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Masters of Field Work Information Package

It is the policy of Boise State University to provide equal educational and employment opportunities, services, and benefits to students and employees without regard to race, color, national origin, or sex, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 799A and 845 of the Public Health Service Act, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, where applicable, as enforced by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Introduction

Boise State University offers a curriculum leading to a Master's degree in Social Work. The School of Social Work holds full departmental status as a separate department within the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs. The School is responsible for the social work curriculum and requirements leading to an accredited MSW Degree. The program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The two-year Master in Social Work curriculum includes the following courses:

Year One:

Fall Semesterr

History and Philosophy of Social Welfare
General Methods I: Small Systems (micro), Individuals,
Small Groups, Family, Interpersonal
Assessment, Interviewing
Skills Lab
Human Development through the Life Cycle Ethnicity,
Gender and Class
Research I: General Statistics

Spring Semester

Social Policy Analysis
General Methods II: Larger Systems (macro),
Community, Grassroots, Needs Assessment,
Complex Organizations
Human Behavior and Social Environment (Social
dimensions of human behavior)
Field Practicum

Year Two:

Fall Semester

Individuals and Families: Policy and Legislation
Research II: Evaluation
Advanced Interventions - Comparative Theories
Advanced Practicum

Year Two: (continued)

Spring Semester

Advanced Clinical Practice with Individuals and Families
DSM-IV Emotional Disorders or DSM-III-R
Advanced Practicum II
Two Electives

Specialization Electives - Selected Topics - 2 cr. each

(Elective options will vary from year to year, and may include these or other pertinent issues.)
Substance Abuse
Social Work with People of Color
Social Work with the Elderly
Women's Issues
Social Work Supervision
Family Therapy
AIDS Issues
Health Issues
Grant Writing/Administration/Planning
Rural Social Work
School Social Work

The Advanced Standing Master in Social Work Curriculum includes the following courses:

Summer (Two 5 Week Sessions)

Social Policy Analysis
Ethnicity, Gender and Class
General Methods II: Larger Systems (macro), Community, Grassroots, Needs Assessment, Complex Organizations
Human Behavior and the Social Environment (social dimensions of human behavior)
Research I: General Statistics

Fall Semester

Individuals and Families: Policy and Legislation
Research II: Evaluation
Advanced Interventions - Comparative Theories
Advanced Practicum

Spring Semester

Advanced Clinical Practice with Individuals and Families
DSM-IV Emotional Disorders or DSM-III-R
Advanced Practicum II

Specialization Electives - Selected Topics - 2 cr. each

(Elective options will vary from year to year, and may include these or other pertinent issues.)
Violence in the Family
Substance Abuse
Social Work with People of Color
Social Work with the Elderly
Women's Issues
Social Work Supervision
Family Therapy
AIDS Issues
Health Issues
Grant Writing/Administration/Planning
Rural Social Work
School Social Work

Graduate social work education prepares individuals to practice social work at the advanced level. The NASW Task Force on Labor Force Classification defines social work practice:

Social work practice consists of professionally responsible intervention to (1) enhance the developmental, problem-solving, and coping capacities of people; (2) promote the effective and humane operation of systems that provide resources and services to people; (3) link people with systems that provide them with resources, services and opportunities; and (4) contribute to the development and improvement of social policy.

The interventions are provided to individuals, families, small groups, organizations, neighborhoods, and communities. They involve the disciplined application of knowledge and skill to a broad range of problems which affect the well-being of people, both directly and indirectly. They are carried out at differentiated levels of knowledge and skill through an organized network of professional social workers within the boundaries of ethical norms established by the profession and the sanction of society. Within these norms, the interventions may be carried out in cooperation with other helping disciplines and organizations as part of any human service enterprise.

The social work tradition is one of promoting social justice and equality to enhance the quality of life for all people, with special attention to the disadvantaged and the oppressed. The School of Social Work at Boise State University is committed to these principles and ideals as reflected in the mission, goals, and objectives.

Mission of the Masters of Social Work Program

The Boise State University Master of Social Work Program is dedicated to educating students for advanced direct practice with individuals and families within the context of varying systems—households, groups, organizations, and communities. The school's philosophy of social and economic justice, egalitarianism, and respect for diversity reflects a strengths perspective that addresses populations at risk.

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, define our mission. These values reflect our commitment to address the needs of populations at risk, especially those of 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, in particular, American Indian, Alaska Native, and First Nations peoples; Latino, Chicano, or Mexican Americans; African Americans; and Asian Americans.
 - c. Social work services in the State of Idaho are delivered primarily by public (federal, state, county, and municipal) and nonprofit agencies and institutions. These arenas have an ongoing need for social workers 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, and skills for **beginning generalist practice** with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities; and preparation for graduate education.
 - b. The Master of Social Work Program prepares students for **advanced direct practice** with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities. Students learn clinical, organizational, policy, and administrative skills necessary for promoting social justice and equality, and enhancing the quality of life for all people.
3. The **advanced direct practice paradigm** that constitutes the defining framework for the Boise State University Master of Social Work Program features the following elements:
 - a. **A liberal arts perspective** informed by recognition of the critical import to social work education and practice of cultural, political, and sociohistorical contexts; skills in communication, reasoning, analysis, and critical thinking and inquiry; human behavior knowledge; and scientific method;
 - b. **Social work knowledge, values, and skills** essential for making sound, ethical, and autonomous professional judgments and decisions;
 - c. Thorough exploration of the many dimensions of **human diversity**, including natural endowments; cultural heritage; histories of social, economic, and racial oppression and their implications for social work practice;
 - d. **Specialized training in advanced direct practice with individuals and families**, to address the basic social service needs of the sparsely populated, largely rural State of Idaho. **Individuals and Families** designates the single **concentration** of our program, which prepares students for **advanced direct practice at all systems levels that affect individuals and families**—individual, family, household, group, organization, and community. In our state, the majority of Masters of Social Work **[MSWs] function as direct practitioners at all levels**, in public, private, and nonprofit agencies with scarce fiscal resources and personnel, particularly social work professionals with advanced training;

- e. Building on the first-year foundation, the **concentration** provides **advanced interventions preparation** at an augmented level of complexity. The concentration prepares students with knowledge and skills of sufficient depth, breadth, and specificity for more sophisticated, creative analysis, decision making, leadership, and expertise at multiple systems levels;
 - f. Building on a **strengths perspective foundation**—our overarching conceptual framework that incorporates **diversity** considerations, ecological theory, and **empowerment models of practice**—the **concentration** offers training in advanced practice interventions based on a variety of theoretical perspectives and models
4. As an overarching conceptual framework, a **strengths perspective** suggests the following:
- a. 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.
 - b. Such an approach furthers inclusion in “paradigms and paradigm-building ... the voices and visions of ... previously excluded” (Shriver, 1995, p. 16) individuals, groups, and communities.
 - c. Supporting, fostering, and attending to people’s own positive capacities for growth and well-being—their beliefs, values, experiences, talents, resources, and aspirations—raise the probability that they will act on those strengths, and grow and develop in the process. Personal and group awareness of inherent strengths is a vital form of knowledge that may inspire and inform personal and social transformation.
 - d. The concepts of empowerment, membership, suspension of disbelief, synergy, dialogue, collaboration, regeneration, and healing from within define the essence and purpose of social work—to preserve, promote, and restore human health and dignity; celebrate and benefit from human diversity; and advance social progress.
 - e. Clients and client systems are the experts on their own lives, hence the social work relationship should be one of collaboration and dialogue that fosters a communal basis for knowledge exchange. De-emphasizing power differentials between social workers and clients tends to enhance mutuality and client growth, in terms of personal and social power.
 - (a) A strengths perspective suggests that power is inherent in all human beings, and rejects the notion that power and resources are zero-sum commodities to be used by one person or group to dominate another.
 - (b) Coercive and exploitive power is expressed in often-interlocking forms of economic, racial, sexual, cultural, and class oppression. Social work that reflects a strengths perspective models sharing of power and resources whenever possible, to promote client participation in decisions that affect their lives and enhance opportunities for all to achieve their full human potential.

The Goals of the Masters Degree Program at Boise State University are:

1. Provision of an education program that prepares graduate students for advanced direct practice utilizing a strengths perspective.
2. Provision of an education program that prepares graduate students for culturally sensitive practice with individuals, families, groups, households and communities.
3. Support faculty, staff and student diversity.
4. Make agency-based practice the major focus of the program to meet the needs of the State of Idaho.
5. Support faculty involvement in research and demonstration projects.
6. An emphasis on social work practice that is based on the values and ethics that guide the social work profession.

Masters of Social Work Program Objectives

The Master of Social Work program's objectives prepare students to (1) build on the foundation of social work practice, in order to become knowledgeable about a range of social systems and how they affect social functioning, (2) gain an appreciation for the role of research in professional practice, (3) recognize a life-long obligation to continue the process of learning and skills development, (4) develop a strong sense of commitment to ethical practice that includes services to the poor and oppressed that promotes equality and social justice, and (5) prepare students for agency based practice to meet the social service needs of the State of Idaho.

In the following areas, utilizing a strengths perspective, graduates of the Master of Social Work program will be able to:

1. **Content Area:** Dynamic interaction between individual adjustment (bio-psycho-social functioning) and the environment (the family, the group, and the community).
 - a. Demonstrate knowledge about the personality system: individual growth and development—psychological, biological, social, and cultural;
 - b. Demonstrate knowledge about patterns of adaptation for individuals and formulate a sound bio-psycho-social assessment;
 - c. Demonstrate knowledge about the dynamics of the interactional system (i.e., the family—structure, roles, and patterns of communication) and formulate an assessment;
 - d. Demonstrate knowledge about the dynamics of the sociocultural system:
 - (i.) identify local, state, and national institutions that support individuals and families;
 - (ii.) identify resources and gaps in resources within the local and state service delivery networks needed to support individuals and families.
2. **Content Area:** Oppression and discrimination.
 - a. Demonstrate knowledge about the social, economic and institutional factors that promote healthy growth and development for individuals and families, including populations at-risk, in contrast to those factors that restrict healthy growth and development;
 - b. Identify personal values, including biases and prejudices, and reduce the influence of the latter two characteristics in order to engage in ethical social work practice.
 - c. Demonstrate knowledge of the manifestations of oppression and discrimination particular to the state of Idaho.
3. **Content Area:** Theories of change and the ability to intervene on behalf of individuals, families, and groups to prevent, ameliorate, and/or resolve unmet needs – as advocate, broker, mediator, and case manager.
 - a. Apply strategic skills to engage community and political systems for the development of programs and resources;
 - b. Evaluate service delivery programs contributing to enhanced service delivery.
4. **Content Area:** Direct interventions with individuals, families, and groups to address intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges.
 - a. Apply intervention knowledge and skills that utilize a strengths perspective and focus on prevention.
 - b. Apply empowering techniques that enable individuals, families and groups to bring about positive change in their environment.
5. **Content Area:** Assessment skills to gauge community support to address individual, family, and group needs.
 - a. Conduct needs assessments in order to identify community issues;
 - b. Assess the degree of public support for the allocation of resources to prevent, alleviate, and resolve issues of concern to individuals, families and groups.

6. **Content Area:** Qualitative and quantitative research methods to conduct outcome assessments.
 - a. Apply basic research designs and statistical and qualitative analyses.
 - b. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of social services delivery programs,
 - c. Evaluate the effectiveness of one's own practice interventions.

7. **Content Area:** Commitment to social work that promotes social and economic justice with respect for the value, dignity, and freedom of individuals, families, disenfranchised groups and populations at-risk.
 - a. Identify with social work as a profession,
 - b. Utilizing a strengths perspective, promote social and economic justice for all people including women, people of diverse cultural, racial, ethnic or religious identity, diverse affectional orientation and other populations at-risk.
 - c. Engage in ethical social work practice,
 - d. Exercise an active role in community service.

Program Objectives

8. Recruitment of diverse faculty, staff, and students.
 - a. Offer scholarships, graduate assistantships, and other forms of support.
 - b. Identify, enroll, and graduate a diverse student body.

9. Support faculty research:
 - a. Limit teaching load to three classes per semester for faculty engaged in research.
 - b. Offer University and College information on grant proposals and funding sources.
 - c. Offer faculty information on grant training and workshops.
 - d. Offer staff support.
 - e. Recognition of research activities through merit monies.
 - f. Offer a faculty mentoring program.
 - g. Provide travel funds to support faculty scholarly activity.
 - h. Provide faculty research support through school funding.

Field Practicum 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' graduate social work education. The 900 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 helping professionals. Students utilize their academic and practice experiences in the reality of the agency-client-service matrix. Graduate Field Practicum provides students an opportunity to participate in, and become familiar with, the many components of the social work role. The ideal field placement offers students a focus on the methods of direct practice planning and policy development and implementation, and other social work special projects and research activities.

Field Practicum will provide practice experiences in a continuum of modalities, 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. The first year field placement is 300 clock hours—20 hours per week for one semester. Advanced standing students are assumed to have completed an equivalent experience in their accredited undergraduate program.

The second year of Field Practicum emphasizes specialization related to direct social work practice with individuals and families. The role, function, and structure of the family is a particular focus across service delivery systems/Field Practicum placement sites. The student completes 600 hours of field experience—20 hours per week for two semesters.

Field Practicum is considered to be a key component of the graduate curriculum. A full-time Practicum Director is assisted by other faculty in developing and monitoring Field Practicum placements. The Practicum Director is available upon request to meet with Field Instructors regarding placement concerns. A Faculty Liaison is assigned to meet with the Field Instructor and the student during the semester in order to plan, monitor, and evaluate student activities, and to assist the student to integrate theory and practice through joint conferences, seminars, and written assignments.

Objectives for Field Practicum

Objectives for First Year Field Practicum

1. Apply a strengths perspective assessment/intervention model.
 - a. Carry out a social work assessment, using individual, family, agency, or community as the focal system, which incorporates an ecological systems perspective.
 - b. Work with systems of different sizes, individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - c. Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity through individualization, respect, and appreciation for differences in the application of a strengths perspective assessment.
 - d. Apply specific knowledge of population at risk, ethnicity, customs, traditions, heritage, language, and contemporary culture to the assessment/intervention model.
2. Understand the agency, its context and clientele.
 - a. Collect and utilize data and information to assess the agency context and clientele
 - b. Collect and utilize information to identify agency mission, purpose, sources of sanction and funding.
 - c. Demonstrate understanding of agency policies and relevant regulations, and their effect on practice.
3. Develop understanding of and demonstrate professional growth toward MSW level profession behavior and identity.
 - a. Demonstrate integration of social work values with one's professional practice.
 - b. Effectively utilize the agency instructor's supervision.
 - c. Evaluate the effectiveness of student's own practice.
 - d. Demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills in carrying out learning activities in the agency setting.
4. Apply research-based knowledge and other ways of knowing to consumer issues.
 - a. Utilize research-based knowledge and other ways of knowing to develop recommendations to improve programs and services.
 - b. Utilize research-based knowledge and other ways of knowing to develop recommendations to improve practice with clients.
5. Develop and utilize evaluation methods of client outcome.
 - a. Specifically define and operationalize goals and interventions with the focal system.
 - b. Develop and utilize an evaluation method of monitoring focal system progress in goal attainment.

Objectives for Second Year Field Practicum

6. Apply a strengths perspective assessment/intervention model.
 - a. Develop a range of skills to engage in the direct practice process and apply to problems within a field of practice. List skills to be gained in this practicum.
 - b. Develop familiarity with the body of research-based and practice acknowledged interventions appropriate to the setting and within the broader field of practice.
 - c. Be able to identify and implement appropriate prevention activities within a field of practice.
 - d. Be able to evaluate the effectiveness of a strengths perspective assessment/intervention model within a field of practice.

- e. Apply the strengths perspective assessment/intervention model for work with oppressed groups.
7. Understand the agency, its context within a field of practice, and clientele.
- a. Be able to critique the effectiveness of the agency as a rural/regional service provider.
 - b. Be able to analyze and critique the agency's ability to meet the needs of oppressed groups; formulate strategies for mediation and advocacy.
 - c. Be able to analyze and critique the agency's role and relationship with other organizations that comprise a service delivery system within a field of practice and engage in problem solving at the organizational level.
 - d. Be able to identify policies and policy issues within a field of practice which impact agency effectiveness; formulate and articulate alternative policies.
8. Demonstrate professional growth toward MSW-level professional behavior and identity.
- a. Operationalize the roles of the direct practitioner in the agency and field of practice service system; be able to assess the effectiveness and limitations of each.
 - b. Contrast social work roles with the roles of other professionals within a field of practice; be able to operate as a functional member of an interdisciplinary team.
 - c. Identify ongoing professional growth needs and incorporate a plan for addressing those needs into practicum activities related to the worker, the agency, the community and the profession.
 - d. Identify major ethical dilemmas within a field of practice.
 - e. Critically analyze professional abilities and engage in professional development to increase ability to work with culturally diverse groups.
9. Apply and generate research-based knowledge toward consumer issues.
- a. Apply research-based practice approaches knowledge development within a field of practice, for example, be able to gather data for program planning or be able to survey the literature to determine appropriate interventions.
 - b. Use research-based knowledge to develop suggested strategies for change in the services and policies which guide organizational delivery of services.
 - c. Be able to disseminate and articulate research-based knowledge in a field of practice to agency colleagues.
 - d. Additional objectives related to student's field of practice.
10. Develop and utilize evaluation methods of client outcome.
- a. Specifically define and operationalize goals and interventions with the focal system.
 - b. Develop and utilize an evaluation method, including single subject design to monitor client progress in goal attainment.
 - c. Develop the ability to interpret the results of practice evaluation and modify the intervention when the current methods are ineffective.
 - d. Develop the ability to organize the results of practice outcomes so that results may be made available to other professionals.

Structure of Field Practicum

First Year Field Placement

1. **Prerequisites.** Generally, students entering the first year of Field Practicum will have a 3.0 grade point average and will have completed all first-year, fall semester requirements: SW 502, SW 503 and 504, SW 505, SW 512, SW 514, and SW530.
2. **Field Practicum I** is taken in the spring semester of the first year. The 6-credit course requires 20 clock hours per week, totaling a required 300 hours (15 weeks). Students are expected to attend Field Practicum during the entire 15 weeks. The student's work schedule (days and times) will be negotiated by the student, the Field Instructor, and the Faculty Liaison.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for Advanced Social Work Practicum I and II, the student must have:

1. Achieved second-year status.
2. Completed all summer advanced standing courses.
3. Maintained a 3.0 grade point average.

Advanced Social Work Practicum I is taken in the fall semester of the second year. The 6-credit course requires 20 clock hours per week, totaling a required 300 hours (15 weeks). Students are expected to attend Field Practicum during the entire 15 weeks. The student's work schedule (days and times) will be negotiated by the student, the Field Instructor, and the Faculty Liaison.

Advanced Social Work Practicum II is taken in the spring semester of the second year. The 6-credit course requires 20 clock hours per week, totaling a required 300 hours covering a semester (15 weeks). Students are expected to attend Field Practicum during the entire 15 weeks. The student's work schedule (days and times) will be negotiated by the student, the Field Instructor, and the Faculty Liaison.

Administration of Field Practicum

The Practicum Director has primary responsibility for the Field Practicum Program. Students relate directly to the Practicum Director concerning matters of placement. Faculty Liaisons are also assigned to monitor the placement and assist the student and agency Field Instructor with issues and learning goals. Agency Field Instructors are responsible for 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 Field Instructor recommends a grade to the Practicum Director who determines the final grade.

Learning Contract

During the first two 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 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 Field Instructor and reviewed by the Faculty Liaison to ensure appropriateness, mutual understanding, and expected success. (See Learning Contract Form)

The Faculty Liaison facilitates and encourages the student's development as a Master's level social work practitioner, through the integration of social work theory, practice, and values. 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 the following:

1. Negotiation of a behaviorally specific learning contract.
2. Analysis of the organization and program unit in which the student is placed.
3. Presentation of a practice issue: assessment, intervention and evaluation.
4. Philosophy of social work practice.
5. Evaluation of field experience and social work education.

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. (See Sample Assignments).

Field Instructor Training and Orientation

The School of Social Work provides orientation and training for Field Instructors. A prerequisite for Field Instructors being assigned as adjunctive faculty is their participation in a training session held annually and attendance at other coordination meetings as scheduled periodically.

Orientation for new Field Instructors covers presentation of curriculum, School of Social Work expectations and guidelines, review of learning contracts and evaluations, training in field instruction methods and supervision, and issues of ethnicity and diversity.

Acceptance to Practicum

In the event that a student does not meet the above criteria, she/he must work with her/his advisor and the Practicum Director to develop an academic plan. This plan will be presented to the faculty for a decision and conditions for entry into Practicum. The applicant will be notified in writing of the faculty decision. Appeal of the faculty decision may be made by first contacting the advisor and formulating the basis for appeal. A reconsideration vote can then be requested, which may include the student's presentation of her/his case to the faculty. Further appeal procedures are outlined in the University and Social Work Student Handbooks.

First Year Time Line

- August.....Orientation – Students complete field interest survey.
- September/October.....Practicum Director develops first-year placement options.
- OctoberStudents interview with Practicum Director.
- NovemberStudents interview with agencies.
- DecemberPracticum Director confirms first-year placement.
- Mid-JanuaryStudents begin Field Practicum - first week of the Spring semester.
- 3rd week of semesterLearning Contract due. Faculty liaison meets with field instructor and student.
- January/February.....Students interview with Practicum Director for second – year placement
- February.....Students interview with two agencies.
- March.....Mid-term. Faculty liaison may meet with field instructor and student to evaluate performance and progress.
- Spring Break.....(No Field Practicum-one week.)
- April.....Practicum Director finalizes placement for Fall semester.

Second Year Time Line

- August 15.....Students confirm starting date/time with agency field instructor.
- 4th week in AugustStudents begin Practicum I – first week of the Fall semester.
- 3rd week of semesterFaculty liaison meets with field instructor with field instructor and student
- October Mid-term.....Faculty liaison may meet with field instructor and student to evaluate performance and progress.
- DecemberEnd of fall semester. Final evaluation, written. Faculty liaison meets with field instructor and student.
- Christmas Vacation.....(No Field Practicum - approximately 3 weeks.)
- 1st week in FebruaryRevised Learning Contract due. Faculty liaison meets with field instructor and student.
- March.....Mid-term. Faculty liaison may meet with field instructor and student to evaluate performance and progress.
- Spring Break.....(No field Practicum - 1 week.)
- MayEnd of semester. Final evaluation, written, Faculty liaison meets with field instructor and student.

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation is a key part 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 will be asked to evaluate her/his work. At the end of the semester, the student and Field Instructor will then discuss and compare their evaluations. The evaluation should relate to the student's Learning Contract and the Field Practicum goals and objectives. The Faculty Field Liaison awards the grade. Although Field Instructor input and evaluation is an important part of student grading, the final responsibility for the grade is with the school's Field Liaison Faculty in consultation with the Practicum Director. The assigned grade will be either Pass ("P") or Fail ("F"). A grade of "Fail" results in removal from the program.

Agency Qualifications for a Masters of Social Work Field Work/Practicum Student

1. The agency may not have exclusionary policies or practices that discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, affectional orientation, or national origin. This policy also incorporates compliance with the College's requirement that Field Practicum sites honor the Martin Luther King, Jr./Human Rights Day Holiday. (See the Martin Luther King, Jr./Human Rights Day policy – #3 below under "other policies".)
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 social work knowledge, skills, and values. A Learning Contract identifying the knowledge, skills, and values to be developed in both the first and second year field placements will be negotiated between the agency, the student, and the Faculty Liaison.
4. The agency should provide learning experiences in which the graduate student can develop her/his learning goals consistent with the program's format and mission.
 - A. First-year placement for students without prior social work experience: broad exposure to a field of practice, social issue(s), multiple intervention strategies, diversity elements etc., offered by a public agency or private non-profit agency (see definition of experience).
 - B. First-year placement for students with prior social work experience: Special projects that offer the student the opportunity to utilize social work skills in a new field, level of intervention, or type of practice. The experienced student may also choose from public agency options. (See Special Project definition.)
 - C. Second-year specialized placement: An individualized placement that emphasizes the learning and career goals of the student, within the mission of the school (empowerment social work practice with individuals and families).
5. The agency should provide the student with a physical place within the agency setting (desk, supplies, telephone, support services).
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 work site.
7. The agency should provide a Licensed MSW employee to serve as the student's Field Instructor, using the criteria below.
8. If the agency does not have a staff person with an MSW degree, the agency may designate a non-MSW supervisor to oversee the day-to-day activities of the student. The agency will need to hire or use an 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 will also be accessible to the student by telephone and will meet with the student and the agency supervisor a minimum of one hour weekly, to plan and implement the placement learning objectives.

Criteria for Masters of Social Work Field Instructor/ Adjunct Faculty Appointment

The Field Instructor shall:

1. Be a Licensed Social Worker with an MSW Degree and two years post-MSW experience.
2. Be willing to participate in Field Instructor training meetings and must be released from the agency to do so.
3. Cooperate with the School of Social Work 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 and families.
6. Process the activities of the student to identify knowledge, skills, and values applicable to advanced professional social work practice.
7. Assist the student in developing an individualized learning contract.
8. Meet at least one hour per week with the student to integrate social work theory and practice and give the student a monthly verbal evaluation of her/his learning progress.
9. Provide formal written evaluation of the student's progress, including grade recommendation, at the middle and end of the placement experience.

Termination from Field Work

Because social work is a field of direct professional practice and not solely an academic discipline, it is essential that students follow the NASW Code of Ethics and be held accountable for knowledge, values, skills and abilities as well as academic performance. Satisfactory completion of Field Work is based on the professional judgement of both the Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison in the following areas. (See Evaluative Standard 5 for Grievance Procedures)

Resistant Attitude to 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.

Personality Unsuitable to Social Work – 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 diverse types of people. The inability to enable others to form close trusting relationships with the social worker and to manage the intense emotional expressions which come from people in need may mean that a different career should be sought.

Emotional Immaturity or Instability – 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 a chronic pattern of emotional immaturity or mental instability may be barred from the practicum.

Unprofessional Behavior– Breaches of the Code of Ethics or seemingly small infractions such as regularly leaving confidential files unlocked may be deemed to be serious enough to terminate field work. The misuse of clients by involving them in staff conflicts and gossiping about the agency or clients are examples of behaviors which are inconsistent with professional social norms. Failure to comply with the National Association of Social Workers 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 MSW Program.

Failure to Disclose or False Reporting – The failure to disclose pertinent data or giving false information in applying to the Social Work Program or at any step in the application for specific field placements is grounds for termination from field work and from the MSW 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 involvement with staff. Our policy is to avoid placing students at agencies where they have received services in the past. Additionally, we would most likely avoid asking them to provide services with any client group where they still may have some vulnerability or aversion for whatever reason. For example, we would not ask a sexually abused woman to provide services to perpetrators.

Other Policies

1. Martin Luther King, Jr./Human Rights Day: The third Monday of each January is Martin Luther King, Jr., National Holiday and Martin Luther King, Jr./Human Rights Day in Idaho. The University is closed for the holiday as students, faculty, and administrative staff pause to remember the work of Dr. King and how we might live his dream. The School of Social Work will include in its criteria for Field Practicum agency participation that all Field Practicum agencies recognize this holiday and accord our students such time away from normal Field Practicum learning. Recognition of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday is a component of an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Field Practicum site.

This policy was passed by faculty vote in February 1991. We recognize that institutional social change is slow. This policy will be implemented over a period of several years. Considerations will be made for emergency and 24-hour care programs.

2. Finances: The School of Social Work does not pay Field Instructors. The School acknowledges the valuable service 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.
3. Insurance: BSU 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. Student fees at BSU provide health insurance.
4. Attendance and Holidays: The student is expected to be at the agency for an entire semester. The student shall not 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 shall observe agency holidays, rather than school holidays, in their attendance at the agency. Exceptions to this are: Thanksgiving weekend, semester break, spring break, and the Martin Luther King, Jr./Human Rights Day. (See #3).
5. 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 and University Grievance procedures.
6. Academic or practicum credit is not granted for life experience or professional work experience.

Guidelines for Practica of Students Employed in Social Service Agencies

1. All the guidelines for other (unpaid) practica shall apply to practica of students employed in their agencies.
2. Agencies wishing to offer a practicum placement to an employee will agree to put the student's learning objectives and needs ahead of agency maintenance needs for the duration of the practicum.
3. The student shall 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.
4. 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 shall 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 shall provide social work field instruction from an MSW. If the agency does not have a staff person with an MSW degree, the agency may designate a non-MSW supervisor to oversee the day-to-day activities of the student. The agency will need to hire or use an 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.

5. The student should be free to take risks and make mistakes as a learner to the same extent as a non-employed student.
6. The Faculty Liaison, student, and agency Field Instructor will decide how the student's learning is to be documented.
7. The Faculty Liaison shall 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 no credit will be given for the practicum.