



# Field Practicum Manual

## Bachelor of Social Work

A handbook for Field Instructors, Students and Faculty  
Revised 2009

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# Bachelor of Social Work

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## Overview

The Master of Social Work (MSW) is a two-year, full-time graduate program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The program prepares students for advanced direct practice with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities, to address the multiple social systems that affect Individuals and Families, which constitutes the single program concentration. Students learn clinical, organizational, policy, and administrative skills necessary for promoting social and economic justice. Program goals are to educate students for agency-based, culturally sensitive practice founded on strengths, diversity, and ecological theories.

## Mission of the School of Social Work

The Boise State University School of Social Work educates individuals for beginning and advanced professional social work practice. The School's education philosophy imparts to students an understanding of social and economic justice, egalitarianism, and respect for diversity through a strengths perspective.

The following values, assumptions, concepts, principles, and data underlie the Mission:

*(1) The Mission is grounded in distinctive local characteristics and needs and certain values integral to social work education and the social work profession:*

- a) The values of equal opportunity, enhanced functioning, and systemic responsiveness to human needs, for all people, in all dimensions of life and its organization, serve as the foundation for our mission. These values reflect our commitment to populations at risk, especially the historically oppressed and disenfranchised.
- b) The at-risk and/or historically oppressed populations of the State of Idaho include all children and families, rural and urban, who live in poverty; gays and lesbians; the aged; persons with disabilities; and peoples of color.
- c) Social work services in the State of Idaho are delivered primarily by public (federal, state, county, and municipal) nonprofit and for-profit agencies and institutions. These organizations have an ongoing need for social workers prepared for beginning generalist social work practice and those with advanced direct practice skills ranging from individual and family clinical services to the mezzo and macro skills for community organization, planning, administration, and general policy practice.

*(2) The Boise State University School of Social Work prepares graduates at two levels:*

- a) The Bachelor of Social Work program consists of an undergraduate liberal arts education; a foundation of social work values, knowledge, professional skills, and use of self for supervised beginning generalist practice with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations and communities; and preparation for lifelong learning and graduate education.
- b) The Master of Social Work program consists of an advanced direct practice with individuals and families concentration. The MSW Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education until 2008.

*(3) The beginning generalist practice paradigm that constitutes the defining framework for the Boise State University Bachelor of Arts in Social Work features the following elements:*

- a) A liberal arts perspective that provides the cultural and historical context, communication and reasoning skills, scientific method, and human behavior foundations for the student of the profession.
- b) A basic knowledge of human diversity, its many dimensions, and the profound implications of diversity for social work practice.
- c) Social work values, knowledge, professional skills, and use of self that guide sound professional judgments and critical thinking.
- d) The integration of social work values, knowledge, professional skills, and use of self in supervised ethical practice.
- e) A planned change approach which uses multiple level interventions targeted toward multi-sized systems within an ecosystem framework. Within the context of a collaborative helping relationship, critical thinking skills are focused toward intervention at a range of system levels following assessment of the transactions among individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities, and associated interlocking opportunities, barriers, strengths, and resources for self-determined growth, development, adaptation, and social and economic justice. The beginning generalist practice approach at Boise State University utilizes a planned change process to empower client systems and advance social and economic justice. A basic assumption of this approach is the belief that each person has inherent power toward growth and well-being. It is also accepted that, when the positive capacities or strengths of a person are supported, the person is more likely to act on those strengths. This approach requires a foundation in professional values, ethics, knowledge, professional skills, and use of self guided by client self-determination and the critical thinking of practitioners informed by the state of the art.
- f) The systematic evaluation of practice and programs.

*(4) [Advanced direct practice paradigm is a reference to the MSW Program]*

*(5) As an overarching conceptual framework, a strengths perspective suggests that basic abilities, competence, autonomy, and power are inherent in all human beings, and the human realm is dynamic, adaptive, evolving, and multidimensional. Thus, a social work approach that reflects a strengths perspective seeks to discover, identify, use, build, and reinforce individual, family, household, group, organization, and community capacities.*

## **BSW Program Goals**

In keeping with the School's mission, the primary goals of the BSW program are:

1. To educate individuals for supervised beginning generalist practice with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities through a foundation of social work values, knowledge, professional skills, and use of self; and
2. To prepare individuals for lifelong learning and graduate education.

## **BSW Educational Objectives**

To meet the above BSW program goals, the faculty of the School of Social Work has identified the following educational objectives. Building on a liberal arts perspective, the BSW educational objectives are categorized by values, knowledge, professional skills, and development of professional self. These objectives are to educate students to

1. *Values* - develop a strong commitment to social work values and to ethical practice that includes services to the poor and oppressed that promote equality and social justice;
2. *Knowledge* - gain knowledge in the dynamic interaction between individual adjustment and the environment, the complexities and richness of human diversity, the social and institutional factors that contribute to oppression, and theories of change;
3. *Professional Skills* - utilized a planned change approach and interventions at a range of system levels through critical thinking skills and within a collaborative helping relationship; and
4. *Development of Professional self* - integrate values, knowledge, and professional skills required for the professional use of self.

## BSW Educational Outcomes

Utilizing a strengths perspective, graduates of the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work will:

### *Values*

- demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of all client systems
- demonstrate respect for the self-determination of all client systems and the commitment to assist in clients obtaining needed resources
- demonstrate sensitivity to diversity through individualization, respect, and appreciation for differences
- promote the effective and humane operation of systems that provide people with services, resources, and opportunities
- identify the core values of social work and practice within the ethical code of the profession.

### *Knowledge*

- understand the history of social work and the policies, structures, and programs of social welfare as a contemporary social institution
- demonstrate knowledge about individual growth, development, and adaptation in psychological, biological, social, and cultural spheres
- demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics of interactional systems
- demonstrate an understanding of those social and institutional factors that inhibit healthy growth and promote oppression and discrimination
- demonstrate an understanding of theories of change
- demonstrate an understanding of theories on human diversity and characteristics of populations-at-risk
- demonstrate a knowledge of systematic evaluation of practice and programs using both qualitative and quantitative methods
- demonstrate a knowledge of the planned change process

### *Professional Skills*

- demonstrate skills for implementing a planned change approach with interventions across and between varying sizes of systems
- demonstrate ability to manage and enhance the collaborative helping relationship

- demonstrate the use of critical thinking skills through purposeful reasoning for the benefit of the client system
- demonstrate the ability to identify and evaluate multiple perspectives and develop plans for building strengths and achieving the aspirations of diverse people
- demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through oral and written methods
- demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking

### *Development of Professional Self*

- demonstrate the ability and willingness to examine personal life experiences, values, and characteristics that affect learning and practice
- utilize a personal and professional identity consistent with social work values, ethics, and practice
- demonstrate the ability to make constructive use of supervision as a beginning practitioner
- demonstrate the motivation for continued growth and expanding knowledge

## **BSW Educational Indicators**

To achieve the BSW educational objectives, the course of study is organized by four educational outcomes that are integrated throughout the curriculum. These educational outcomes are values, knowledge, professional skills, and development of professional self. Accompanying these educational outcomes are indicators of student achievement of the outcomes. These indicators provide a guide to assist students, faculty, field instructors, and members of the larger social work community in their understanding of each outcome's meaning.

*Values - develop a strong commitment to social work values and to ethical practice that includes services to the poor and oppressed that promote equality and social justice;*

*Demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of all client systems*

The student demonstrates:

- respect for all client systems to include: gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, sexual or political orientation
- commitment to human dignity and equal opportunity

*Demonstrate respect for the self-determination of all client systems and the commitment to assist in clients obtaining needed resources*

The student demonstrates:

- advocacy for client self-expression and self-determination
- support for client's right for opportunity
- support for client's right for accessibility of services

*Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity through individualization, respect, and appreciation for differences*

The student demonstrates:

- sensitivity to the role of discrimination and oppression based on human development, conditioning, experience, and outlook
- ability to understand the diversity of human growth and development
- use of knowledge to provide services with sensitivity to diversity, ethnicity, history, oppression, customs, traditions, heritage, language and other distinguishing variables
- respect for cultural and social diversity

*Promote the effective and humane operation of systems that provide people with services, resources, and opportunities*

The student demonstrates:

- ability to identify and challenge unfair and discriminatory actions
- the courage and determination to advocate and promote the needs of others
- advocacy for systems change to respond to client's needs

*Identify the core values of social work and practice within the ethical code of the profession*

The student demonstrates:

- knowledge of core values and ethical practices
- integration of professional code of ethics and values
- exploration of ethical issues and dilemmas
- appreciation for role of NASW and the Code of Ethics

- effective management of confidential records and information consistent with the agency and professional standards
- ability to communicate the limits of confidentiality to clients
- respect the right of clients to limit the information shared
- willingness to maintain confidentiality in difficult/conflictual situations

***Knowledge** - gain knowledge in the dynamic interaction between individual adjustment and the environment, the complexities and richness of human diversity, the social and institutional factors that contribute to oppression, and theories of change;*

*Understand the history of social work and the policies, structures, and programs of social welfare as a contemporary social institution*

The student demonstrates:

- applied understanding of social policies and their impact on social well-being
- awareness of the policies that conflict with individual sense of self-determination and independence
- ability to determine policies that interface with agency goals
- understanding of methods of social policy analysis
- awareness of the history of social work

*Demonstrate knowledge about individual growth, development, and adaptation in psychological, biological, social, and cultural spheres*

The student demonstrates:

- understanding of theories of about diversity
- understanding of bio-psycho-social development
- understanding of theories about family development
- understanding of theories about group development
- understanding of theories about community and organizational development

*Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics of interactional systems*

The student demonstrates:

- use of information to identify mission, purpose, resources and sanctions of agencies
- understanding operating policies and regulations of agencies
- understanding of the interaction among different sized social systems
- understanding of systems theory and the ecological perspective
- demonstrate awareness that the focus of interventions can be at the individual, family, household, group, organization or community level

*Demonstrate an understanding of those social and institutional factors that inhibit healthy growth and promote oppression and discrimination*

The student demonstrates:

- understanding of the dynamics and consequences of social and economic injustice
- knowledge of theories, interventions and policies used in advancing social and economic justice
- understanding of the influence of the environment on individual's behavior
- ability to identify the effects of poverty, racism, sexism, powerlessness, and alienation on personal development

*Demonstrate an understanding of theories of change*

The student demonstrates:

- integration of theoretical knowledge with practice
- use of alternative methods and consultation to arrive at an appropriate action
- understanding of factors that influence change

*Demonstrate an understanding of theories on human diversity and characteristics of populations-at-risk*

The student demonstrates:

- knowledge of theories about client diversity
- understanding of the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
- ability to identify the characteristics of populations at-risk
- understanding of the difference and similarities in the experiences, needs and beliefs of people

*Demonstrate knowledge of systematic evaluation of practice and programs using both qualitative and quantitative methods*

The student demonstrates:

- ability to develop and utilize an evaluation tool to measure outcomes
- systematic evaluation of client systems
- ability to collect data and information to assess clientele and context
- understanding of the scientific, analytical approach to knowledge building
- understanding of the research process including: research questions, literature review, methodologies, statistics, and conclusions of research reports
- ethical standards of scientific inquiry

*Demonstrate knowledge of the planned change process*

The student demonstrates:

- awareness of the change process and its effect on clients
- knowledge of professional literature and consultation to improve practice skills, programs, services and outcomes
- knowledge of the definition and application of the goals of the -client system
- understanding of the strengths perspective in the planned change process

***Professional Skills** - utilized a planned change approach and interventions at a range of system levels through critical thinking skills and within a collaborative helping relationship;*

*Demonstrate skills for implementing a planned change approach with interventions across and between varying sizes of systems*

The student demonstrates:

- skills in applying culturally competent interventions to specific client situations
- demonstrating use of professional self with clients
- applying generalist interventions in practice with client systems
- using bio-psycho-social interventions with individuals
- analyzing the impact of social policies on client systems

- using knowledge to influence organizational policies
- evaluating research studies
- applying findings of research studies to practice
- using appropriate research methods to measure and evaluate outcomes
- ability to build on strengths of the client system
- ability to make connections between theory and practice

*Demonstrate ability to manage and enhance the collaborative helping process*

The student demonstrates:

- ability to engage, empathize, and communicate genuine warmth
- recognition of nonverbal cues that assist in effective communication
- behaviors that convey trust, honesty, acceptance and mutuality
- appropriate verbal and nonverbal skills for effective and efficient communication including: listening, reflecting, summarizing, confronting, interpreting, and influencing
- skills in evaluating and providing/gaining feedback from all parties involved
- collegial respect and cooperation in various settings
- flexibility, determination, and skills as a team member

*Demonstrate the use of critical thinking skills through purposeful reasoning for the benefit of the client system*

The student demonstrates:

- knowledge of various community resources
- skills in networking, referring, advocating and facilitating the linkage of client systems
- understanding of the impact on client systems when resources are limited

*Demonstrate the ability to identify and evaluate multiple perspectives and develop plans for building strengths and achieving the aspirations of diverse people*

The student demonstrates:

- ability to identify and reflect the strengths, resources, issues and concerns of the client system
- skills to gather, organize, and evaluate comprehensive information

- consistency in providing accurate and timely information independently
- organizational skills to prioritize information consistent with stated issues
- motivation and ability to gain complete information relevant to defined issues
- ability to utilize the following in assessment: use of systems theory, bio-psycho-social theories and knowledge, and theories of diversity and professional values

*Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through oral and writing methods*

The student demonstrates:

- active participation and openness of ideas
- prompt and accurate completion of written work
- relevance, accuracy, precision, clarity, depth, breadth, of oral and written communication
- use of appropriate professional language in both oral and written formats
- use of appropriate technology (i.e., computer hardware and software)

*Demonstrate the use of critical thinking*

The student demonstrates:

- purposeful and reasoned thinking
- application of routine critical thinking process
- skills in gathering data and facts
- ability to evaluate own perspective and alternative perspective on issues
- ability to evaluate implications of the chosen course of action
- ability to clearly identify the challenge or question that the student is focusing on
- skills in developing conclusions based on relevant facts, observations and data

*Development of Professional self - integrate values, knowledge, and professional skills required for the professional use of self.*

*Demonstrate the ability and willingness to examine personal life experiences, values, and characteristics that affect leaning and practice*

The student demonstrates:

- willingness to examine personal life experiences, values and biases

- using self-awareness as a process and seeking further professional knowledge and growth
- critical thinking and self-awareness of strengths and limitations
- understanding of personal presentation and its impact on client system
- ability to consistently take responsibility for own actions
- openness to new ideas
- healthy ways of handling stress

*Utilize a personal and professional identity consistent with social work values, ethics and practice*

The student demonstrates:

- knowledge of the roots of the profession and its development
- ability to define the unique qualities of social work which define it as a profession
- ability to collaborate with other professionals

*Demonstrate the ability to make constructive use of supervision as a beginning practitioner*

The student demonstrates:

- preparation for and effective use of supervision
- awareness of personal limitations and seeks consultation from others
- ability to gain evaluative feedback through case staffing, reports, and any other method available
- ability to apply of supervisory feedback
- ability to accept direction from others

*Demonstrate the motivation for continued growth and expanding knowledge*

The student demonstrates:

- motivation and ability to initiate and complete tasks independently
- ability to identify own learning needs
- ability to identify professional roles and responsibilities

# Field Practicum

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## Overview

Field Practicum is a dynamic course that challenges students to apply social work practice knowledge, skills, and values within an organizational and community context. Field Practicum is a vital dimension of students' undergraduate social work education. The 480 hours of field practice prepare students to enter the work force as professional social work practitioners.

Field Practicum affords experiential assessment and evaluation of students' development in the process of becoming a helping professional. Students are provided opportunities to apply their academic and practice experiences in the reality of the agency-client-service matrix. Through the supervised field experience, students participate in, and become familiar with, the many components of the social work profession and its varied roles. The ideal field placement offers students a focus on the methods of direct practice, policy development and implementation, and other social work special projects and research activities.

Field Practicum provides practice experiences in a continuum of modalities and varying sizes of systems, including work with individuals, families, small groups, and communities within an organizational and community context. It is expected that students will experience a diversity of client populations and intervention issues, relying upon a range of theoretical concepts and models to develop breadth of learning and establish a broad base for practice.

## Field Practicum Administration

Field Practicum is a key component of the undergraduate curriculum. The Practicum Director, assisted by faculty, has primary responsibility for the organization of educationally directed, coordinated, and monitored field experiences for BSW students. The Practicum Director develops and monitors practicum sites and is available upon request to meet with students and Field Instructors regarding placement concerns. He is the primary conduit for sharing information between the School, the BSW program, the field agencies, and the students, and is responsible for field manual preparation. A Faculty Liaison is assigned to monitor each field practicum site and is responsible for planning, monitoring, and evaluating student activities. Typically, only full-time faculty members serve as Faculty Liaisons. Agency Field Instructors, approved supervisors within the field agency, are responsible for supervising and monitoring student progress in the agency, for assigning tasks to the student, for assisting the student in integrating theory and practice, and for providing feedback to the student on a weekly basis, as well as completing a formal written evaluation at the end of the semester. The Agency Field Instructor recommends a grade to the Faculty Liaison who is responsible for determining the final grade. Primary support for the Agency Field Instructor is provided through a BSW field work information package, an annual field instructors orientation program in which information about the curriculum, the administration of the field education program, and other issues are discussed.

## Agency Qualifications for BSW Practicum Site

The Practicum Director is responsible for the development and monitoring of BSW field practicum sites. Agencies may request that they be evaluated by the Practicum Director as a site. The Practicum Director may also contact an agency as a possible field placement site. All agencies which serve as field placement sites are required to sign an affiliation agreement which stipulates agency and School. All agency practicum sites must meet the following qualifications.

1. The agency may not have exclusionary policies or practices that discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, religion, affectional orientation, or national origin. This policy also incorporates compliance with the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs' requirement that field placement sites honor the Martin Luther King, Jr./Human Rights Day Holiday.
2. The agency should be an established program that has community and professional sanction. (Sanction includes, but is not limited to, one of the following: program accreditation by a professional licensing body, employer of Licensed Certified Social Workers, recipient of a grant from a governmental body or foundation, longevity of program, operation under auspices of a board of directors, has established accountability procedures.)
3. The agency should provide a range of foundation and/or specialist services, in which the student can participate in an array of tasks related to the development of values, knowledge, professional skills, and development of professional self. A learning contract identifying the values, knowledge, professional skills, and development of professional self values to be developed in the field placement must be negotiated between the agency, the student, and the Faculty Liaison.
4. The agency should provide learning experiences in which the student can develop her/his learning goals consistent with the program's format and mission. The placement is to be consistent with generalist social work practice.
5. The agency should provide the student with a physical place within the agency setting (desk, supplies, telephone, support services etc.).
6. The agency must provide vehicle or liability coverage if the student will be asked to transport clients. The agency must provide mileage compensation if the job requires more travel than to and from field agency site.
7. The agency must provide for a Licensed BSW or MSW employee to serve as the student's Agency Field Instructor, using the criteria below.
8. If the agency does not have a staff person with a BSW or MSW degree, the agency may designate a non-BSW supervisor to oversee the day-to-day activities of the student. The agency will need to hire or use a BSW or MSW from another part of the agency to serve as a consultant, to meet individually with the student a minimum of one hour weekly, for the purpose of helping with social work integration. The consultant must also be accessible to the student by telephone and meet with the student and the agency supervisor a minimum of one hour weekly, to plan and implement the placement learning objectives.

## Criteria for Appointment as BSW Agency Field Instructor

The Agency Field Instructor must:

1. Be a Licensed Social Worker with a BSW or MSW degree and a minimum of two years post-BSW or MSW experience;
2. Be willing to participate in Field Instructor orientation meetings and be released from the agency to do so;
3. Cooperate with the School in planning and implementing a student field placement;
4. Understand the social work role and be able to articulate and model this understanding for the student;
5. Identify activities and tasks directly related to the roles and functions of social work practice with individuals, families, and small groups;
6. Process the activities of the student to identify knowledge, skills, and values applicable to advanced direct social work practice;
7. Assist the student in developing an individualized learning contract;
8. Meet at least one hour per week in supervision with the student to integrate social work theory and practice and give the student a monthly verbal evaluation of his/her learning progress; and
9. Provide formal written evaluation of the student's progress, including grade recommendation, at the middle and end of the placement experience.

## Field Instructor Training and Orientation

The School of Social Work at BSU provides orientation and training for field instructors. A prerequisite for field instructors' assignment as adjunct faculty will be their participation in a training session held annually and attendance at other coordination meetings, as scheduled periodically. Orientation of new instructors for the BSW program shall include a series of workshops designed to explain the BSW curriculum and the general duties and responsibilities of field instructors. Additionally, methods of field work instruction, learning contracts, and evaluations will be covered. Specifically, the following areas are dealt with:

1. General orientation to BSW curriculum;
2. Definition of generalist practice;
3. Expectations for the evaluation of practice;
4. Theoretical models for practice with individuals, families, households, groups, and communities;

5. Special issues for field instructors' role of field instruction versus supervision; approaches to instruction and development of role with School of Social Work/Agency teaching relationship, grading, learning contracts;
6. Ethnicity, issues of culture, color, and minority status affecting social work education, field instruction, and practice.

## Other Field Practicum Policies

### *Finances*

The School of Social Work does not pay Agency Field Instructors. The School acknowledges the valuable service Agency Field Instructors provide to students and the social work profession; therefore, adjunct faculty status is assigned to Field Practicum instructors. Students are not expected to be paid for their time and services rendered on behalf of the agency. It is expected that students will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the delivery of service (e.g., mileage for using personal car).

### *Insurance*

Boise State University does offer liability insurance to cover the student's Field Practicum; NASW offers liability insurance in which the student can enroll on an individual basis. Students are required to be covered by liability insurance during their Field Practicum experience. Student fees at BSU provide health insurance.

### *Attendance and Holidays*

The student is expected to be at the agency for an entire semester. The student cannot work more than 20 hours per week in order to finish Field Practicum early; continuity over time is a desirable developmental factor in the field experience. The student should observe agency holidays, rather than school holidays, in their attendance at the agency. Exceptions to this are;

- Thanksgiving weekend
- semester break
- spring break
- The Martin Luther King, Jr. / Human Rights Day

In some agencies, students may be allowed to maintain client contact during semester and spring breaks.

### *Issues with Placement*

Should issues arise related to a Field Practicum placement, evaluation, or placement retention, the student should seek assistance from the Faculty Liaison or Practicum Director. If this does not result in a satisfactory solution, the student may seek relief through the School's grievance procedures.

### *Credit for Life Experience*

Academic or practicum credit is not granted for life experience or professional work experience.

### *Students employed by the Agency*

All the guidelines for general (unpaid) practicum shall apply to practicum of students employed by their agencies.

Agencies wishing to offer a practicum placement to an employee must agree to put the student's learning objectives and needs ahead of agency maintenance needs for the duration of the practicum.

The student must develop learning objectives based first and foremost upon his/her needs to expand his/her knowledge, acquire or practice new skills, and apply classroom knowledge not previously demonstrated in the field. The student's learning objectives can be related to the agency's goals, but will not be tailored to the agency's maintenance needs.

In order to qualify for practicum credit, the student's work assignment must be transformed to meet the student's learning objectives. The Practicum Director will assist the student and agency in structuring a new practicum experience. Student and agency must be able to clearly demonstrate that activities in the practicum are substantively different from the student's normal job activities. The student must be excused from his or her regular position for the required practicum hours to experience new learning. For example, a student who is employed as a case aide could complete the practicum as a student in another unit. The student could be assigned to a needs assessment project or a community education project. The new role should be consistent with the student's learning goals.

Like all practicum students, the employed student must be given the opportunity to play an observer and learner role in the agency. For example, the student might attend board or administrative meetings, observe individual and group therapy sessions, visit other agencies with which the practicum agency interacts, and attend workshops and other structured activities.

The agency must provide social work field instruction from a BSW or MSW. If a person with a social work degree is not available in the agency, social work field instruction can be provided through contract. In special circumstances, agency supervision can be provided by staff with a Master's degree in related field. The student should be assigned an agency practicum supervisor different from their regular work supervisor. The agency field instructor will spend at least one hour per week with the student to assess and enhance the student's attainment of learning objectives.

The student should be free to take risks and make mistakes as a learner to the same extent as a non-employed student.

The Faculty Liaison, student and Agency Field Instructor must document the student's learning, using the required practicum forms (learning contract).

The Faculty Liaison will closely monitor the practicum to assure that it represents a valid educational placement.

In instances where the Faculty Liaison and Practicum Director determine that the spirit and/or letter of these guidelines are not being followed, it is the School's responsibility to identify the problems in writing and initiate resolution. Without resolution credit will not be given for the practicum.

## Structure of Field Practicum

The field practicums (SOCWRK 480/481), and its companion senior seminars (SOCWRK 498/499), are the capstone courses of the professional social work curriculum. The faculty of the School grants admission to the field practicum on the basis of student applications to complete the requirements for the baccalaureate degree. Completion of the professional curriculum is prerequisite or co-requisite to admission to the field practicum.

Field Practicum is organized into two academic courses: SOCWRK 480, Social Work Field Practicum I, and SOCWRK 481, Social Work Field Practicum II, for 5 credit hours each, 16 clock hours per week, totaling a required 480 hours, 240 hours per semester. In their senior year, students take Social Work Field Practicum I, in the fall semester and Social Work Field Practicum II in the spring semester. Students are expected to apply knowledge, skills, values, and ethics learned in their academic courses to the practice experiences afforded them in the field agency. The student learning contract and evaluation tool are used by students, field instructors and the field liaison to evaluate student outcomes.

Senior Seminar is organized into two academic courses: SOCWRK 498, Senior Seminar I, and SOCWRK 499, Senior Seminar II, for 1 credit hour each. These classes are co-requisites with Field Work I-II, respectively. The Practicum Director is responsible for teaching the two courses to provide integration between the field experience and the classroom. In order to maintain seminar group continuity, students are encouraged to register for the same seminar section each semester.

Senior Seminar is closely linked to Social Work Field Practicum. The purpose of this course is to facilitate and encourage students' development as entry-level practitioners through the integration of social work theory, practice, and values. Students are expected to share field experiences and take major responsibility for the content in the course. Assignments in Senior Seminar are related to the field experience and the thinking, feeling, and doing of social work practice. Seminar assignments are likely to include the following:

- Negotiating a learning plan.
- Analyzing the host organization and program unit in which the student is placed.
- Presenting a practice issue: assessment, intervention, and evaluation.
- Writing a philosophy of social work practice.

- Evaluating practice.
- Evaluating the field experience and social work education.

The flow of the assignments helps students develop an understanding of the host setting, conceptualize practice, establish a personal value base for professional practice, and evaluate their educational experience in preparation for termination and graduation. The Field Handbook is used as the course syllabi for SOCWRK 498/499.

The School uses a concurrent model of field practicum. In a concurrent model, the student enrolls in the field practicum and other course work concurrently across two semesters.

### **Procedures of Field Practicum**

Students are encouraged to review agency information maintained by the Practicum Director on all current placement sites. Students can access this information at the School's web site: <http://boisestate.edu/socwork>. During the spring semester, students attend the Field Agency Fair which offers them an opportunity to talk with agency staff directly. Selection of a field practicum starts with each student completing a field interest survey and meeting with the Practicum Director. During this meeting the Practicum Director conducts an interview to determine student educational, career, and placement interests. The interview includes a review of previous personal and professional experience as a context for matching of student's interests, learning needs, and agency resources, as well as School curriculum requirements. Practicum options are generated from that meeting with students interviewing at these agencies (see Process for Securing a Field Practicum Placement). Practicum sites are generally confirmed no later than the month prior to the practicum starting. Prior to starting practicum, students are required to sign a field practicum academic contract which delineates the responsibilities of the student during the placement.

During the first three weeks of Field Practicum, the student is expected to develop a behaviorally specific learning contract. The individual learning contract specifies the tasks to be completed, hours to be worked in the agency, meeting time with the Agency Field Instructor, and other assignments for the practicum. The learning contract promotes adult learning and is a means for evaluation of completed tasks. This contract is negotiated with the Agency Field Instructor and reviewed by the Faculty Liaison to ensure appropriateness, mutual understanding, and expected outcomes.

The Faculty Liaison facilitates and encourages the student's development as a beginning generalist social work practitioner, through the integration of social work theory, practice, and values. Faculty Liaisons are required to visit each agency a minimum of twice per semester. These visits are documented by the Faculty Liaison and reviewed by the Practicum Director. Students are expected to share field experiences and take major responsibility for using academic supervision. Assignments related to the field experience and the thinking, feeling, and doing of social work practice may be assigned by the Faculty Liaison. Assignments might be similar to negotiating a behaviorally specific learning contract, analyzing the organization and program unit in which the student is placed, or presenting a practice issue related to assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

The assignments are designed to assist the student to develop an understanding of the host setting, to conceptualize practice, to establish a personal value base for professional practice, and to evaluate this educational experience as a means of termination and graduation. Special site visits to address student challenges in the practicum may be made at any time during the academic year. These visits are documented on a special site visit form and require a description by the Faculty Liaison of concerns or issues requiring resolution or action steps for goal completion. These forms are also reviewed by the Practicum Director.

Social work education is preparation for professional practice. Therefore, it is mandatory, above and beyond their academic performance that students practice in accordance with statutory and professional ethical standards. In the field practicum, the evaluation of student performance reflects the professional judgment of the Agency Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison about student performance in the following areas:

### *Attitude toward Learning*

Students who are overly or persistently defensive and/or have difficulty integrating new concepts, or responding constructively to criticism, may be asked to discontinue field work.

### *Professional Character*

Every profession is dependent on its practitioners possessing appropriate character attributes. Social work particularly requires the ability to empathize, project warmth, and develop trusting relationships with a wide variety of people. The inability to support others in forming close trusting relationships and to manage the intense emotional expressions which come from people in need may mean that a different career should be sought.

### *Emotional Maturity and Stability*

While immaturity or instability may not keep someone from performing well in some fields, it may in fact, mean that students are not yet ready to be entrusted with a license to work directly with vulnerable persons. Additionally, the lack of emotional stability or the presence of a mental illness may stand in the way of building relationships, and dealing with confidential material or otherwise jeopardizing client welfare. Therefore, students who display an ongoing pattern of emotional immaturity or mental instability may be dismissed from the field practicum.

### *Ethical Behavior*

Breaches of the NASW Code of Ethics, even superficially small infractions such as regularly leaving confidential files unlocked, may lead to a termination of the field practicum. The exploitation of clients through involvement in dual relationships, personnel issues, conflicts, and gossip are examples of behaviors that are inconsistent with professional social norms. Failure to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics will result in dismissal from the practicum. Any sexual interaction between a student and a client or other serious breach of ethical conduct will result in expulsion from the BSW Program.

### *Failure to Disclose or False Reporting*

The failure to disclose pertinent data or giving false information in applying to the Social Work Program at any step in the application for specific field placements is grounds for termination from the field practicum and the Program. Anyone who has been convicted of a felony must disclose this information to the Practicum Director. (A felony involving a crime against person(s) may be grounds for exclusion from field work.) In placing students, it is important to know if they have been served by the agency they are applying to, or if they have had any prior involvement with staff. In order to prevent the development of dual relationships, it is our policy to avoid placing students at agencies where they have received services.

### **Termination**

Termination from Field Practicum is a very serious matter and is governed by the BSW Program student dismissal policy and procedures. (See student dismissal policy in BSW Student Handbook.)

### **Evaluation and Learning Plan**

Evaluation is a key component of the Field Practicum experience, providing feedback on the student's performance in the agency setting. The purpose of the evaluation is to enhance student learning and skill development, through understanding areas of strength and identifying areas which need improvement. Evaluation must be a continual activity. The formal written evaluation is a summary of daily and weekly feedback to the student. The student is an active participant in the evaluation process. The student is asked to evaluate his/her own work as part of this process. At the end of the semester, the student and Agency Field Instructor meet to discuss and compare their evaluations. The learning contract also serves as the evaluation tool. The Faculty Liaison awards the grade with Agency Field Instructor input. The assigned grade is either Pass ("P") or Fail ("F"). A grade of "Fail" results in removal from the BSW Program.

The field practicum learning plan and evaluation include all of the BSW educational objectives organized by four educational outcomes that are integrated throughout the curriculum. These educational outcomes are values, knowledge, professional skills, and development of professional self. Accompanying these educational outcomes are indicators of student achievement of the outcomes. These indicators provide a guide to assist students, faculty, field instructors, and members of the larger social work community in their understanding of each outcome's meaning (see BSW Educational Outcomes and Educational Indicators)

The field practicum provides students with a supervised social work practice experience in a community social service agency. The practicum emphasizes experiential learning in foundation knowledge, social work practice skills, values, and ethics as well as opportunities to work with diverse, oppressed and at-risk populations using strengths based perspective. The practicum contributes to an understanding of the knowledge, skills, and values consistent with the BSW Program's Educational Objectives, Educational Outcomes, and Educational Indicators.

## Eligibility for Field Practicum

For students to be eligible for field work, they must:

- Be accepted into candidacy for Social Work degree
- Have completed all of the courses listed below:
  - P 309 Life Span Development I
  - P 310 Life Span Development II
  - SOCWRK 301 Social Welfare Policy
  - SOCWRK 321 Human Behavior in the Social Environment
  - SOCWRK 333 Generalist Practice I: Individuals
  - SOCWRK 380 Social Work Research and Statistics
- Take at least one skills class (SOCWRK 444 Generalist Practice II or SOCWRK 455 Generalist Practice III) concurrently with Field Practicum I.
- Carry at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average and a 3.0 grade point average in social work courses.
- Complete an application for field work by the end of October in the year prior to the student entering field work.

## Process for Securing a Field Practicum Placement

1. Submit Field Practicum Application, a signed statement of understanding, and an academic plan
2. Look through the Field Practicum Agency Website, attend field agency fair, and select three potential agencies
3. Student and Field Practicum Director review application and discuss a placement commensurate with the needs of the student and school.
4. Selection of potential agency from the list of three. Practicum Director contacts agency to inform them of the student's interest and learning needs.
5. Student contacts agency, arranges for an interview with agency field instructor.
6. If there is no match (student or agency turns down), return to step 4. If decision to proceed with placement is affirmative, notification of Practicum Director by student and Field Instructor is to be made.
7. Student assigned to faculty liaison.
8. Placement begins. Student and field instructor meet to begin drafting Learning Agreement. Learning Agreement should be completed by the third week in the field.

9. Student arranges for field instructor, student, and faculty liaison to meet and discuss completed Learning Agreement, agency/school issues.
10. Student and Field Instructor meet once a week for supervision during the semester.

## **Time Line**

### *Sophomore Year*

- Discuss field-work with advisor.

### *Junior Year*

#### *January*

- Planning for field practicum and consultation with academic advisor

#### *February*

- Attend agency fair

#### *March*

- The first school day in March is the last day for application to field practicum.
- Interview with the Practicum Director.
- Interview with agency Field Instructor's regarding placement.

#### *April*

- Finalize placement for Fall Semester.

### *Senior Year*

#### *August*

- Confirm first day of field work with agency Field Instructor.
- Begin Field Practicum with the first week of the Fall Semester.

#### *September*

- Learning contract due.
- Director of Field Practice or Liaison meets with students and their Field Instructor's.

#### *October (mid-term)*

- Director of Field Practicum or Liaison may contact or meet with students and their Field Instructor's to evaluate performance and progress.

#### *December*

- Written final evaluations due.
- Director of Field Practicum or Liaison meets with students and their Field Instructors.

#### *Christmas Break*

- Students not in Field Work (Approximately 3 weeks)

*January*

- Begin Field Work II with first week of the Spring Semester.

*February*

- Revised learning contract due.
- Director of Field Practicum or Liaison meets with students and their Field Instructor's.

*March (mid-term)*

- Director of Field Practicum or Liaison may contact or meet with students and their Field Instructor's to evaluate performance and progress.

*Spring Break*

- Students not in Field Practicum.

*May (end of semester)*

- Final written evaluations due.
- Director of Field Practicum or Liaison meets with students and their Field Instructors.

## **Criteria for Agencies Hosting BSW Field Practicum Students**

- The agency shall have inclusionary policies and practices that forbid discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, affectional orientation, or national origin.
- The agency shall have an established program with recognized community and professional sanction. (Sanction includes, but is not limited to, one of the following: program accreditation by a professional licensing body, employer of Licensed Certified Social Workers, recipient of a grant from a governmental body or foundation, longevity of program, operation under auspices of a board of directors, established accountability procedures).
- The agency shall provide a range of services in which the student can participate, offering students an array of assignments leading to the integration of social work values, knowledge, and skills in generalist social work practice with client systems of various sizes.
- The agency shall provide the student with physical resources for practice in the agency setting (desk, supplies, telephone, and support services).
- The agency shall provide vehicle or liability coverage if the student will be asked to transport clients. The agency must provide mileage compensation if the job requires more travel than to and from work site.
- The agency shall provide a BSW or MSW employee to serve as the student's Field Instructor.
- If the agency does not have a BSW or MSW on staff, alternatively the agency may designate an experienced paraprofessional supervisor to oversee the day-to-day activities of the student by arranging for MSW consultation for the paraprofessional and field instruction for the student.

The MSW must be accessible to the student by telephone during working hours, and will meet with the student and the agency supervisor a minimum of one hour weekly in field instruction.

- The agency shall provide students with opportunities to interact with client systems of various sizes over time.
- The agency shall support students in the evaluation of practice.

## Evaluation of the Practicum

The evaluation of the practicum is planned to provide input from all persons involved; the practicum student, field instructor, and faculty field liaison. In addition, meetings are held with the field instructors to provide input, direction, and evaluation of the field practicum program.

*Evaluation of student by the faculty field liaison.* The faculty field liaison has the final responsibility for grading student performance.

*Evaluation of student by field instructor.* Students will be evaluated by their field instructors at the end of each semester. The Evaluation of Student Practicum-Undergraduate Form will be used for this purpose. It is expected that the agency field instructor will involve the student in this evaluation process.

*Evaluation of agency by student.* The agency and the field instructor will be evaluated by the student at the end of the practicum, using The Baccalaureate Field Practicum Evaluation. Feedback from the student will be used in future practicum planning.

*Evaluation of the faculty field liaison by the student.* As part of the usual course evaluation process each semester, the student will assess the effectiveness of the faculty field liaison. The Faculty Field Liaison Evaluation Form will be used for this process.

*Evaluation of the practicum agency and agency field instructor by the faculty field liaison.* The faculty field liaison will provide feedback to the practicum office regarding the adequacy of the agencies and field instructors in providing an educational experience for students. At the end of each practicum placement, the faculty field liaison will be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the placement in providing professional training.

Several mechanisms for input by field instructor into the practicum and the curriculum are in place as well. Agency visits and training sessions with field instructors who have provided a learning experience for social work students will be utilized as a means of feedback and evaluation of the process, format, and procedures for the field practicum. In addition, these contacts will facilitate evaluating the undergraduate student's readiness for the practicum, identifying additional needs in the curriculum, and discussing developments in the social work community. Suggestions from the field instructors will be provided to the Field Practicum Committee.

## Learning Contract and Evaluation

The learning contract and evaluation form is your blueprint for integrating social work values, knowledge, and skills for generalist practice with individuals, households, families, groups, organizations, and communities by the end of the field practicum. In general, the student and field instructor should negotiate and complete the learning contract and evaluation by the end of the third week of the practicum, with consultation as needed by the faculty field liaison. As a suggestion, students and field instructors may utilize a list of projects, activities, or assignments on which the student is already engaged for incorporation into the learning contract according to the appropriate domain, educational outcome and indicator.

The purpose of the field practicum is the student's integration of professional values, knowledge, and skills in social work practice. In the field practicum, students master the lessons of the classroom through interaction with real clients in a supervised agency setting. In social work education, the field practicum is where theory and science join the art of practice.

Students must earn a passing grade in the field practicum in order to earn the baccalaureate degree in social work. A passing grade in the field practicum is earned by demonstrating mastery of basic social work values, knowledge, and skills in practice. The profession believes those competencies are the key to helping people, and helping people is the reason for social work education. Therefore, mastering the values, knowledge, and skills of helping people is the focus of field instruction, and the basis for evaluating student performance.

### *Student Performance*

Throughout the field practicum, students should prepare themselves to demonstrate their professional values, knowledge, and skills - and their use of self - in their practice with clients. The School expects students to demonstrate their performance and seek evaluative feedback from the field instructor routinely as part of the learning process. The same process will be used in the semester and final evaluations of student performance.

At the end of each semester, students meet with their field instructor and the faculty field liaison in a formal conference to demonstrate their practice for faculty evaluation. The School uses 30 dimensions of social work practice to evaluate student performance. The 30 dimensions represent the central features of generalist social work practice, reflecting the curriculum of the baccalaureate program, the curriculum standards of the Council on Social Work Education, and the collective wisdom of the field and faculty. Students should examine those performance criteria when they begin their social work education in order to focus their classroom learning. Students and field instructors should examine the performance criteria at the beginning of the field practicum, and use them routinely to structure the focus of social work supervision.

### *Expectations*

The field practicum is the capstone of professional social work education. Baccalaureate students are expected to complete 480 clock hours of service learning under the supervision of a certified or licensed social worker. Students and field instructors are expected to meet at least one hour per

week for ongoing supervision and evaluation of the student's practice with clients in order to master the values, knowledge, and skills of generalist practice and the profession. Students are expected to demonstrate their developing mastery through professional reports, case records, audio or videotapes, client practice outcome reports, case staffing, and other evaluation tools.

### *Instructions*

At the beginning of each semester, use The Field Practicum Evaluation to guide the development of a student learning plan. The learning plan should assist students in the integration and demonstration of their professional use of self, social work values and ethics, knowledge, and skills in social work practice. At the end of each semester, the faculty field liaison will join the field instructor and the student to evaluate those demonstrations of student learning and performance. In addition, the Evaluation can provide a useful structure for weekly supervisory meetings between the field instructor and the student. Keeping use of self, values and ethics, and knowledge and skills in the foreground of routine supervisory meetings socializes the student to the profession.

Ideally, every student assignment, and every supervisory meeting, should prepare the student for end-of-semester and final evaluations. Preparation involves monitoring student performance and offering constructive feedback to support student learning. Students should participate actively in this process.

In general, the student should begin the semester evaluation by completing the student portion of the Evaluation. The field instructor completes the Evaluation after reviewing the ratings and comments of the student. Both the student and the field instructor rate student performance on a five-point scale. Using the same scale allows the student and the field instructor to identify areas of agreement and focus their discussion before the final meeting with the faculty field liaison. The final meeting with the faculty field liaison can be convened after the student and field instructor have met to compare and discuss their findings.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the student to prepare for the final evaluation in consultation with the field instructor. That preparation should include client-outcome evaluations, professional reports, videotapes, and other demonstrations of proficiency.

At the end of the semester, The School asks the field instructor to recommend a passing or failing grade for the practicum, but the final grade must be assigned by the faculty field liaison in accordance with University regulations.