MSW PROGRAM

PRACTICUM EDUCATION MANUAL

Thank you for your interest in practicum education. We hope you find the following information helpful. The University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2) considers practicum education an integral part of the MSW Program. Indeed, the Council on Social Work Education defines practicum education as its signature pedagogy. The goal of practicum education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the agency setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of academic pursuits and practicum are of equal importance within the curriculum. Whether you are a current or prospective student, a social service agency, or a practicum instructor, we hope this manual answers your questions. If not, please reach out to us so we can offer guidance.

Warmly,

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THE SP2 MSW PROGRAM

MSW PROGRAM MISSION

The MSW Program promotes the profession of Social Work by educating students to become leaders for social change. SP2 prepares social workers to be highly competent professionals who are skilled at providing effective service, integrating interdisciplinary knowledge, theory, and social work values with practice to address social needs. The MSW Program generates knowledge for application in the field and inspires students to academic and practice excellence. The philosophy of the program embraces diversity and promotes social change in order to achieve a more just society.

THE GOALS OF THE MSW PROGRAM

PREPARE STUDENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE.

- Prepare students for professional social work practice in a variety of systems and settings with diverse client populations.
- Educate students for advanced practice in an identified area of concentration in either clinical or macro practice.
- Foster the use of social work knowledge, skills, values, and ethics in all aspects of their professional activities.
- Cultivate leadership for social change and in the development of social service delivery systems.
- Cultivate a climate of critical inquiry.

ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE RELEVANT TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND SOCIAL WELFARE.

- Infuse and develop interdisciplinary knowledge into social work and social welfare.
- Develop and evaluate innovative models of social work practice and service delivery to respond to extant and emerging needs of client systems.
- Identify and analyze existing and emerging social problems.
- Disseminate knowledge on social problems.

CRITICALLY EXAMINE THE HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL OPPRESSION AND PROMOTE DISTRIBUTIVE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

- Develop a critical framework for understanding racism and other forms of oppression.
- Learn and apply change strategies in social agencies to promote social justice, including race and gender equity.

THE PENN APPROACH

Since its founding in 1908, the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice has articulated a social philosophy that shapes the social work program the School offers, the research

it undertakes, and the leadership it provides to the profession. This statement of social philosophy – The Penn Approach – is, first and foremost, an evolving document. It is continuously revised to reflect the changing requirements of those in greatest need in our society. It also reflects the faculty's commitment to introduce MSW students to a variety of perspectives related to social work practice, social change, social policy, research, racism and oppression, and the nature of human behavior in the social environment. The Penn Approach is not a static or dogmatic approach to practice, but rather is descriptive of a perspective of critical and constructive inquiry.

The Penn Approach to the education of future social work professionals includes the unique contributions to the values of the profession and four major perspectives:

- a clear understanding and respect for the past;
- analysis of current professional issues;
- a vision of the future that reflects a commitment to social change; and
- knowledge appreciation and knowledge generation on local, national, and global issues.

THE PENN APPROACH TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: MAJOR PRINCIPLES

Built on this rich history, The Penn Approach reflects ongoing refinement and expansion of the Functional concepts and principles of social work practice within the context of a pluralistic, complex, and ever-changing society. According to The Penn Approach, the helping process is incomplete unless the social work practitioner engages in a continuous process of planned change to improve the delivery of services and link social resources to the areas of greatest need according to values of distributive justice. These principles apply to the work of Penn practitioners with all client systems: individuals, families, groups, organizations, neighborhoods, and entire communities locally, nationally, and globally. They apply equally to the functions of agencies, the functions of social workers as professionals, and functions in social work education.

Nine principles comprise The Penn Approach:

- Client Empowerment
- Mutual Respect between Practitioner and Client
- Attention to Group-Based Social Inequalities
- A Structured Solution-Focused Process
- Agency Purpose and Function
- Planned Social Change
- Monitoring Change
- Advocating for the Redistribution of Social Resources
- Fostering a Climate of Inquiry

THE PENN APPROACH IN CURRENT PRACTICE

The Penn Approach will continue to expand upon these nine principles to meet the societal needs of the 21st Century. Social workers have long understood that neither individual nor environmental change efforts, in isolation, is sufficient to enhance clients' well-being or to change social policies that fail to address clients' needs adequately. The Penn School of Social Policy & Practice's history of service to people who experience oppression and multiple vulnerabilities will be reflected in its continuing commitment to eradicating social and economic inequalities.

Toward these ends, the Penn School of Social Policy & Practice offers a curriculum that integrates the development of practice skills with research, the study of specific social problems and social policies, theories, and methods of social change, knowledge about human relationships, and individual and societal responses to institutional racism and other forms of bias, discrimination, and oppression. Students learn to analyze and intervene in complex individual and social issues using both interpersonal and systemic perspectives to address people's problems.

COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND NINE SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES (2022)

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the accrediting body for all MSW Programs in the U.S. Their standards both inform and guide SP2's academic standards. CSWE has designated Field Education social work's signature pedagogy. As such, field work, which we refer to as practicum education, reflects the core competency and practice behaviors in the assignment of duties and evaluation of learning. Below are the 2022 Core Competencies.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

a) make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
b) demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
c) use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
d) use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

a) advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
b) engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

a) demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
b) demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

a) apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and

b) identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

a) use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
b) apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

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

a) apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
b) use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

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

a) apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
b) demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

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

a) engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
b) incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

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

a) select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
b) critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

NASW CODE OF ETHICS

The social work profession relies on the NASW Code of Ethics to guide and formulate ethical responses to complicated human interaction. This section provides an abbreviated description of the NASW Code of Ethics. More detailed information can be found here: https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English. Students are expected to be familiar with and proceed in accordance with the Code of Ethics. If questions emerge, students can consult their practicum instructor, course instructor, practicum liaison, academic advisor, or the MSW Practicum Education Office.

The Code of Ethics identifies core values on which social work's mission is based, summarizes ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values, establishes a set of specific ethical standards that guide social work practice, and provides the basis on which the public can hold a practitioner accountable.

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES

1) Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.
2) Social workers challenge social injustice.
3) Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.
4) Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.
5) Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.
6) Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

The MSW program promotes the profession of social work by educating students to become leaders for social change. We prepare them to be highly competent professionals who are skilled at providing effective service, integrating interdisciplinary knowledge, theory, and social work values with practice to address social needs. The MSW program generates knowledge for application in the field and inspires students to academic and practice excellence. The philosophy of the program embraces diversity and promotes social change in order to achieve a more just society.

The MSW curriculum is divided into two parts: the Foundation curriculum, which provides an orientation to the profession and a basis for understanding practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, and the Advanced curriculum, which enables students to focus on their chosen area of specialized practice, advanced clinical social work practice or advanced macro social work practice.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

FOUNDATION CURRICULUM

The Foundation portion of the MSW program provides the base for the Advanced portion of the curriculum. Foundation courses introduce students to a generalist orientation, one that seeks to make explicit social work concepts and principles that undergird work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and other systems. The foundation curriculum also seeks to broaden the students' perception and involvement beyond the level of the individual and family by looking at groups, organizations, and communities within the context of the political, social, global, and economic environment.

FOUNDATION CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

- Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
- Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.
- Practice with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic resources, sexual orientation, family structure, gender, national origin, race, religion, and other identities.
- Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.
- Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.
- Apply knowledge and skills of a generalist social work perspective to practice with systems of all sizes.
- Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.
- Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.
- Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities.
- Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice.
- Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change.

ADVANCED YEAR CURRICULUM

In the Advanced year of the MSW Program, students select a method of concentration: advanced clinical or macro social work practice. Students take a required year-long practice course in their concentration plus at least one practice elective in their chosen concentration. As in the foundation

portion, the advanced portion of the curriculum is concerned with the holistic nature of social work practice. Students learn to intervene in a variety of social-environmental systems impinging on people, focusing their learning on mastery of relevant concepts and methodological approaches appropriate to the practice context. Major emphasis in the practicum experience may be on either clinical practice or macro practice. The practicum experience, in conjunction with classroom learning, provides students with professional preparation that can be used in a variety of settings following graduation.

The clinical and macro practice concentrations have the same objectives. They are realized, however, in relation to the requirements of each concentration. Both clinical and macro students will address the following concentration objectives in their respective courses and practicum work:

Students will master advanced knowledge that supports their development as a clinical or macro social work practitioner in:

- practice intervention theories and frameworks;
- social work research methods; and
- environmental contexts.

Students will demonstrate the following skills in a highly differentiated, discriminating, and self-critical way in either a clinical or macro practice setting:

- apply practice skills based on relevant and current conceptual frameworks or practice theories in their area of practice;
- use methods of intervention that are specific to their concentration; and
- assess the effectiveness of interventions in their practice.

Students will apply professional ethics and values to increasingly complex and nuanced situations in their practice, including:

- integration of strategies of ethical decision-making to guide intervention in clinical or macro practice;
- integration of the centrality of diversity and ethical responsibility as a change agent into all aspects of one's professional behavior.

CLINICAL CONCENTRATION

The Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice concentration builds on the generalist approach to practice gained in the foundation year with expectations that students draw upon appropriate theories, evidence, and expertise to inform engagement, assessment, goal setting, intervention, and evaluation in direct practice with individuals, families, and groups, with integration of advanced understanding of organizational and community contexts and practice and their implications for clinical practice. This set of expectations informs the primary emphasis of the advanced clinical curriculum on social work practice with individuals, families, and groups, and the integrated inclusion of social work practice with organizations and communities. This structure is consistent with the longstanding Penn Approach (https://sp2.upenn.edu/who-we-are/), which includes attention to the agency's function and to implications for intervention to address group-based inequities that may be identified through clinical practice.

MACRO CONCENTRATION

The Advanced Macro Social Work Practice concentration also builds on the generalist approach to practice gained in the foundation year with expectations that students draw upon appropriate theories, evidence, and expertise to inform engagement, assessment, goal setting, intervention, and evaluation in social work practice primarily focused on groups, communities, and broader systems, with integration of advanced understanding of individual and family contexts and practice and their implications for macro practice. This set of expectations informs the primary emphasis of the advanced macro curriculum on social work practice with groups, organizations, and communities, and the integrated inclusion of social work practice with individuals and families. This structure is consistent with the longstanding Penn Approach (https://sp2.upenn.edu/who-we-are/), which includes attention to the interrelation between the individual and social need, the importance of accountability systems informed by understanding of practice and evaluation with individual clients, the capacity to develop services in response to changing needs of individuals and families, and the advanced ability to formulate social change efforts with individuals, families, service programs, and systems that can address multidimensional challenges.

COURSES OF STUDY

Penn offers three different options for completing the MSW Program, enabling students to choose the course of study that best fits with their personal circumstances and career goals: the two-year Full-Time program, the three-year Part-Time program, and the ten-month Advanced Standing program. Additionally, the Penn MSW Program accepts students from Pennsylvania's CWEL program.

The full-time MSW Program is a two-year program designed for students who have chosen to pursue a graduate social work degree and are prepared to matriculate on a full-time basis.

The part-time MSW Program is a three-year program designed for students who have chosen the profession but are not prepared to matriculate on a two-year basis.

The full-time Advanced Standing Program is designed for exceptional BSW students who have graduated from a BSW program within the past five years. A limited number of students are accepted into this program. Advanced Standing students begin graduate studies in the summer, followed by two semesters of full-time study during the academic year.

DUAL DEGREES

Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice promotes interdisciplinary collaboration. One of the many ways we collaborate with our colleagues at Penn's eleven other professional and graduate schools is through our dual degree programs. The Practicum Education Office takes into consideration the students' areas of interest related to dual degrees when identifying a placement. The dual degree options offered at SP2 are available online (https://sp2.upenn.edu/dual-degree-programs/). All inquiries regarding dual degrees should be directed to the student's academic advisor. Additionally, students interested in pursuing a dual degree are strongly encouraged to thoroughly review the application procedures of the other degree of interest.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AND SPECIALIZATIONS

Certificate programs and specializations provide unique opportunities and concentrated learning in a specific area of practice. All questions regarding certificate programs and specializations should be directed to the certificate or specialization director and the student's advisor, with support from the Practicum Education Office regarding any placement requirements. The certificates and specializations offered at SP2 are available online (https://sp2.upenn.edu/certificate-programs-and-specializations/).

PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

FOUNDATION YEAR MSW PRACTICUM

Foundation year placement orients students to the social work profession and offers the opportunity to learn core generalist social work practice knowledge and skills. Students engage in direct practice, which may include, but is not limited to, intake, assessment, case management, discharge planning, and psychoeducation. These skills may be developed in any foundation setting. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires all foundation students to engage in direct practice with clients. Psychotherapy settings and settings that are entirely macro-focused or have limited direct practice opportunities are not part of foundation experiences.

ADVANCED YEAR MSW PRACTICUM

In the advanced year, or concentration year, placement builds on the foundation of the first year, enabling students to develop advanced skills and knowledge in either clinical or macro social work practice. Students have significant input into the placement request, although no specific placement is guaranteed.

ADVANCED STANDING MSW PRACTICUM

Advanced standing students specify their clinical or macro social work practice concentration upon enrollment in the program. They are referred to placements according to their concentration as they build on their BSW placement experience. They engage in an integrative practicum seminar during July and August, which allows them to begin placement assignments early. They shift into the Advanced Year cohort when the fall semester begins.

STUDENT PLACEMENT PROCESS AND AGENCY ASSIGNMENT

The MSW Practicum Education Office is responsible for arranging student placements. Students are not tasked with arranging their own placements. Agency supervisors or designated intern coordinators receive placement materials from the MSW Practicum Education Office when students are referred.

Communication between the agency and the MSW Practicum Education Office begins in the months leading up to the start date for each student's placement. Once an agency is identified, the student will receive agency information that includes who to contact to arrange an interview.

PLACEMENT PROCESS FOR FOUNDATION YEAR STUDENTS

After students enroll in the MSW Program, they are prompted to complete a form detailing their educational and practical experiences and learning goals. Students are asked to select three general areas of interest. This information is forwarded to the Practicum Education Office.

The Practicum Education Office secures a learning opportunity for the student in one of the many agencies affiliated with SP2. The student receives materials that outline the process for connecting to the agency and securing a placement. These materials identify the name, address, and telephone number of the person with whom they are to communicate to arrange an appointment to discuss the placement.

Please note that agencies request interviews prior to securing a placement. In some cases, where the student is coming to SP2 from a distant location, other methods of discussing placement may be necessary (i.e., telephone, Zoom, etc.).

The agency receives application materials specific to the student being referred. These materials include a letter recommending the student to the agency and information about the student's educational background and prior experience.

Students interview at the agency. Students and agencies submit confirmation paperwork to the MSW Practicum Education Office. Placements are confirmed via Sonia communication. Students are responsible for communicating with the MSW Practicum Education Office should any changes related to the placement arise.

Pennsylvania DHS Employees/CWEL participants moving into a student role will be asked for placement interests that meet Title IV-E requirements and will be prompted by the MSW Practicum Education Office to contact the person in charge of practice at the agency to discuss placement arrangements.

PLACEMENT PROCESS FOR ADVANCED YEAR STUDENTS

Foundation practice practicum liaisons discuss with students their educational objectives for the advanced year placement. The placement process for the advanced year typically begins midway through the foundation year. The student's Academic Advisor and the Practicum Education Office may also be consulted.

The practicum liaison and the student collaborate on the placement plan, drawing upon the student's educational goals, learning needs, career interests, and phase of professional development.

The student completes and reviews with the practicum liaison a list of four ranked choices for advanced year placement. This list, along with accompanying biographical information, is submitted to the MSW Practicum Education Office for review. The Office makes every effort to place the student in one of their four ranked choices, beginning with the first choice until the advanced year placement is secured. Some students will complete an application and interview process based on the selected site's procedures. Some advanced year sites will accept more applications than the number of placement slots that will be available in the year ahead.

PLACEMENT CONFIRMATION PROCESS

Placements are confirmed with email communications via the Sonia system.

AGENCY PRE-PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS AND CLEARANCES

Sites vary in their requirements for students assigned to their sites. We encourage agencies and students to address these requirements, including the following:

- Background Checks: SP2 expects students to complete all paperwork requirements if criminal, child abuse, and/or other clearances are a required component of the practicum.
- Agency Orientations: Agencies and students are encouraged to communicate regarding any agency orientations that fall outside of the scheduled placement days. SP2 encourages students to complete agency orientations during the month of July or early August when possible. This schedule will help students avoid missing required SP2 orientations and classes during late August.
- Please refer to the SP2 website for more detailed information regarding the academic calendar (https://sp2.upenn.edu/resource/academic-calendar/).
- Driving/Transportation: Students are expected to provide their own transportation to and from practicum. Students are not permitted to drive clients in their own vehicles. Students are permitted to drive clients in an agency vehicle given prior clearance and confirmation of liability insurance by the agency.

PRACTICUM SCHEDULING INFORMATION

WEEKLY PRACTICUM SCHEDULE

All students are required to attend scheduled classes. Agencies are discouraged from scheduling regular assignments in the evenings before classes. This schedule allows for a practicum/class participation balance that affords strong performance in each area. However, if the student and agency find a mutually agreeable schedule that best accommodates clients, the Practicum Education Office should be informed.

Practicum days are consistent in order to allow for scheduled class meetings. The following outlines the days of the week students are expected in practicum as it relates to the program and year in which they are enrolled. It is expected that a full day of practicum will involve 8 hours.

Full-Time Foundation (1st year)
Monday, Thursday, Friday during the fall and spring semesters

Full-Time Advanced (2nd year)
Monday, Tuesday, Friday during the fall and spring semesters

Advanced Standing
Monday, Wednesday, Friday during July and August
Monday, Tuesday, Friday during the fall and spring semesters

Part-Time Foundation (1st year placement, which begins the second year of the MSW Program)

Students complete 16 hours each week; one full day (8 hours) is completed during traditional business hours as defined by the agency. The remaining hours can be completed during evenings or weekends with appropriate supervision.

Students complete practicum in the fall and spring semesters and are expected to continue in practicum 16 hours per week through the end of June.

Part-Time Advanced (2nd year placement, which begins the third year of the MSW Program)
Beginning in early August, students complete 16 hours each week; one full day (8 hours) is completed during traditional business hours as defined by the agency. The remaining hours can be completed during evenings or weekends with appropriate supervision.

Students continue with practicum in the fall and spring semesters and are expected to continue in practicum 16 hours per week through the end of the spring semester.

PRACTICUM HOUR REQUIREMENTS: FULL- AND PART-TIME STUDENTS

Practicum is concurrent with practice course enrollment at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice.

Full-time students are expected to spend the equivalent of three days (24 hours) per week in practicum September-April. Part-time students are expected to spend two days (16 hours, with 8 hours during traditional business hours) per week in practicum. Part-time students begin practicum in the fall of their foundation practice year and continue through June; they begin their advanced year practicum in early August and continue through the end of the spring semester.

Students are required to remain in practicum placement for the duration of their practice class.

PRACTICUM SCHEDULING FOR DUAL DEGREE STUDENTS

The School of Social Policy & Practice has several combined programs in its curriculum. All dual degree students should notify the MSW Practicum Education Office about their enrollments. The School will be responsible for notifying the agency of the student's special circumstances at the time of the placement referral. The student and Practicum Education Office will determine the assigned days in practicum.

SCHEDULED PRACTICUM DAYS AND AGENCY HOURS

All students are expected to observe the agency's predetermined schedule even when that schedule does not reflect traditional business hours. Practicum instructors are asked to inform students of agency schedules as soon as possible. Students are expected to be in practicum on the days agreed upon by the agency, SP2, and the student. Students are also expected to be in their agencies for all practice days.

ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS

It is recommended that the agency consider granting up to two days to cover time off for illness or other unplanned emergencies. The practicum liaison should be the contact person to resolve unusual circumstances. In the case of major illness, students are requested to notify the School and agency if both practicum and academic work will be affected. Practicum instructors are asked to

notify the School as soon as possible if they learn of a student's serious illness or emergency absence.

HOLIDAYS

Students observe both the agency holiday schedules and the University holiday schedule. The University includes Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday in its holiday schedule. Students are expected to be excused on that day. The Friday after Thanksgiving is a University holiday, which may differ from the agency schedule. Any practice days that are missed due to agency or School holiday scheduling are not to be made up by the student. Students who observe religious holidays may be excused from placement but may be asked to make up missed time. Supervisors and agency staff should be notified by students about any anticipated absences in a timely manner to ensure that there is no disruption to client services. The University policy on religious and secular holidays is provided here: https://chaplain.upenn.edu/worship/holidays/.

SCHOOL-SCHEDULED RECESSES AND BREAKS

Winter Recess: Students are not required to be in practicum during the two-week winter recess from placement.

Spring Recess: Students are entitled to three days of vacation from practicum during the spring recess. Occasionally, an agency also has a scheduled spring recess. It is suggested that the spring recess coincide with the University recess, providing the student with a full week free of class and practicum, except in those situations where the agency's spring recess provides three days at another time. Any other circumstances should be discussed with the student's practicum liaison.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is central in the social work profession. The following are expectations for supervision:

- Agenda: Students are expected to bring substantive agendas for supervision meetings. The agendas should reflect in-depth thinking about their practice.
- Frequency: Supervision should be scheduled weekly for at least 1- 1½ hours on the same day. This time should be protected, if possible, in order to maximize student learning.
- Availability: It is suggested that practicum instructors be available to students for consultation on an informal basis to the extent that is reasonably possible.
- Content: It is recommended that the practicum instructor and student attempt to integrate classroom learning and readings into the practice experience to the extent possible.
- Process Recordings: It is strongly recommended that supervisors require the completion and review of regular process recordings.

PRACTICUM LEARNING CONTRACT

Students are required to develop learning contracts within the context of the placement and practice class.

Each student is expected to develop a plan for practicum, referred to as a Learning Contract. This plan should be tailored to individual interests, the level of experience, the nature of the agency, the objectives of coursework, and CSWE social work competencies. Each practice course will provide instructions for completing the learning contract. In general terms, it includes:

- A brief description of the student's learning goals that are established in collaboration with the practicum instructor for professional development during the semester;
- For each goal, there should be a concrete plan for measuring progress toward the goal and specific steps that will be taken to ensure that each goal is met; and
- Commitments of both the student and practicum instructor, including consideration of the following questions by the student and practicum instructor: What commitments will you make to this practicum placement/student? What will they look like? What can the student/practicum instructor/agency/clients count on from you? These commitments may include hours of attendance and supervision, actions to facilitate learning and professional development, and other considerations relevant to the student, practicum instructor and agency.

Suggested steps for writing a learning contract:

1) The student writes a rough draft of the learning contract.
2) The student shares a rough draft with the practicum instructor for feedback/input; the student revises the learning contract based on practicum instructor feedback.
3) Both the student and the practicum instructor sign the final copy of the learning contract.
4) The student makes four copies of the learning contract: one for the student, one for the practicum instructor, one for the practicum liaison, and one for the practice instructor.

The practicum liaison will refer to the learning contract during the practicum visit when it may be revised further. The learning contract is reviewed and updated each semester.

EXPECTATIONS OF MSW PRACTICUM INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS REGARDING THE EVALUATION PROCESS

It is expected that practicum instructors meet with students for one hour of weekly supervision. It is also expected that the practicum instructor and student use this time to periodically and informally assess the student's progress, including midway through the semester. Students are expected to be active participants in the evaluation process.

Practicum learning is a collaborative process between the practicum instructor and the student. It begins with the formulation of the learning contract and continues through regularly scheduled supervision and ongoing evaluation during the placement. The evaluation process is an integral part of practicum education and serves to facilitate professional development by helping students develop the capacity to evaluate their own work, appraise their performance progress, and determine future learning tasks and objectives.

The major purposes of the evaluation are (1) to provide an opportunity for the student and practicum instructor to evaluate student progress and (2) to conceptualize skills, knowledge, and other learning needs that they should focus on in the future. Towards the end of each semester, it is the practicum

instructor's responsibility to conduct an evaluation conference with the student and, based on the discussion, to develop a draft of the final evaluation. No student is to be requested to write their own evaluation. The completion of the evaluation is the responsibility of each practicum instructor, who will ask for student input and hold an evaluation conference as part of the process.

The Practicum Education Office sends an electronic link to the evaluation via the Sonia system. The practicum instructor completes the evaluation and "submits" their input, which acts as the practicum instructor's electronic signature. This process then prompts a Sonia notice to the student that the evaluation is ready for review. The student may comment on the evaluation but is not required to do so. The student "submits" that they have reviewed the evaluation, which acts as the student's electronic signature.

A student's e-signature on the evaluation does not necessarily mean that they agree with the evaluation, only that they have read the evaluation.

PRACTICUM LIAISON ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The foundation and advanced practice liaisons advise students on matters pertaining to practice courses and practicum performance. This role includes acting as a liaison to the practicum site, coordinating the practicum curriculum assignments with the student's educational needs/learning objectives, and reviewing the student's practicum evaluation. Grades for the practice class are given after the completion of each semester's work, and practicum evaluations are incorporated into the final course grade by the practice course instructor. In order to assess students' work in the practicum, the practicum liaison conferences with the practicum instructor at multiple points in the year. At least one of the conferences is an on-site or Zoom visit, usually for the first conference of the year. Other conferences may take place by telephone. An in-person or telephone conference may be called at any time throughout the placement experience. The final practicum evaluation that is completed by the practicum instructor also informs the assessment of students' work in the practicum.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE FALL SEMESTER VISIT

In the fall semester, the student, practicum instructor, and practicum liaison will meet in person to discuss the student's learning and progress. The following is a list of some of the areas that may be addressed:

- Discuss the student's overall progress thus far;
- Review and/or modify the student's learning contract, including learning objectives and goals related to the identified learning needs of the student;
- Review the structure of the practicum instruction process, including expectations of both students and practicum instructors (e.g., the use of process recordings, agendas, and other practicum education teaching tools in supervisory conferences);
- Determine opportunities for integration of practicum learning with the practice class curriculum, including planning for the second semester;
- Answer any questions regarding the syllabus and assignments for the year; and

- Answer any questions regarding the end-of-semester evaluation process.

PREPARING FOR THE AGENCY MEETING

- It will be helpful to have reviewed the course syllabus and to have a copy of the student's learning contract on hand.
- Plan to discuss how supervision is structured, the types and numbers of clients assigned, and any concerns or questions that have emerged.
- Sometime during the second semester, the practicum liaison will call the practicum instructor to review the student's continuing progress and learning needs in the classroom and practicum. The practicum instructor and practicum liaison may determine that an in-person rather than a phone conversation is recommended.
- Placements are as varied as the backgrounds and experiences of students in practicum. It is not possible to create a set of guidelines sufficient to address every circumstance a student might encounter. The school asks that the placement and student work in conjunction to create, reinforce, and discuss effective strategies to anticipate and respond to challenging social work practice experiences.
- SP2 asks that practicum instructors provide specific orientation to agency policies and procedures regarding risk management/safety. We also ask that students request this information from their supervisor should an agency not have a formal set of policies and procedures. Practicum instructors are asked to include discussions around formal and informal procedures in weekly supervision.

SAFETY AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AND AGENCIES

SP2 has established the following guidelines related to safety in practicum. Agencies and students are expected to adhere to these guidelines in order to maintain consistent safety standards for all MSW students.

- Students are not permitted to drive clients in their personal vehicles. If the site has a car/van that students are expected to use for transporting clients, the agency is responsible for verifying that liability insurance covers the student.
- Students should not be left to staff an office or see a client without other staff present in the building.
- If a critical incident occurs while a student is in the placement, the student is asked to report the incident to the Director of MSW Practicum Education.
- Students and supervisors are asked to review the unique safety issues related to their placement experience/agency.
- Students are asked to be aware of their surroundings. They should become familiar with the neighborhood and community in which they are placed. The practicum instructor at the site and the student should review questions about parking, public transportation, and walking routes.
- Use supervision to explore attitudes, assumptions, fears, biases, and stereotypes that may shed light on assumptions about the placement and its environs. Such discussions are essential to the field of social work and your professional development.
- The student and supervisor should identify, familiarize, and discuss agency policies and guidelines related to safety, risk management, and de-escalation.
- Supervisors are asked to identify and arrange for any special training required for managing direct practice interactions. Training areas may include but are not limited to predicting and managing aggressive behavior, interacting with special populations and settings (e.g., adolescents, people with dissociative disorders, prison settings, substance use treatment, hospitals, people experiencing medical/health-related issues, etc.), de-escalation techniques, non-violent self-defense, critical incident protocols, and physical restraint protocols.
- Supervisor and student should discuss office arrangements. The placement of desks, chairs, lighting, etc. can be an important part of safety planning. The physical working space is part of the professional message sent to people who will visit the work environment.
- Students should be aware of their own specific health issues that can be impacted by practicum experiences. These issues should, when appropriate, be brought to the attention of Practicum Education Office staff and practicum instructor so that placements can accommodate individual needs.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR HOME VISITS

Home visits are an integral part of social work practice. SP2 has established the following guidelines in order to maintain consistent safety standards while engaging in home visits.

- SP2 requires that students be accompanied on home visits before being asked to go alone.
- Communication is essential. The practicum instructor or a designated staff person should know where a student is traveling, with whom the student is meeting, when the student is expected to arrive and depart, and the nature of the visit.
- The student and supervisor are asked to identify and review any agency policies/guidelines regarding home visits.
- Students are asked to take a cell phone while conducting home visits. The practicum instructor and/or a designated staff person should have the student's cell phone number.
- Prior to traveling, students should familiarize themselves with routes for driving, walking, or taking public transportation. If driving, students should be aware of where to park.
- Students should be aware of their surroundings and walk or drive with a sense of purpose. They should avoid distractions such as talking on the phone or texting while traveling, as this activity can distract from the ability to remain focused.
- If a building or environment feels unsafe, students are asked to exit immediately.
- Students are not permitted to drive clients in their personal vehicles. If the site has a car/van that students are expected to use for transporting clients, the agency is responsible for verifying that the agency liability insurance covers the student.
- If an incident occurs while a student is in practicum, the student is asked to report the incident to the Director of MSW Practicum Education.
- When necessary, supervisors are expected to provide specialized training/guidance in areas such as universal precautions procedures, de-escalation techniques, and risks associated with social work in this agency setting.

SOCIAL MEDIA – GUIDELINES FOR USE

Social media channels are exciting ways to connect with others, advance the tenets of the social work profession, and share information. We expect that agencies, staff, and agency clients will make frequent use of social media. Given that, we ask that students adhere to social work values and ethical standards as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether using a personal site or an agency site. Common issues related to social work practicum work include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) with clients, colleagues, and practice settings.

SP2 asks that students do not have personal social media communication with clients unless the communication is via the agency's social media site and clients can be guaranteed that they will not have access to any personal student profile data.

Please be cautious about discussing your placement, classroom work, or agency staff experience on your personal social media sites. Do not discuss confidential or private information about clients,

colleagues, or agency practices, even if you are disguising the information. In general, consider the security, privacy, and confidentiality of all communication methods and, when in doubt, seek consultation and supervision.

SP2 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The purpose of the social media policy is to provide guidance on how SP2 students can engage with social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, or other social media or networking sites, and not jeopardize their good standing as graduate students or violate the professional Code of Ethics specifically related to students enrolled in the Master of Social Work program or for students who are professional social workers enrolled in a doctoral program.

As students at the University, we expect you to abide by our Principle of Responsible Conduct (https://oacp.upenn.edu/oacp-principles/). These principles extend to students' use of social media platforms. Therefore, SP2 students are encouraged to carefully consider the possible impact and consequences before posting material about students, colleagues, internships, practicums, or practicum agencies, and not post anything that the University or other professional contacts, including the School of Social Policy & Practice staff and faculty and practicum site could construe as defamatory, threatening, harassing, hateful or humiliating.

As a rule, SP2 students should not post anything on social media that refers to or discloses information about other people, especially clients, without first gaining appropriate consent and carefully considering the possible impact and consequences of doing so.

Do not post any client information, including photographs or videos, on social media without first gaining appropriate consent from the client(s) and, when appropriate, the agency setting. Breaching client confidentiality and/or privacy may: 1) cause harm to the client(s); 2) violate professional ethics (https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics/code-of-ethics/code-of-ethics-english), agency policy or law; and 3) result in professional or legal sanction. Simply removing a person's name does not render that information de-identified.

SP2 students should use personal email addresses, not Penn email addresses, in personal online postings.

*Note that pseudonymous email addresses or online identities can be traced, so their use does not protect you from responsibility or liabilities for your online postings.

Please see the University's Policy on Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources for additional rules related to the use of email and other electronic resources: https://www.isc.upenn.edu/IT/policies.

DISCUSSION POINTS REGARDING USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE PLACEMENT SETTING

It may be helpful for the supervisor and student to explore the following questions at the start of the practicum placement.

1) Does the site have a policy on the use of social media communication tools? If so, review the policy. If not, what expectation does the agency have regarding the use of social media during practicum hours?
2) How much personal information is shared with clients and former clients as well as agency staff and professional colleagues?
3) What are the most common ethical concerns you should be aware of when using social media as a professional social worker?

ADDRESSING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

TERMINATION OF A PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

If a student is terminated from their practicum placement due to problems identified by the agency, the decision to provide another placement will be made at the discretion of the Director of Practicum Education and the student's practice course instructor. The Director of Practicum Education may request consultation with the Practicum Education Committee, which consists of the Director or Associate Director of Practicum Education, the student's practice instructor and practicum liaison, the student's academic advisor, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, and the Practice Sequence Chair. If the student is subsequently terminated from a second practicum placement, the student will not be assigned to a third placement site until a review is conducted by the Practicum Education Committee. Possible outcomes are:

1. The student is re-assigned to a third placement.
2. The student is not assigned to another practicum placement and is withdrawn from the practice class. The student may be given the opportunity to re-take the practice class when it is offered again.
3. If it is determined that the student has violated professional conduct standards, a plan for remediation will be implemented per the procedure specified in the SP2 Student Handbook.
4. The student may be terminated from the MSW program.

The Practicum Education Office is responsible for communicating the Committee's decision to the student.

*Please note that there are other times when the Practicum Education Committee may meet, including to address significant concerns regarding a student's performance in practicum and concerns related to practicum performance that may impact the academic standing of a student.

PROCEDURES FOR CHANGES IN A PLACEMENT DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

In general, placement assignments cannot be changed after August 1st unless there are significant mitigating circumstances. It is the intent of the School that a student will remain in a placement for at least one academic year. Unique circumstances sometimes arise, however, which necessitate a change in placements. The process for reviewing a placement may be initiated by the agency, the student, or SP2.

Please note, unless there are unusual circumstances, if there is a change in a placement, students are expected to end their work with clients, staff, and any other groups in a professional way, including returning to the agency to complete this process according to usual social work practice expectations.

WHEN THE SCHOOL REVIEWS WHETHER A CHANGE IS NECESSARY

- The practicum liaison, along with the practicum instructor and student, will try to resolve any problems that arise before considering a change of placement.
- In the event that they are unresolvable, the student's current practicum liaison will contact the agency, practicum instructor, and the Director of Practicum Education regarding the need to change the student's placement.
- The practicum instructor will be given information regarding the need for a change and will be involved in the termination of the placement if it is necessary.
- Because of the limited time that a student is in placement, changes should be made in a manner that provides the student continuity in the educational process, as well as continuity in services to clients.

WHEN THE AGENCY DETERMINES THAT A CHANGE IS NECESSARY

- The student's practicum instructor should notify the student's current practicum liaison.
- If, for any reason, the practicum instructor is unable to notify the liaison, the MSW Practicum Education Office should be contacted.

WHEN THE STUDENT HAS CONCERNS ABOUT PLACEMENT

- If a student believes there is a valid reason for a change in placement, they may take the initiative to discuss the possible change with the practicum liaison, who is responsible for discussing the matter with the agency and MSW Practicum Education Office. Before any change is considered, the student must meet with the practicum liaison to explore strategies for remaining at the practicum. The practicum liaison will make a visit to the agency to meet with the student and practicum instructor in order to explore strategies for success, as well as to communicate and address concerns.
- If it is determined that a change of placement is necessary, the practicum liaison coordinates the communication with the student.
- The student is expected to carry out all practicum assignments in a professional manner until the placement is officially terminated unless there are unusual circumstances. If such circumstances occur, the practicum liaison is responsible for communicating them to the student's practicum instructor.

PROBLEMS SECURING A PRACTICUM PLACEMENT IN THE MSW PROGRAM

In the event of three unsuccessful practicum placement interviews, the MSW Practicum Education Office will reassess the student's appropriateness for practicum placement. Planning for another placement at that point is at the discretion of the Director of Practicum Education, in consultation with the MSW Faculty Director. Possible outcomes are:

1. Recommend dismissal from the program if an appropriate graduate-level social work placement appears unobtainable.
2. The student will postpone practicum placement and be withdrawn from practice class until the following year (re-entry review required).

3. The student will be recommended to another practicum placement for interview.

NON-ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE POLICIES

While in practicum, SP2 students are expected to comply with University policies and regulations outlined in the Penn Book, the University Code of Student Conduct, the Code of Academic Integrity, and the SP2 Master's Student Handbook. Students are expected to incorporate the highest standard of ethics in every element of their work and behavior and to demonstrate knowledge, skills, maturity, and emotional stability necessary to function as a professional.

Examples of non-academic performance and conduct that will subject the student to disciplinary action or dismissal from the program include:

- Violations of the University Code of Academic Integrity (e.g., plagiarism).
- Behavior determined to be a violation of University or School policies or regulations.
- Behavior determined to be a violation of the profession's ethics (e.g., NASW Code of Ethics in the case of social work).
- Inability to secure, sustain, or perform satisfactorily in a placement.
- Behaviors that do not meet professional expectations and standards, which include generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity, and/or emotional stability for professional practice.
- Behaviors determined to be unprofessional conduct towards colleagues, faculty, or staff.

Standards and procedures for student non-academic performance are particular to specific professional standards or academic programs. Therefore, additional procedures that operationalize these standards and action steps in response to violations can be found in the policies for specific programs.

Alleged violations of the University's Code of Student Conduct, Code of Academic Integrity, and other applicable policies regarding student behavior may be referred to the Center for Community Standards and Accountability (CCSA). The CCSA is responsible for acting on behalf of the University in matters of student discipline. The CCSA deals with alleged instances of academic dishonesty and other student misconduct, in order to determine how best to resolve these allegations consistent with the goals and mission of the University as an educational and intellectual community. For more information on the CCSA, see https://csa.upenn.edu/.

PROCEDURES FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

All MSW students must meet required standards of behavior for professional social work practice. The following standards, along with related skill areas and required behaviors for each, are delineated in the SP2 Student Handbook (https://sp2.upenn.edu/masters-student-handbook/).

As outlined in the SP2 Student Handbook, the Corrective Action Plan is a written document that describes how a MSW student's professional behavior violates one or more Core Professional Performance Standards and identifies corrective action to be taken and time frame for completion. The problematic behaviors must be behaviorally described, using examples.

Procedures:

1. Depending on the nature of the problem(s), the academic advisor or practicum liaison develops the Corrective Action Plan.
2. The Corrective Action Plan is submitted to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs for review and signature. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs returns the signed form to the originating individual (academic advisor or practicum liaison).
3. It is the responsibility of the academic advisor or practicum liaison to closely monitor the student's performance and evaluate the student's compliance at the end of the specified period.
4. If the student satisfactorily improves, the plan is signed by all respective parties at the end of the specified period and forwarded to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs.
5. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs may arrange a consultation with the academic advisor or practicum liaison and student before rendering a recommendation regarding the student's continued matriculation in the program. It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean of Student Affairs to ensure that the student has had access to due process throughout the review process.
6. The MSW Faculty Director reviews the recommendation, makes a determination, and informs the Associate Dean of Student Affairs of the decision.
7. It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean of Student Affairs to ensure that all related documents are made a part of the student's file.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN PROCEDURE

A student may be dismissed from the program without having first engaged in the corrective action plan in the event that:

- The student's behavior poses an imminent danger to clients, other students, faculty/staff, and/or self and others (e.g., abuse of clients and/or colleagues, violence, or threat of violence).
- The student's behavior represents an egregious breach of core performance standards and ethics (e.g., drugs on the premises, theft, bizarre, dishonest, unethical, and/or disruptive behavior).
- The student fails to receive the minimum acceptable grade (B-) in a required course, after the second attempt. In such cases, the policy governing dismissal from the program for failure to meet academic requirements supersedes the corrective action plan procedure.
- The University decides to place the student on an involuntary leave of absence with conditions specified for return to the program, according to the conditions and procedures described in the Pennbook (https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/). The University may place a student on an involuntary leave of absence or require conditions for continued attendance under the following circumstances when the student exhibits behavior resulting from a psychological, psychiatric, or other medical condition that: harms or threatens to harm the health or safety of the student or others; causes or threatens to cause significant property damage; or significantly disrupts the educational and other activities of the University community.

INFORMATION FOR PRACTICUM AGENCIES

CRITERIA FOR BECOMING A PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR

Supervision of students can be a very exciting, challenging, and demanding activity. In most instances, assuming responsibility for students' supervision is an addition to one's ongoing duties. The student's immediate practicum instructor is the key person responsible for the student's learning at the practicum site. Because of this important role, certain criteria are essential in taking on this educational function. These criteria include the following:

- A Master of Social Work degree from an accredited school of social work plus two years of post-master's practice experience.
- An aptitude for conceptualizing and demonstrating practice knowledge and skills and the ability to facilitate the same in students.
- An understanding of the agency's program and service delivery methods.
- A depth of practice knowledge and understanding of a broad range of methods.
- A desire and aptitude for teaching principles and concepts from specific practice tasks.
- An ability to evaluate and influence the delivery of services.
- The support of the agency and/or program administrator.
- Willingness to complete forms that provide SP2 with educational and employment experiences of the practicum instructor.
- Willingness to provide feedback to the student and to complete informal and formal student evaluation processes.

PROCEDURES FOR INITIATING AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

- Contact can be initiated by either SP2 or the agency.
- The agency provides SP2 with descriptive materials regarding the agency's program.
- SP2 provides the agency with the criteria required to become a site.
- The Practicum Education Office makes a site visit and, at this meeting, discusses possible placement options and the alignment of the options with requirements of the foundation, advanced macro, and advanced clinical curriculum, including in relation to the CSWE competencies across system levels.
- The agency and SP2 jointly assess whether or not the MSW Program’s educational requirements will be met at the agency.
- When a decision is reached by the agency and SP2, an email letter of confirmation is sent from SP2 to the agency, and SP2 establishes a line of communication necessary for the academic year’s success.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE BECOMING A PRACTICUM SITE

- If agencies are mandated to provide extensive orientation or training to students, they are asked to notify SP2 when placement negotiations are initiated. An extensive orientation is one that is longer than two placement days and/or one that requires student attendance outside of regularly scheduled placement days.
- Agencies are asked to provide sufficient workspace appropriate for the work the student will be engaged in.
- Agencies are asked to provide email, cell phones, computers, and other work-related tools when/if they are necessary for students to complete their assignments.
- Students are NOT permitted to use their personal cell phones for practicum-related work.
- Students are NOT permitted to drive clients in their personal cars.
- If formal clearances are required before the start of placement, the student should be given ample time to complete the process.

EXPECTATIONS OF PRACTICUM INSTRUCTORS

Supervisors are expected to provide the following learning opportunities:

- Design an educational experience with student input appropriate for a student as a learner.
- Aid the student in identifying learning goals.
- Aid the student in identifying what knowledge the student is seeking.
- Schedule and attend weekly supervision conferences with students.
- Make use of and hold students accountable for creating and providing supervision agendas in advance of weekly supervision meetings.
- Make use of and hold students accountable for completing process recordings throughout the academic year.
- Assist the student with integration of classroom learning and practicum experiences.
- Provide the student with information and material regarding the agency programs and help the student examine the program objectively and critically.
- Maintain an open dialogue regarding progress during supervision meetings.
- In conjunction with the student, reflect on and provide feedback regarding the student's professional growth.
- Help the student to identify learning and progress related to primary practicum assignments.
- Share in the communication process with the practicum liaison and practice course instructor.
- Collaborate each semester with the student to discuss and then complete the practicum evaluation.
- Arrange for agency space and supports for the student.

BUDGETING YOUR TIME AS A PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR WITH MSW STUDENTS

Practicum arrangements consist of a workload that, in quality and quantity, reflects the agency's work/mission and meets a student's educational needs. It is estimated that a practicum instructor should budget ½ day per week per student.

The following are expectations for which practicum instructors should budget ample time:

- Weekly supervision (1-1 ½ hours per week).
- Time to read, analyze, and comment on the student's process recordings, case notes, and any other documentation required by the agency.
- Time for writing end-of-semester evaluations of the student's work.
- Time for in-person and phone conferences with the practicum liaison and student.
- Time for attendance at SP2's regularly scheduled meetings, events, and optional CEU workshops offered to practicum instructors.
- For first-time practicum instructors, enrollment in SWRK 507, "Theory and Practice in MSW Student Supervision Seminar," is required.

Please also note that additional staff may be asked to support the student's learning experience in such areas as information technology, human resources, and administrative support.

SWRK507: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN MSW STUDENT SUPERVISION SEMINAR

The SWRK507 Seminar, commonly known as the Seminar in Field Instruction or SIFI, is required for all new practicum instructors in order to orient them to the MSW Program's educational philosophy and to enhance their understanding of this collaborative process on behalf of student learning. The seminar must be taken concurrently with a student's placement at the agency. New supervisors meet six times in the fall semester for this seminar.

The seminar for practicum instructors provides an overview of the learning experienced by most MSW students. Practicum instructors are encouraged to identify their particular needs, to design both their own and their student's learning activities, and to provide support to their students. Through assigned readings, course content, and course participation, supervisors learn to gauge changes in their students' professional development. The seminar assists practicum instructors with addressing challenges in teaching situations with students, especially as students move through new experiences, where it is essential to enhance student confidence and help students assume responsibility for their learning.

Another theme of the seminar is student performance evaluation. Practicum instructors are encouraged to view evaluation as a continuous and dynamic process focused on students' learning goals, needs, and mutually agreed-upon practicum objectives as a basis for the end-of-semester written evaluations.

ORIENTATION OF STUDENTS TO THE AGENCY

All students, regardless of the amount of experience they have had, will need an orientation to the practicum agency. This orientation can be done on an individual or group basis. The purpose of this orientation is to help the student learn about the agency's programs, policies, and procedures.

A significant part of this orientation should be learning by doing– by providing services. The student should be given an authentic piece of work that is appropriate to carry out within the first week in the agency. It is suggested that students be given an assignment on the first day in the agency. This piece of work can be in the form of an individual case and related case notes, a group and related narrative for that particular group, a committee meeting accompanied by minutes of the committee meeting, etc. This first assignment represents a means for the practicum instructor to assess the student's understanding of the experience and to help the student become a part of the agency.

Other areas that may be addressed during orientation include:

- The agency's responsibility in the student's learning process;
- The student's responsibility in the learning process;
- An overview of the specific programs and policies relevant to students;
- Discussion of general information about the organizational structure of the agency;
- Discussion of the program's services, populations served, and potential roles and contributions of the student; and
- Discussion of the agency's policies and procedures regarding confidentiality, mandated reporting, crisis response, safety protocols, equity and inclusion, workplace harassment, social media use, and other relevant issues in the setting.

If agencies are mandated to provide extensive orientation or training with students, they are asked to notify the school when placement negotiations are initiated. An extensive orientation is one that is longer than two days of placement days and/or one that requires student attendance outside of regularly scheduled placement days.

Questions to consider when planning an orientation:

- Is completion of training mandatory in order for the student to begin work?
- Does the orientation coincide with the first week of practicum for students?
- Can the student complete this training during the hours allotted in practicum? If not, will the student be required to attend training prior to beginning practicum?
- Are risk management and safety guidelines significant components of orientation?

OPERATIONAL/EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS OF THE AGENCY

Students are expected to be provided with the following:

- Materials necessary to complete work, such as access to agency records, computer, phone, and office supplies. We ask that students not be asked to use their personal phones for agency-related duties, especially those related to contact with clients.
    - SP2 is aware that, at times, a student will use their own electronic equipment for placement work. SP2 asks that no confidential contact information be accessible

on a student's personal electronic records, such as call logs, billing logs, contact lists, or client documentation. Every effort must be made to ensure that client and student confidentiality are maintained.

- Use of a desk, office space, storage for materials, copier, and access to private space for interviewing clients, etc.
- Reimbursement for travel while carrying out the agency's function, e.g., bus, subway, train, and mileage for car usage.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM STUDENTS

Practicum instructors and agencies can expect students to:

- Promptly and accurately report absences from the agency.
- Secure clearance from practicum instructors for material to be presented in class as representative of the agency's purpose, policies, and procedures.
- Prepare for supervisory conferences, including submitting an agenda in advance.
- Seek clarity in understanding work assignments.
- Demonstrate a commitment to offering services within the agency structure.
- Complete documentation consistent with agency procedures.
- Develop and submit process recordings to the practicum instructor for learning purposes.
- Offer constructive suggestions for agency service improvement.
- Demonstrate professional conduct as a representative of the agency in carrying out agency business.
- Adhere to agency rules and regulations with reference to practice with clients and other practicum activities.
- Bring any difficulties that the student is encountering to the attention of the practicum liaison.
- Demonstrate a willingness to receive constructive feedback regarding practice skills and performance during supervision.
- Uphold SP2 policy that students are not permitted to transport clients in their own vehicles, to use their own phones for agency-related activities, particularly those involving contact with clients, or to use their own computers for agency-related activities, especially for the use and storage of any confidential information.

WHAT PRACTICUM INSTRUCTORS CAN EXPECT FROM SP2, PRACTICE COURSE INSTRUCTORS, AND PRACTICUM LIAISONS

Practicum instructors can expect SP2, practice course instructors, and practicum liaisons to:

- Provide reliable and open communication.
- Provide advance notice of meetings involving the practicum instructor.
- Explain expectations about the supervisory role in relation to the student's educational process.

- Provide background information related to the student prior to the beginning of the placement.
- Provide prompt responses when practicum instructors request communication about issues pertaining to practicum, students, or other matters.

WHEN TO REACH OUT TO A LIAISON

Each student's practicum liaison will reach out to the practicum instructor shortly after each semester begins. A visit will be scheduled in the fall semester; a phone conversation will be scheduled in the spring semester. Other visits or conversations are scheduled on an as-needed basis.

Practicum instructors are asked to communicate with the practicum liaison as soon as concerns emerge. While some concerns can wait for conversation at a regularly scheduled visit or phone conversation, others cannot. We ask that practicum instructors reach out as soon as possible regarding concerns or other issues they would like to discuss; timely communication ensures that students have ample opportunities to grow and learn from the follow-up.

If circumstances warrant additional individual meetings or meetings with the practicum instructor, the practicum liaison, and the student, they can be arranged at any point during the year at the request of the practicum instructor, practicum liaison, practice course instructor, and/or the student.

EVALUATION FOR INCOMPLETE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCES

Occasionally, it is necessary for a student's placement to be changed during the semester. Practicum instructors are requested to evaluate the student's work prior to departure. A written assessment of the student's practice status and progress is to be forwarded to the student's current practicum liaison and the Director of MSW Practicum Education.

Occasionally, a practicum instructor leaves the agency prior to the end of a student's practicum. SP2 requests that, prior to leaving the agency, the practicum instructor complete an up-to-date assessment of the student's work that will be included in the end-of-semester evaluation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN DOES PLACEMENT BEGIN AND END?

Practicum dates correspond to the course of study in which a student has enrolled. Most students begin in September. Part-time and advanced standing students begin and end their placement at different times throughout the year.

If you are a full-time two-year student, you will begin your placement in September and end at the end of the spring semester. This will be your schedule for both years that you are at SP2.

If you are an advanced standing student, you will begin your placement the first week of July and end at the end of the spring semester.

If you are a part-time three-year student, you have two different start dates for your placement:

1) Your Foundation placement begins in September of your second year in the program, alongside the full-time two-year students. In order to complete the required number of hours, your placement will end in the last week of June.

2) To give you ample time to complete the required hours, your Advanced placement begins the last week of July or the first week of August of your third year in the program (the specific date is shared in that year's academic calendar). The placement ends at the close of the spring semester so that you can graduate with your cohort.

Please refer to the SP2 academic calendar for specific dates and other pertinent information.

CAN I CHOOSE MY PLACEMENT?

Students do not arrange their own placements. Your practicum placement is a significant part of your academic record and, as such, should originate from SP2's Practicum Education Office. Practicum staff work in conjunction with practice faculty, practicum liaisons, and students to ensure that practicum experiences will support academic coursework and enhance professional growth.

For the Foundation Year (1st year) and Advanced Standing students, the Practicum Education Office reviews incoming students' background, experience, and areas of interest to match students with agencies. Staff members use this information to make thoughtful decisions regarding where to place students. Students are notified of their placement by the Practicum Education Office.

Advanced Year (2nd year) students begin the process of securing their placement in January of their Foundation Year (1st year). This group of students meets in-person with their practicum liaison in consultation with the Practicum Education Office to choose agencies and areas of practice for their Advanced Year placement. The Practicum Education Office provides a wide selection of placement options to consider.

CAN I DO MY PRACTICUM WHERE I WORK?

Students in all program options are invited to share their interest in pursuing a placement at their employment site with the MSW Practicum Education Office. Students interested in continuing in an approved employment-based placement or students who become unemployed in an organization where practicum education has co-occurred with employment should contact the Practicum Education Office for guidance. Policies pertaining to employment-based placements are explained to students and practicum personnel during the practicum planning period.

For an employment site to be a successful placement, the following are required:

- You must have been employed for at least 6 months and have passed the probationary period.
- You must have a new supervisor for the hours dedicated to your placement, to distinguish practicum education supervision from employment supervision.
- You must be assigned to a new area of practice and new responsibilities in your agency for the hours dedicated to your placement, to distinguish practicum learning from employment.
- Practicum assignments must be directly linked to the nine social work competencies and level of practice (generalist/foundation year or specialized clinical or specialized macro year).
- If a student becomes unemployed from the organization where practicum education has co-occurred, the MSW Practicum Education Office will meet with the student to review the circumstances and determine the next steps for placement at the organization, placement at another organization, or, in situations involving student performance, further consultation according to MSW Practicum Education policies related to student performance.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS THAT MAY IMPACT MY CHOICE OF A PLACEMENT SITE?

Some agencies require flexible work hours and/or days. FBI, Criminal Background, Child Abuse, and/or other clearances may be required. Occasionally a car for travel is required. Some agencies state that specific language skills are beneficial for a successful placement experience.

WHAT DAYS OF THE WEEK AM I IN PLACEMENT?

The schedule depends on what year, program, and time of year you are in practicum. It is expected that a full day of practicum will involve 8 hours. The following outlines the days for each course of study:

Full-Time Foundation (1st year)
Monday, Thursday, Friday during fall and spring semesters

Full-Time Advanced (2nd year)
Monday, Tuesday, Friday during fall and spring semesters

Advanced Standing
Monday, Wednesday, Friday during July and August

Monday, Tuesday, Friday during fall and spring semesters

Part-Time Foundation (1st year placement, which begins the second year of the MSW Program)
Students complete 16 hours each week; one full day (8 hours) is completed during traditional business hours as defined by the agency. The remaining hours can be completed during evenings or weekends with appropriate supervision.

Students complete practicum in the fall and spring semesters and are expected to continue in practicum 16 hours per week through the end of June.

Part-Time Advanced (2nd year placement, which begins the third year of the MSW Program)
Beginning in early August, students complete 16 hours each week; one full day (8 hours) is completed during traditional business hours as defined by the agency. The remaining hours can be completed during evenings or weekends with appropriate supervision.

Students continue with practicum in the fall and spring semesters and are expected to continue in practicum 16 hours per week through the end of the spring semester.

IF I AM A PART-TIME STUDENT, HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK WILL I NEED TO COMMIT TO PRACTICUM PLACEMENT?

Part-time students complete 16 hours per week in their practicum placements. In the Foundation Year, part-time students are in practicum from September through June. In the Advanced Year, part-time students complete their hours from August through the end of the spring semester. Throughout both years, at least 8 of the 16 hours must be completed during the same day each week according to traditional business hours.

WILL I RECEIVE A GRADE FOR PLACEMENT?

Students will receive a written evaluation of their performance in their placement each semester of both years. Each student will receive a performance evaluation completed by their practicum site instructor toward the end of each semester. The evaluation aligns with the competencies required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Practicum performance is evaluated in terms of Pass, Marginal Pass, or Fail. This practicum evaluation is factored into grades for the social work practice courses: SWRK 6040, SWRK 6140, SWRK 7040, SWRK 7140, SWRK 7080, and SWRK 7180.

Students also complete a Learning Contract with their practicum instructor at the start of each semester. The Learning Contract focuses on the students' learning goals and aligns with the practice course objectives and the CSWE competencies.

IF I DO NOT HAVE A CAR, HOW WILL I BE ASSIGNED TO A SITE?

The Practicum Education Office takes into consideration whether students have their own car or will require the use of public transportation to their agency. Students who do not have a car are expected to utilize public transportation. The Practicum Education Office considers a commute of up to 60 minutes each way by any form of transportation to be appropriate.

IF I AM PLANNING TO LIVE OUTSIDE OF PENNSYLVANIA AND COMMUTE TO CLASSES, CAN I BE PLACED IN AN AGENCY NEAR MY RESIDENCE?

The MSW Program at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice is based in Philadelphia. The Practicum Education Office offers opportunities for placements in the Greater Philadelphia Tri-State Region. This area includes parts of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. The Practicum Education Office cannot guarantee that a placement outside of this area can be secured.

WILL I GET TO INTERVIEW AT MY PRACTICUM PLACEMENT?

It is expected that students will interview at their sites before they are accepted for placement. Some agencies are agreeable to phone or video interviews for students who are unable to interview in person due to geographical distance. Students are expected to prepare for these interviews in the same manner as a job interview. The Practicum Education Office is available by request to support students in preparation.

DOES MY PRACTICUM SITE INSTRUCTOR HAVE TO HOLD AN MSW DEGREE?

All first-year Foundation placements must include supervision by someone who has an MSW degree. There are a limited number of circumstances in the foundation year where SP2 provides contracted MSW supervision. In the second year, SP2 offers an Integrative Seminar for students who are supervised by a supervisor who does not hold an MSW degree. No licensure is required for MSW supervision. Supervisors without an MSW must hold a master's degree in a related field.

IS THERE A DRESS CODE FOR PRACTICUM?

Students should plan to adhere to the placement agency's policy regarding dress code. We recommend that students speak directly to their agency practicum instructor about this topic. The practicum liaison, practice course instructor, and the Practicum Education Office are available for consultation on this topic.

ARE STUDENTS INSURED IN PRACTICUM?

The University carries insurance for MSW interns. If agencies require documentation from SP2, they should notify the MSW Practicum Education Office.

WHAT IS SONIA?

SP2 uses a platform called Sonia that provides online assessment tools and tracks all information related to placement. This online system allows SP2 to monitor practicum learning. Throughout the placement process, the Practicum Education Office will use Sonia to communicate, track, update, assess, and confirm all information related to a student's placement.

HOW DO STUDENTS AND FACULTY ACCESS SONIA ONLINE?

Students and practicum site instructors use the online Sonia system to view and complete practicum evaluations in the MSW Program.

Practicum site instructors will receive emails from the Practicum Education Office outlining the process for completing the online evaluation for their student(s).

SP2 students also receive instructions from the Practicum Education Office that outline the directions, process, and timeline for completing Sonia items.

HOW CAN I GET TECHNICAL SUPPORT WITH SONIA?

If you have technical difficulties or questions regarding the Sonia system, please email soniasupport@sp2.upenn.edu for assistance.