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The curriculum of the Social Work Program is designed in two key phases in accordance with the 2015 EPAS Guidelines of CSWE. The first phase is offered as generalist practice that provides a strong foundation for student knowledge, values, skills, and a holistic look at the scope of the social work profession. In this phase, students are exposed to a beginning level of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive-affective processes through their educational classes and through their experiences in generalist field practicum. In describing students' first year in the MSW Program, the terms "generalist" and "foundation" will be used interchangeably in the MSW Field Handbook. The second key phase of the MSW curriculum is labeled as the specialized practice or concentration year practice in which students are exposed to and expected to demonstrate advanced knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive-affective processes in both their educational classes and in their specialized field practicum. In describing students' second or advanced year in the MSW Program, the terms "specialized" and "concentration" will be used interchangeably in the MSW Field Handbook.

### **MSW Program Competencies**

In line with the standards and policies of CSWE, we identified 9 generalist curriculum competencies and advanced practice in the specialized competencies that addressed the community, profession, the MSW Program, and program renewal. In articulating our 9 competencies, we no longer propose that students can master the generalist competencies

8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level

## **SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF FIELD PRACTICUM**

### **Overall Purpose**

Since the beginning of the social work profession in the late 1800's, social work education has included academic class work as well as actual practice experience in social service agencies. Field education is the signature pedagogy of Social Work. The attempt to forge a strong link between theory and practice remains a cornerstone of social work professional education. Through the Field Practicum, graduate students are provided with significant integrative experiences in preparation for their professional careers. The supervised practice experience or practicum is referred to in many differ

**Hours Required for Generalist Practicum:**

**Face-to-Face (On-Campus) Cohort**

Students are required to complete a total of 460 Generalist Practicum Hours over Fall and Spring semesters of their first year. The table below shows the associated courses and activities.

**Total Required Generalist Practicum Hours = 460 hours**

**Web Hybrid and Part-Time On-Campus Cohort**

Students are required to complete a total of 460 Generalist Practicum Hours over Fall and Spring semesters of their second year. The table below shows the associated courses and activities.

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>Fall Semester SOWK 6800</b>	<b>Spring Semester SOWK 6900</b>
Practicum Seminar	2 hrs/Weekend Session X 5 Weekend Sessions = 10 hours	2 hrs/Weekend Session X 5 Weekend Sessions = 10 hours

## **II. Specialized/Concentration Practicum**

The second segment of the practicum is conceptualized as a Concentration practicum in which students focus on the integration of theory and practice skills in Advanced Generalist Practice. Concentration practicum consists of two consecutive semesters



## **SECTION III: APPLYING FOR YOUR PRACTICUM**

### **Applying for Generalist Practicum**

Full-time students must complete a Generalist Practicum Application by the beginning of fall semester. Part-time/Web Based students must complete the Practicum Application by

## **Generalist Practicum Field Instructor**

1. Students will be assigned to Generalist Practicum agencies. The Office of Field Instruction will send the Field Instructor a copy of the student's Generalist Practicum Application and resume. The student will be instructed to contact the Field Instructor regarding a Confirmation Interview to determine the appropriateness of the placement.
2. Depending on the outcome of the interview, the Field Instructor may accept or not accept the student for placement. It is appropriate for the Field Instructor to let the student know of the outcome at the time of the interview, or if preferred, contact the Field Director (229) 249-4864 who will convey the decision to the student. At the time of the interview, it is helpful to discuss hour expectations, times at which the student must be in practicum, any prerequisite information required for starting at the agency, etc., in order to assess the feasibility of the placement. It is also helpful to determine the exact start-up date for the student to begin the practicum.
3. Each student will be assigned to a Practicum Seminar Instructor as well as a seminar group. The students will remain with that Practicum Seminar Instructor/group for the entire Generalist Practicum Sequence. The Practicum Seminar Instructor will act as your Faculty Liaison and will assist you with any issues that arise regarding the placement. Assignments for each course are presented in the syllabi. The first semester of practicum is guided by

6. Practicum Seminar Instructors will be asked to conduct at least 2 visits to the placement agency during the Generalist Practicum sequence. For sites that are geographically distant (more than 2 hours away) instructors have the option of conducting one of the visits via telephone conference call or distance learning. For all sites, regular contact by telephone and e-mail are essential for educational monitoring. At the beginning of each practicum, practicum seminar instructors will secure the e-mail addresses of students enrolled in their practicum and will construct an e-mail listserv of all foundation students and field instructors in order to communicate regularly with practicum participants.
7. To ensure educational monitoring, field instructors will be required to attend field instructional training meetings. Additionally, as field instructors generally are on campus for these meetings, meetings can be arranged among the field instructors, practicum seminar instructors and students should problems or concerns arise in a particular placement.

### **Applying for Specialized/Concentration Placement**

1. Orientation for all students applying for Concentration Practicum will be held in January of each year. Specific instructions for applying for Concentration Placements will be explained at that time. Students applying for concentration practicum must have completed Foundation coursework.
2. Complete a brief résumé of your educational experience, work/volunteer experience, and any previous practicum experiences. The résumé will accompany your Practicum Application. Also, complete the Summary of Diversity of Generalist Practicum Experiences included in your application. Your field instructor and practicum seminar instructor will also sign this form. All students will also need to complete the Authorization of Release and Acknowledge of Risk forms in the Field Handbook.
3. Students are encouraged to talk with the Director of Field Instruction regarding information about agencies.
4. Once a student has decided on his or her choices of a Concentration Practicum site, students will identify their first, second and third choice of practicum sites. This information is to be identified on the Concentration Practicum Application in the appropriate space. Once the application is complete, it must be c20-3(on)-592stc with thei

7. Instructions for setting up placement interviews, which will occur during the remainder of Spring Semester, will be included in the memo.
8. You will advise Director of Field of the outcome of the placement interview. If the recommended practicum site is **not** confirmed, you will advise the Director of Field Instruction and request another recommended site.
9. It is expected that students present themselves professionally and communicate clearly during placement interviews. It is likewise expected that students demonstrate the social and interviewing skills necessary to be able to secure a placement through the interview process. No more than (3) agency assignments will be given to a student in order to secure a placement.

**Note:** A student must first decline a placement before the field education faculty will work on a new placement. There is no guarantee that an appropriate new placement will be available. This process may delay practicum start date, require students to make up lost hours, and affect the program of study sequence.

10. When placements are confirmed, the student will notify the Field Office.
11. Advance standing students who begin the MSW Program during the Summer Semester will go through a brief placement process during the months of May and June, which will be an abbreviated form of the regular placement process. Students will submit a Concentration Practicum Application, and a brief resume. Completed applications will be turned in to the Field Office.

The Director of Field Instruction will assign students to placement based on their selection

3. A Mid-Term and Final Grade Form will be provided by the Field Director and available via the InPlace Portal from Fall 2021. Field Instructors will be asked to complete both Grade Forms each semester. (The Mid-Term Grade Form is particularly important because of the student's need for performance feedback early in the practicum. Any problems, concerns or marginal performance noted can be identified on the Corrective Action Plan found in the Field Handbook. The grading process for all Practica is specified under Practicum Policies, Number 6. Please read this material carefully. Grade Forms may be given to the Liaison or mailed directly to the Liaison or the Field Office.
4. Please call your Faculty Liaison with concerns or questions that arise during the semester.
5. The exact format of student presentation of materials in supervision is left to the discretion of the field instructor; however, students will be required to complete four process recordings throughout the year. The due dates for these recordings can be found in the Concentration Field Academic Calendar and the Concentration Syllabi. The decision to require additional Triadic Process Recordings is left to the discretion of the field instructor and/or faculty liaison. In addition, students will be required to complete student logs and turn them in monthly. The due dates for these student logs are negotiated with Faculty Liaison and Field Instructor. The Process Recordings and the Student Logs will be a part of the evaluation process and must be turned in to the faculty liaison and field instructor. Also included in the Handbook are Student Journals and Case Studies. The decision to use these methods is left to the discretion of the field instructor/faculty liaison.
6. During the student's final semester, the field instructor and the student will be asked to evaluate the practicum experience using the packet of Evaluation Forms included in the Evaluation Section of the Field Handbook.

## **SECTION IV: FIELD INSTRUCTION ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Field Instruction program requires different functions of the Director of Field Instruction, Field Instructor (agency staff), Task Supervisor (agency staff), Faculty Liaison, Educational Advisor, and student. Thus, personnel from the VSU Field Education Program and designated personnel from community partner agencies will support your learning during your practicum.

**Director Of Field Instruction/Office of Field Instruction:** The Office of Field Instruction, and specifically the Director of Field Instruction, is responsible for the total field instruction program of the Social Work Program. This includes:

1. Evaluation and maintenance of a bank of agency resou



**B. Teaching Role:**

1. Throughout the internship, the Faculty Liaison provides learning experiences (including Process Recordings and journals) and participates in the evaluation of the learning outcomes. It is expected that the Faculty Liaison will make regularly scheduled visits to the agency during each semester of the field experience for the purpose of developing an appropriate Learning Contract between the student, agency and University; monitoring the progress of the student; providing educational supports to the student and Field Instructor; troubleshooting any administrative or policy issues that may arise between the agency and University; receiving input from agencies about curriculum and practicum policy and content; identifying agency needs for consultation or training; planning for future practica and evaluating the student's learning outcomes related to the Practicum Competencies.

**Generalist Practicum:** Practicum Seminar Instructors will conduct at least 1-2 visits per semester to each placement agency during the Generalist Practicum sequence. For



2. The Faculty Liaison is responsible for assigning the academic grade for every practicum student according to the specifications of the practicum syllabi and grading criteria. Field Instructors will recommend both a Mid-Term grade and a Final semester grade

**Student:** Practicum courses are restricted to students enrolled in the Master of Social Work program and to those who have completed the application process. To plan for the practicum, the student is responsible for completing the Practicum Application, to be accompanied by a current résumé.

The student is responsible for follow through on utilization of practica information sources provided by the School — for example: discussions with Faculty Liaisons who are assigned to specific practicum sites, contact with former or current students placed in agencies of interest and information available through the Office of Field Instruction. The student is responsible for conveying sufficient information to her/his Advisor and the Field Office about personal needs, goals, interests, constraints and or special circumstances regarding placement site. Once assigned to a specific agency, a student is responsible for arranging and participating in an interview with the Field Instructor to assure a goodness of fit between the student and the agency. In the event that the interview raises serious questions

videotaped), evaluation summaries, etc., from the agency without the explicit permission of the Field Instructor.

*A student's failure to adhere to the expected standards for professional, ethical conduct will be considered grounds for termination of practicum, a failing grade in practicum, and withdrawal of the student from the MSW program.*

2. **Professional Liability and Health Insurance:** Prior to the beginning

practicum. Students may not complete any practicum experience prior to the end of a semester!

**Night and Weekend Placements (Non-Traditional Placements):** There are few sites that offer all evening and/or weekend hours. Very few offer any evening or weekend hours at all. Under no circumstance will the educational competencies of the curriculum be compromised for a non-traditional placement. The field instructor must be available on-site for at least 8 hours per week for foundation students and 12 hours per week for concentration students. The field office cannot guarantee that a student will have evening and/or weekend hours as part of their field placements. The majority of available agencies provide client services during the typical workweek of Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Of utmost importance is the need for students to be in agencies when there are maximum opportunities for interaction with other professional staff to facilitate student participation in professional decision-making and collaborative work.

Students must present availability and clarify agency expectations for their practicum hours at the time of the ini

beginning of the Concentration Practicum. For either practica, evidence to the contrary of the above expectations—given appropriate efforts by the Field Instructor and Liaison to assist the student to remedy these deficits—will constitute grounds for the agency’s withdrawal of the practicum for the student and for the initiation of an Academic Review of the student’s standing in the MSW program and course of study.

- b. **Student failure to meet the expected standards for ethical professional practice** as noted above in Item 1, Professional Ethics.
- c. **The agency’s failure to provide the expected learning experiences and/or appropriate supervision** or to meet any of the other expectations identified in the Memorandum of Understanding between the agency and the University. (See Memorandum of Understanding).
- d. **Unexpected events in the life of the student or in the agency** that jeopardize the quality of the student’s learning experience.
- e. **“Mismatch” between the Field Instructor and/or agency and the student.** Sometimes, differences in learning or interpersonal styles emerge as the student and Field Instructor begin to work together rendering the practicum less than optimally productive for a student’s learning. Such circumstances are rare, but they may generate recommendations for a change in the practicum arrangements.
- f. **Requests for practicum termination or substantive changes that relate to job offers or job changes will not be considered as a sufficient reason for termination of an academic practicum.** Both Foundation (SOWK 6600 and SOWK 6700) and Concentration (SOWK 7611 and SOWK 7612) Practicum consists of two consecutive academic courses. This means that the student must be placed in one agency (i.e. location, settings, field instructor, etc.) for two academic semesters.

**In addition, students are asked to consider carefully their financial needs prior to placement, to speak with the Field Director about financial concerns, to recognize that acceptance of an internship offer constitutes a commitment to the agency, and to make job changes prior to the beginning of a practicum sequence. Students working full-time should expect to significantly reduce or discontinue their work commitments to accommodate the demands of the two required practica. The competing demands of practicum, academic classes, and full-time employment tend to detract from the overall learning experience of field education. Therefore, it is imperative that students adjust their schedules in order to focus on their field learning experiences.**

- g. **Termination of practicum by student.** Students may not terminate a practicum without formal, **PRIOR** approval of their facult 115.34tETQ EMF1 12 Tf(>169044400rhei511(

the auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding between the practicum agency and the university, termination of an agreed-upon practicum involves dissolving an existing agreement between the agency and university personnel. A student cannot implement this decision.

Students who are experiencing practicum problems that they believe are sufficiently severe as to cause them to consider terminating the practicum **MUST** discuss their concerns with their field instructor or their faculty liaison and the Director of Field Education so that appropriate problem-solving steps may be initiated.

If a student terminates a practicum without prior approval or knowledge of the faculty liaison or field director, the student may not be placed in another practicum until fall of the following academic year. Additionally, a Field Staffing with the Student Development Committee or a Special Advisement will be convened by the Director of Field Education because of the policy violation. Students may be assigned to repeat practicum hours or may be given additional learning competencies depending on the recommendations by the Special Advisement Committee.

- h. **Termination of student by agency or Director of Field Instruction.** Students who are terminated by the agency or Director of Field Instruction based on student failure to meet the expected standards for ethical professional practice may not be placed in another practicum until fall of the following academic year. Additionally, the Director of Field Instruction will convene a Field Staffing or a Special Advisement due to the policy violation. Students may be assigned to repeat practicum hours or may be given additional learning competencies, depending on recommendations by the Special Advisement Committee.

Students who are experiencing practicum problems they believe to be sufficiently severe as to cause them to consider terminating the practicum **MUST** discuss their concerns with their field instructor or their faculty liaison, and the Director of Field Education so that appropriate problem-solving steps may be developed.

Any of the circumstances cited above are not necessarily anyone's fault. In some instances, termination of the practicum reflects the fact that the practicum is highly successful in helping the student discover that social work is not what was expected and is not appropriate for her/him.



- 4) The Director will set a time for the review and determine who should be present and any other concerns.
  - 5) All participants are notified. The student will be notified by the Educational Advisor and must respond to the Advisor within two working days.
  - 6) Academic Review/Special Advising are mandatory and students are required to attend at the appointed time.
  - 7) The Advisor and student must meet prior to the advisement meeting in order to discuss the student's situation in detail.
  - 8) The student is informed in writing of the reason(s) for a called meeting and may choose to invite an advocate to the meeting.
  - 9) A meeting is held during which all participants are able to present their views.
  - 10) A final decision will be made by the Director based on the feedback and recommendations by the participants.
6. **Practicum Performance Evaluation:** Students enrolled in all Practicum courses will be given a Mid-Term evaluation and a Final Grade to be issued at the end of each semester. Grades will be recommended by the Field Instructor and will be issued by the Faculty Liaison or practicum seminar instructor. Faculty Liaison/practicum seminar instructor will have final discretion on assigning the final grade. Copies of both the Mid-Term Form and Final Grade Forms can be found in the Evaluation Section of the Field Handbook. For the Mid-Term evaluation, field instructors and students will meet together to evaluate the student's practicum performance. If the student is performing in a satisfactory way, the field instructor will complete the Mid-Term Grade Form, will provide feedback to the faculty liaison, and will forward the form to the liaison or to the Field Office.
- If the student is performing in a marginal or unsatisfactory way, a conference should be scheduled with the Field Instructor, the student and the faculty liaison in attendance. This conference is particularly important in providing timely feedback to the student regarding any areas of marginal or unsatisfactory practicum performance. The focus of the conference is development of a corrective action plan designed to decrease or resolve the student's problems in practicum (refer to Corrective Action Plan policy and procedures). It is anticipated that problems should lessen or be resolved by the end of the academic semester. Should the student's practicum problems increase or worsen, the faculty liaison should contact the field director to engage in further problem solving. Possible problem-solving strategies include a referral for Academic Review/Special Advisement (procedures that are outlined in the Student Handbook.)
7. **Grade of Incomplete/Academic Probation:** Students will not be allowed to carry a grade of Incomplete or "I" for social work courses into t





Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving are observed by Valdosta State University and students are expected to be absent from practicum on those days. In addition, students may take any holidays observed by the agency without penalty **as long as** the student has verified that the clock-hour requirements of the practicum are not compromised.

It is understood that occasional illness or other emergencies may necessitate absence from the practicum. Students are expected to work out these arrangements with the Field Instructor; this can usually be accomplished by using compensatory time that most students accrue through working extra hours (e.g., for evening hours or meetings).

If the absence is more than a few days, the Faculty Liaison should be notified. In no instance will arrangements be approved that result in a practicum deficit in the required total clock hours or the specified time-span. In addition to their regularly scheduled class sessions, students may be absent from practicum in order to register and to be present at a Final Examination class session, which is often scheduled (by the University) at a time different from the regularly scheduled class time. Students are expected to inform their Field Instructors of these dates as soon as possible and to make appropriate plans for their professional responsibilities. Occasionally, a class instructor will make special plans for an activity that is not on a regularly scheduled class day; in that case, the student and Field Instructor must assess whether the student can be absent from practicum at that time, and appropriate plans must be made by the student for professional attention to agency responsibilities.

- 10. Student Continuation in the Agency and/or With Clients of The Agency After the End of the Placement:** Occasionally, agencies seek to employ a student with whom they have worked with in practicum. Should that situation arise while the student is still in the practicum, the student and the Field Instructor must bring that to the attention of the Social Work Program by discussing those arrangements with the Faculty Liaison and Director of Field Education. In such instances, the Faculty Liaison will coordinate with the Social Work Program Director and the Student Services Director to ensure that the student's placement is continued in a way that meets the requirements of the program. (se)3(-)179(while



15.

**Note:** A student must first decline a placement before the field education faculty will work on a new placement. There is no guarantee that an appropriate new placement will be available. This process may delay practicum start date, require students to make up lost hours, and affect the program of study sequence.

The responsibility for approving and selecting agencies and initiating placement arrangements rests with the Field Education Office. **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO CONTACT AGENCIES WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE FIELD OFFICE FACULTY.** Field education faculty assesses the suitability of agencies as student training sites and approves those that meet the Social Work Program's requirements. Only Social Work Program - approved sites will be used for field education.

20. **Academic Dishonesty:** Policies regarding academic honesty and plagiarism extend to student field practicum representations of interaction with clients, field instructors, and agency staff. Students who fabricate interactions or required attendance will receive an "F" in the practicum course. Please refer to policies specified in the *VSU Graduate Catalog*, *Social Work Program Student Handbook*, *the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers* and *the VSU Student Code of Conduct*.

### **Procedures, Guidelines and Criteria for Approval of Field Instruction Agencies**

The Social Work Program accepts requests from agency staff and faculty to consider new agencies as potential field instruction sites. The process of approving new agencies, training field instructors, and monitoring is quite time consuming for faculty. Therefore, the following procedures for responding to these inquiries have evolved from administrative and faculty decisions over the years.

1. The Field Director will receive all requests for approval of practicum agencies.
2. The first criterion considered is whether the agency is in a geographic location currently utilized by the Social Work Program and where a faculty liaison is already assigned.
3. A decision as to whether the learning experiences provided by that agency are appropriate, are needed, and are not a duplication of experiences will be decided.
4. If the agency and potential field instructor(s) meet the Social Work Program criteria, as judged from the information received, the Director of Field Instruction or designated faculty member will make a site visit for evaluating the agency and complete an "Evaluation of Field Practicum Site."
5. If the agency and potential field instructor(s) are positively evaluated and approval is recommended, then the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Affiliation of Students for Social Work Practicum will be processed through the agency and the University. A signed copy is returned to the agency. These contracts are renewed regularly.
6. A decision to discontinue the approval process at any of the above steps, the agency will be notified by the Director of Field Instruction.
7. Information concerning the new agency will be shared with faculty and students.

### **Guidelines for Agencies:**

1. The services provided are recognized in the community as having a credible social services function and the agency is legally established with financial support. Licensing by the state, where indicated, is completed, and membership in a national standard-setting body appropriate to its function is desirable.
2. The administration and staff should be qualified by education and experience, and have an understanding of professional social work education and its goals. The Memorandum of Understanding between the University and agency and must be completed so that the commitment and responsibilities of the various persons associated with field instruction are understood. The agency's governing body should be aware of and approve staff involvement with students and social work education.
3. The social service program should have employed staff to assure program continuity without total reliance upon students.
4. The activities provided in the program should be such as to make available a sufficient volume of service experiences and a variety of these services appropriate to the learning needs of the students to be assigned. Opportunities for learning and agency practice should include a range of client population groups extending across gender, age, race,



specialty. Evidence of the nominee's interest in keeping abreast of practice developments is indicated by the individual's participation in professional workshops and seminars. The Office of Field Instruction is provided with a resume of the proposed Field Instructor's education and experience.

In a few situations, a social services program has the quantity and quality of learning experiences available but does not have the staff to nominate for Field Instructor. If the agency services are unique and not available to students elsewhere and there are additional resources available to fulfill the field instruction function, temporary approval for a practicum site may be considered by the Director of Field Instruction.

It is preferred that foundation and concentration placements are supervised by an individual who has both a MSW degree as well as practice experience. However, the issue is problematic in rural areas that this program serves in which there is an under-supply of qualified social workers. Each circumstance will be considered on its own merits. If the Director of Field Instruction and the agency can locate an MSW (e.g., another agency staff member, member of the board of directors, or an agency consultant—individuals who are familiar with the caseload and organization of the agency), this individual's appointment as field instructor will be considered. In such cases, an experienced staff member will be asked to serve as a Task Supervisor to monitor the student's performance of agency policies and daily responsibilities. In rare instances, faculty members may be asked to serve as field instructors to ensure educational monitoring of a placement. In all cases, the issue of appropriate placement monitoring is a predominant concern of the Field Director. (See #9 under Guidelines for Agencies).

Field Instructors should plan time involvement that includes the following:

1. A placement Confirmation Conference with the student(s) assigned;
2. An orientation of the student (s) accepted to the agency that familiarizes the student with agency working practices, policies, safety issues, and procedures;
3. A minimum of one hour for regular (weekly) educationally focused field instruction supervision sessions with the student (s);
4. Preparation of the mid-term and semester evaluation and final grade from to be completed at the end of the practicum semester (both foundation and concentration placements);
5. Conferences with the Faculty Liaison and the student to plan and evaluate student progress;
6. Attendance at orientation workshops and other Field Instruction meetings as planned by the Department;

**Additional meetings that might arise in the course of a student's practicum experience**



### **Criteria for Field Instructors**

The agency administrator generally bases the selection of social workers as Field Instructors on the nomination of a staff member. Nominees must hold the MSW or Doctoral degree in Social Work and should have at least two years of post-Master's degree experience. It is preferred that they be eligible for the Academy of Certified Social Workers, be licensed or have other regional or national recognition of their qualifications for practice in reference their specialty. Evidence of the nominee's interest in keeping abreast of practice development should be indicated by participation in workshops and seminars designed to enrich in breadth and depth. Prior to confirmation of the Agency-School affiliation, the Office of Field Instruction should be provided a resume of the proposed Field Instructor's education and experience.

### **Time for Field Instruction Activities:**

Field Instructors should plan on a time involvement that includes:

1. A placement Confirmation Conference with the student(s) assigned;
2. An orientation of the student(s) accepted to the agency and covers agency working practices, policies, safety issues and procedures;
3. Approximately

## **SECTION VI: WORK-SITE FOR PRACTICUM**

### **Procedures For Evaluation of Work-Site for Practicum**

Under special circumstances, and after careful evaluation, the Director of Field Education grants approval for a student to complete MSW practicum requirements as an employee of an organization.

1. Review the Work Site Policies and Procedures.
2. Once the Policies have been read carefully and the student feels that all parties could comply, then the student needs to complete the Work Site Application.
3. Because of the time required for evaluation of the application for a work-site practicum, this application and the student's educational advisor approved, written rationale must be submitted one semester in advance of the upcoming practicum.

**PLEASE RETURN APPLICATIONS VIA EMAIL TO:  
mswfield@valdosta.edu**

4. The Office of Field Instruction will review this application and contact your employer (identified as immediate supervisor in the attached material) to initiate exploration of the requested practicum. Subsequently, a faculty work-site visit with designated administrators will be conducted and, then, a decision will be made by the Director of Field Instruction concerning your application.
5. If your employer is supportive of this approved application and practicum proposal, the employer will then be asked to sign a contract, which commits the organization to provision of specified learning experiences for the practicum, including professional social work supervision/field instruction.

### **Work-Site Practicum Policies**

Use of a student's employment as a practicum site is an **exception** rather than a standard placement option. Whenever possible, placement at non-employment agencies is preferable. Work site placements, however, have enabled many students to complete their education while remaining employed in their home communities. The role of the Office of Field Instruction is to make a determination of whether a student's specific agency of employment meets the standards set by the Social Work Program for a practicum placement site. If a site is approved, the Office of Field Instruction is responsible for managing this site through a contractual agreement between the school and the agency. A faculty liaison will be assigned to the agency to ensure that the student's educational competencies are met through the practicum.

When such placements are executed successfully, students are able to acquire new knowledge and skills. Without careful supervision and monitoring, however, students may not acquire the additional skills and meet the competencies outlined in the curriculum. Therefore, the approval process and the development of appropriate work-site placements are crucial. Such placement development requires the involvement of the student/employee, job supervisor and agency administrator, potential field instructor, the potential field liaison and the Director of Field Instruction. This extra level of group involvement is essential to the development of a sound work-site placement, particularly when the agency has had no previous involvement as a training agency with the school. In such situations, the agency may not be aware of the Social Work Program's mission, competencies, curriculum and expectations.

Whenever possible, the planning for the practicum should occur in a group. A closer type of placement monitoring is necessary to ensure that student competencies are being met and that the student as a learner is clearly differentiated from the student as an employee. Therefore, it is expected that faculty liaison involvement in worksite placements will be more intensive than in non-work-



- 7. Once a Work Site Application has been turned in, a work site visit will be held to determine approval and educational soundness.**

The Field Instructor, Student, Student's Direct Supervisor and Student's Agency Administrator should be present at the initial visit.

- 8. Students will be responsible for demonstrating that learning competencies and time requirements have been met through entries in their student logs.**
- 9. Once work-site approval of an agency is given, students must apply for Concentration Practicum w**

## **SECTION VII: STUDENT RECORDING**

### **Student Journals**

One extremely helpful way of maintaining a record of the student's activities is through student journaling. This is a record of intellectual, behavioral, and attitudinal experiences and is reflected in the Journal Form. Content of the journal reflects analysis of significant learning experiences and the student's thoughts/feelings/ reactions to the experiences. It is not intended to be a work log.

The Practicum Seminar Instructor

## **SECTION VIII: OTHER IMPORTANT MSW POLICIES**

### **MSW Student Code of Conduct**

The MSW Program is a professional educational program. As such, students must adhere to all

## STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

**I have attended the MSW Student Orientation and I have read and listened to a discussion of expected student conduct and behavior for graduate students in the MSW Program. I have also read the Professional Standards of Conduct expected of MSW Students. I am indicating my agreement with the following expectations:**

*(Please initial each statement)*

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that by enrolling in the Valdosta State University Master of Social Work Program, I agree to abide by all academic policies of the Social Work Program and Valdosta State University in order to graduate in good academic standing.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that as an MSW graduate student I agree to abide by the standards, conduct, values, and ethics of the social work profession.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that although I have been admitted to the Master of Social Work Program, if my professional development, personal conduct, or performance are not deemed satisfactory by my instructors who are members of the social work profession, the faculty has both the right and



## **CRITERIA FOR NONACADEMIC TERMINATION OF MSW STUDENTS**

*Students in the Social Work Program are bound by the rules of the larger University as stated in the University Student Handbook. In addition, a student's enrollment in the MSW Program may be terminated for the following reasons:*

1. Violation of the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) (2017) or the Code of Ethics of the State of Georgia Composite Board. Students are responsible for being familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics. Content from the Code is infused throughout the curriculum. The Code of Ethics can be found on the National Association of Social Workers Website. Any questions or concerns about the Code should be discussed with advisors or classroom instructors.



### **Sexual Misconduct and Title IX**

Valdosta State University is committed to ensuring a safe learning environment that supports the dignity of all members of the Valdosta State University community. Valdosta State University (VSU) does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. The University prohibits specific forms of behavior that violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Valdosta State University will not tolerate sexual misconduct, which is prohibited, and which includes, but is not limited to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and stalking. See VSU's Policy on Sexual Misconduct: <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/social-equity/documents/sexual-misconduct-and-title-ix-policy.pdf>

Any person including faculty, staff, students, or visitors may report what they believe to be an act of discrimination or harassment to the Office of Social Equity as soon as possible after the alleged incident(s). Students wishing to file complaints concerning sexual misconducting such as harassment or discrimination should contact: Office of Social Equity, 1208 N. Patterson St., Valdosta, GA 31698, Phone: (229) 333-5463.

**Access Statement:** Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may

## **Overview of the MSW Generalist Practicum**

- The Valdosta State Social Work Program aims to create an educational program that provides advanced generalist practitioners with the knowledge, skills, values, and cognitions/attitudes needed to practice in ethical and culturally sensitive ways with all people.
- The generalist practicum provides students with an orientation to the practicum agency and social work practice as well as the integration of classroom mater

field and classroom curricular

**SOWK 6202** – Diversity and populations at risk are discussed in this class so that students develop a deeper understanding of people at risk for poverty, discrimination, and oppression. This increases their awareness of diversity in practice.

**SOWK 6400** – The course teaches students on social welfare policies and programs, including Medicaid and Medicare to increase awareness of how social policy impacts clients, agencies, communities, and social service delivery systems. Students become aware of how policy affects and guides practice and the importance of advocacy.

**SOWK 6500** – Students will learn how to evaluate their practice by completing a Single Subject Research Design research project with a client/consumer from the practicum site.

### **Evaluation of Student**

Students will receive a grade for the practicum. The Field Faculty Liaison will determine reWsitempleTh a



# Final Grade Form

SOWK Course: 6800 6900 7611 7612

**Social Work Program  
Department of Human Services  
Converse Hall  
Valdosta State University  
1500 N. Patterson St.  
Valdosta, GA 31698**

## FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Field Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Instructor's Summary of Student's Performance (Please use reverse side if more room is necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## STUDENT'S RESPONSE:

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Student Log

Social Work Program • Valdosta State University • Valdosta, Georgia 31698

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Field Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Liaison:**

## Generalist Practicum Learning Plan Worksheet/Semester Evaluation

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Course Student is enrolled in (choose one):

**SOWK 6800**

**SOWK 6900**

The Council on Social Work Education's 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards identified nine competencies that social work students are expected to demonstrate mastery of. The 9 Practicum Competencies listed in the table below will be the focus of the Generalist Practicum. Students must demonstrate skill in all nine competencies.

## Competency



**Competency**  
(as indicated on  
syllabus)

**Practice Behaviors**

**Learning Plan Sign Off:**

**Semester Evaluation Sign Off:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Task Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Task Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



field and classroom curriculum. The Field Instructor or Task Supervisor is critical in making the field and classroom connections happen.

### **Examples of Specific Tasks for Student Interns:**

- Orientation to the agency e.g., education on agency policies and procedures, types of services provided, information or identification of client needs that require social work intervention
- Developing and managing working relationships with clients e.g., opportunities for students to observe other staff interacting with clients, supervision from an experienced worker in the agency to assist students to determine how they can develop an effective working relationship with a variety of client systems. *The social work program will also provide weekly supervision to the students.*
- Interviewing experiences e.g., observing, planning, and conducting interviews for intake or assessment purposes. *Students will be required to do process recordings in their field seminar at VSU to provide the field instructor with data to aid students in further developing interviewing skills.*
- Recording experiences e.g., writing case summaries or other methods of record keeping in the agency
- Macro social work tasks e.g., observation/participation in staff meetings, grant writing
- Resource/referral management such as developing a resource directory of services available for clients; telephone contacts with other agencies providing support services to clients; participation in interprofessional or interagency meetings to advocate for clients.
- Evaluation of practice and agency programs – this can include evaluating client progress and effectiveness of interventions; data collection and analysis; becoming familiar with procedures for agency program evaluation; and developing a system for program evaluation, such as evaluation of service use by clients.
- Groupwork - observation and participation in groups such as client groups, staff meetings, meetings to discuss client progress with other professionals.
- Participation in assignments that facilitate understanding of the community, the field agency



- **SOWK 7310**



# **Final Grade Form**

SOWK Course: 6800 6900 7611 7612

**Social Work Program**

# Student Log

Social Work Program • Valdosta State University • Valdosta, Georgia 31698

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Field Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Liaison:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date Month/Day</b>	<b>Nature of Activity</b>	<b>Program Competency</b>	<b>Approximate Amount of Time (hours) on Activity</b>

**Field Instructor Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Advanced Practicum Learning Plan Worksheet/Semester Evaluation

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Course Student is enrolled in (choose one):

**SOWK 7611**

**SOWK 7612**

**Competency**  
(as indicated on  
syllabus)

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/ Outcomes</b> (Was task performed and how well?)
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice at an Advanced Level			<p>_____ Communicate understanding of diversity and difference and recognize the extent to which a culture's structure and values impact life experiences.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate respect, knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the range of human differences applying self-regulation and self-awareness to manage the influence of personal biases and values with clients and constituencies.</p> <p>_____ Practice without discrimination and identify the behavior of clients and constituencies that reflects client's issues of human diversity.</p> <p>_____ Respond to the effects of human diversity on all aspects of multilevel social work practice.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 3: Advance human rights, social, economic and environmental justice at an Advanced Level			<p>_____ Identify and understand social economic and environmental justice in order to advocate and engage in practices to advance human rights at the individual, and systems levels.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate interventions using culturally and ethically sensitive social work theory and methods with persons of differing economic status, ethnic background, gender or individuals who are differently challenged, as well as individuals who have been subject to oppression or social/economic injustice.</p> <p>_____ Understand and challenge mechanisms of oppression and discrimination applying strategies of advocacy and social change to advance justice.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/ Outcomes</b> (Was task performed and how well?)
Competency 4: Engage in Practice Informed Research and Research Informed Practice at an Advanced Level			<p>_____Apply critical thinking to use research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy and service delivery</p> <p>_____Identify, select, and evaluate strategies for maintaining and enhancing psychosocial functioning and work in collaboration to assess and improve intervention effectiveness.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice at an Advanced Level			<p>_____Identify social policies at the local, state and federal level that impacts the delivery of access to social services.</p> <p>_____Demonstrate the ability to analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities at an Advanced Level			<p>_____Apply knowledge of human</p>





**Competency**  
(as indicated on

	<p>_____Apply research skills to evaluation of psychosocial intervention.</p> <p>_____Communicate and disseminate evaluation results appropriate to the intended stakeholder.</p> <p>_____Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
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