the end of the practicum experience, each student completes a Student Evaluation of Practicum Experience form. This evaluation is submitted to the faculty liaison and Practicum Program Director. The evaluation allows the student to provide input into the appropriateness of the field placement, the value of the learning experience, and the quality of field instruction provided by the field instructor. This information informs future placements at the practicum site, and may be used to offer additional training or support to the field instructor. If serious concerns are raised, the Practicum Program Director may opt not to utilize the field instructor or practicum site in the future.

The Concordia University Academic Policies Committee has a student representative who is appointed by the Associated Students of Concordia University (ASCU). Social work students who have curricular concerns related to the practicum experience or Practicum Seminar may contact the Academic Policies Committee student representative.

In order to provide students a regular mechanism by which they may provide feedback to the Social Work Program, whether about practicum or other matters, the Social Work Program Director sets a regular time to meet with the Concordia Social Work Club leaders each year. The club leaders are elected by social work students. Students who are not active in the Concordia Social Work Club can contact these leaders and ask them to represent their concerns to the Social Work Program Director.