

PRACTICUM EDUCATION HANDBOOK

2023-2024

An introduction and overview of the practicum education program for students, practicum instructors, site supervisors, and practicum liaisons.

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UISSW Practicum Education Program

The University of Iowa School of Social Work is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE provides educational policy and guidelines that accredited programs must follow. An essential element of social work education is applied learning and demonstration of competence in practice. CSWE regards field education (what we refer to as “practicum education”) as the “signature pedagogy” for the profession of social work.

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Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline—to think, to perform, and to act ethically and with integrity... field education is designed to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the explicit curriculum in the field setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice.”

CSWE 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

The University of Iowa School of Social Work’s practicum education program is designed to integrate learning achieved in class with practice in the field of social work. Through practicum education, students have an opportunity to employ social work interventions and ethical decision-making processes with different client populations at multiple levels. Many of the policies and procedures detailed in this handbook are designed to meet CSWE requirements. Per requirements by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), UISSW Practicum Education must include:

- The completion of the required number of hours stipulated by the student’s program level; and
- Substantial practicum supervision from a social worker possessing the degree being sought by the student plus two years post-social work degree work experience.

“Practicum Education” is a broad term often used interchangeably with practicum placement and practicum experience. The University of Iowa School of Social Work (UISSW) uses specific terms to delineate which program level students are in while completing field education. These may be different terms than those used at other schools of social work. All social workers are expected to be competent generalist social workers. CSWE defines Generalist Practice as practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that:

- Is grounded in liberal arts and person-in-environment framework
- Uses scientific inquiry, ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at micro, mezzo and macro levels
- Engages diversity in practice and advocates for human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice
- Recognizes, supports, and builds on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings (CSWE 2022 EPAS)

The UISSW MSW program focuses on basic social work concepts that apply a holistic, strengths-based perspective in promoting well-being by addressing social problems at all system levels. Ethical principles, critical thinking, and problem-solving are important aspects of the social work curriculum.

Practicum Education at the UISSW is offered at three program levels.

BASW Generalist Practicum

Undergraduate students admitted to the BA program are required to complete a minimum of 400 clock hours (8 semester hours) in one semester. BA Generalist Practicum can be completed in either the spring or summer term depending on the student's plan of study. Practicum provides students with an opportunity to engage and demonstrate competency in generalist practice.

MSW Generalist and Specialist Practicum

MSW Generalist Practicum

Students admitted to the MSW program with a bachelor's degree in a major other than social work at a CSWE accredited social work program are required to complete generalist practicum. Master's Generalist Practicum is the opportunity for MSW students to demonstrate competence applying the knowledge and skills developed in the generalist courses of the MSW program. Many students have not chosen their practice specialization when they enter generalist practicum. The generalist practicum frequently helps students make this decision as they gain experience and knowledge about the field of social work.

MSW students may take generalist practicum if they have completed or are concurrently enrolled in the generalist social work courses and are demonstrating competence in all nine CSWE competencies. The learning outcomes taught and measured in these courses focus on values and ethics, human behavior theory, social policy, social justice and diversity, research, and practice at multiple system levels.

Students enter the MSW program choosing a two, three, or four year degree completion plan. Generalist practicum is completed in spring or summer term, depending on the student's plan of study. Students in generalist practicum must complete 3 credits, which are calculated as 100 hours in placement for each credit hour and 300 clock hours total.

MSW Specialist Practicum

Students completing Practicum with Clinical or Leadership Specialization have finished generalist social work coursework at either the undergraduate or graduate level and are expected to demonstrate more advanced knowledge and skills, as required by CSWE. Students choose one of two specializations offered by UISSW: Clinical Practice or Leadership Practice. These advanced specialized curricula build on the school's liberal arts perspective and on the professional foundation. Both are based on a comprehensive eco-systemic theoretical perspective and apply the principles that are part of the school's mission statement, with a focus on culturally competent family-centered and community-based approaches. All students admitted to the MSW program are required to take Practicum with Clinical or Leadership Specialization in their final year in the program. Students in specialist practicum complete 600 clock hours (6 semester hours) in practicum over two semesters, fall and spring (an average of 300 hours per semester).

Practicum Roles & Responsibilities

Student

Prior to placement

- Secure a placement: Students are responsible for searching for placements using the school's online database (IPT), applying for, interviewing with, and securing a practicum
- Complete and turn in the Practicum Agreement form by the announced deadline
- Discuss agency requirements with practicum instructor such as background checks, immunizations or mandatory trainings that require completion prior to practicum
- Complete agency requirements before the start date of the practicum or by agency deadlines. Costs associated with agency requirements are incurred by the student if not covered by the agency

During Placement

- Complete all seminar course requirements including participation in class and completion of assignments
- Attend practicum orientation and complete other practicum requirements assigned by UISSW
- Adhere to the Social Work Code of Ethics, UISSW Professional Behavior Standards, and agency standards
- Comply with agency and school policies and procedures, including maintaining strict confidentiality
- Prepare for and participate in weekly supervision with practicum instructor
- Create the learning plan with support from practicum instructor and practicum education team
- Complete and track required hours in practicum according to program requirements
- Achieve the educational objectives of the learning plan by demonstrating the related knowledge and skills

Academic Advisor

- Discuss educational and career goals with student advisees prior to the practicum
- Advise student on potential practicum opportunities related to educational and career goals

Seminar Instructor

- Provide space for students to process their own experiences in their practicum, learn from others' experiences, practice professional consultation, and reflect on their competency development
- Coordinate with the student's faculty academic advisor, UISSW practicum liaison, and practicum instructor as needed to support the student's progress
- Evaluate the student's performance in seminar and provide a grade at the end of the semester

Practicum Instructor and Site Supervisor

The practicum instructor is responsible for providing the social work context and supporting the student's development as a social work professional. The minimum requirement for this role is to meet with the student for one hour each week to focus on the student's learning and development. For most placements, the student has a practicum instructor who provides both the social work context and the day-to-day supervision and support.

Practicum instructors for BASW students must have a Bachelor or Master of Social Work degree plus two years post-graduate professional experience. Practicum instructors for MSW students must have a Master of Social Work degree plus two years post-graduate professional experience.

A second supervisor, the site supervisor, is a person who provides primary on-site supervision but does not meet the practicum instructor requirements. Many responsibilities overlap between the practicum instructor and site supervisor roles, and the individuals in those roles are expected to collaborate to meet the student's support needs and evaluate the student's progress at the end of the semester.

Prior to Placement

- Sign the placement agreement and ensure the UISSW practicum office has your resume on file
- Discuss agency requirements with the student including required background checks, health screenings and immunizations and/or mandatory trainings that require completion prior to the start of the practicum
- Communicate with the student regarding planned times when you will not be available (conferences, vacations, etc.) and identify another person that the student can go to for questions.

During Placement

- **Practicum instructor required, site supervisor recommended: Provide a minimum of one hour of regularly scheduled supervision per week**
- Participate in UISSW supervisor orientation and site visits with the student and UISSW practicum liaison
- Provide students with an in-depth orientation to the agency, its policies and procedures including safety protocols and standards of conduct
- Provide guidance and instruction to the student, although day-to-day supervision may be provided by another staff member.
- Ensure the student gets quality learning experiences and help the student develop their learning plan
- Monitor the student's progress towards the learning plan and assist in modifying the plan as needed
- Provide feedback to the student on performance and progress towards educational goals
- Provide additional resources for learning (i.e. texts or other readings, access to other professionals, involvement of student in professional meetings, etc.)
- Consult with the practicum liaison as needed to share information, especially when an intervention may be necessary to help the student succeed in practicum
- Evaluate the student's performance and professional behaviors for purposes of program advancement in the school's Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) database (collaboratively if there is a site supervisor), including: Recommending a grade for the semester (S/U); Evaluating competencies in the learning plan; Providing a brief written narrative evaluation (each supervisor provides a narrative); and electronically signing the learning plan (each supervisor signs)

UISSW Practicum Liaison

Practicum liaisons are UISSW faculty members or other social workers hired from the community. The practicum liaison serves as a connector between the University and the practicum.

Responsibilities

- Ensure educational objectives of the practicum are being met through the learning plan
 - Learning activities and opportunities are appropriate to meet competency requirements for the student's program level
 - Student is completing the minimum hours required for the placement level
- Serve as an educational resource and support for the student, the practicum instructor, and site supervisor
- Conduct site visits at the placement site or virtually as appropriate
- Provide assistance with problem-solving issues regarding the placement
- Facilitate communication and maintain relationships between UISSW, agencies and instructors
- Provide final approval of student's completion of practicum education by ensuring completion of placement evaluation in IPT and electronically signing the learning plan

Practicum Administrator and Practicum Education Director

Each UISSW center (Iowa City, Des Moines, Sioux City, Online) has an identified practicum administrator. The practicum education director is a faculty member at the Iowa City Center; additionally, this person serves as the practicum administrator for the Iowa City and Online centers. Current contact information for these roles is found on the UISSW's Practicum Education website and the Practicum Education Contacts page of this manual.

Practicum Administrator Responsibilities

- Day-to-day administration of practicum education at assigned program center
- Administer practicum policies and procedures in consultation with the practicum education director
- Develop, maintain, and monitor placement sites
- Assist students in their search and approve placements, practicum instructors, and site supervisors
- Orient and support students, practicum instructors, site supervisors, and practicum liaisons
- Recruit, train, and supervise practicum liaisons

Practicum Director Responsibilities

- Provide supervision and support to practicum administrators in other centers
- Interpret CSWE and UISSW policies for practicum administrators
- Develop policies related to practicum and collaborate with program directors and administrators in matters related to practicum and student success
- Develop and maintain handbooks, websites, placement management systems, and other resources related to practicum education

Planning and Selecting a Practicum

Eligibility to Enter Practicum

All students entering practicum must first complete skills training through the requisite course in their program or, in the case of Advanced Standing students, with their BSW program. BASW students must complete all courses required in the program before entering practicum and the concurrent practicum seminar. MSW students must complete or be enrolled in all generalist (SSW:6000-level) required courses to enter practicum and the concurrent practicum seminar, and they must be in their final year of the program to enter specialist practicum and the concurrent seminar.

Selecting a Practicum

The UISSW utilizes the student choice model for placement selection. Students are responsible for identifying and securing placement options that suit the student's interests and/or needs. This model can be a rigorous process but it allows students more flexibility and creativity in seeking a placement. Students are highly encouraged to start the search process as soon as possible in order to meet program deadlines. The practicum administrators are available to help guide students through this process and to establish strong relationships with potential placements across Iowa. This chapter provides information specific to the process of selecting a practicum.

The UISSW operates programs at various centers around the state, including Iowa City, Des Moines, Online, and Sioux City. Each UISSW center has its own individualized placement process and deadlines due to differences in academic schedules. Current placement process and deadlines for each center can be found on the UISSW Practicum Education website.

Student Choice Placement Selection

In our application of the student choice model, the student is responsible for identifying, contacting, and ultimately securing a practicum. Students attend a planning meeting in the semester prior to entering practicum education where they learn about the process and how to use the school's Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) database. IPT includes a listing of agencies already set up with the school to take placements. Agency profiles contain information provided to us by the agency. IPT is a good starting place for most students unless they are already familiar with the area and have a specific agency in mind.

The student choice model can be a rigorous process for the student because students are responsible for directly contacting agencies. Some students really appreciate having the control in this approach to choose their own placements, but for other students this process can feel overwhelming and anxiety-provoking.

If the student is not familiar with the area, it can seem daunting to identify potential placement options. There are multiple resources that students are encouraged to access including their academic advisors and the UISSW center's practicum administrator in addition to exploring agency profiles on IPT. In IPT, students can run keyword searches and perform sorting of the agency profiles. In each profile, the agency provides additional information about what the agency does, qualities they look for in students, and any special requirements (such as specific application processes, access to transportation, etc.).

Additionally, students may also be aware of or locate agencies not listed in IPT that may provide strong learning opportunities. Social work is a large profession and social workers often work in host-settings, which are agencies that do not have a primary social work focus (i.e. hospitals, correctional facilities, schools, etc.). Although such host agencies may not have a primary social work focus, social workers employed in these agencies are often willing to take on a student. There is a multitude of placement options and students are encouraged to think outside of the box.

The agencies listed in IPT primarily include agencies that have previously supervised student placement, but the current profiles are in no way a comprehensive list of practicum options. If students are interested in an agency not listed in IPT, the student should speak with the center's practicum administrator to determine if the placement opportunity meets the placement requirements.

Students are encouraged to start the process as soon as possible. If a student is unable to secure a placement before the deadline for that term, it will affect their progress in the program.

Choosing a Placement

There is no perfect placement, but there are some aspects of personality, style, skills, and expectations students should think about as they consider their placement options. It is helpful to begin with the end in mind: by the end of this placement, where do I need to be in terms of knowledge, experience, skill practice, etc. to enter my desired area of practice?

Questions to ask to help in choosing a placement:

- What type of setting do I want to be in?
- What type of skills do I want to enhance (i.e. case management, therapy, policy work, etc.)?
- What types of supervision do I want?
- What types of supervision do I work best with?
- What type of structure do I work best in (flexible vs. structured)?
- What populations am I interested in working with?

It is not advisable for students to split placements between multiple agencies because the shortened experience in each agency can short-change the learning experience. Students who believe they have special circumstances that would merit splitting a placement need to contact their practicum administrator to discuss this.

Students occasionally want to complete their placements at an agency where they work. Employment-based placements can be rewarding but tricky. In order to consider an employment-based placement, students need to contact their practicum administrator as well as complete additional paperwork found on the UISSW Practicum Education website. There is more information regarding employment-based placements later in this section.

Although it is rare, some placement options offer a stipend as part of the placement experience. This is allowable and is considered a paid placement rather than an employment-based placement.

If a student is interested in a placement at an agency that does not have someone who meets the criteria to serve as practicum instructor, student needs to inform the practicum administrator as soon as possible. At times, other people affiliated with that agency (i.e. other staff, volunteers, board members, etc.) are willing to provide that supervision. We will support students in identifying an appropriate person for this role but are unable to guarantee the availability of UISSW faculty, PhD students, or other community members to serve in this capacity.

Applying for a Placement

In most cases, students should apply to at least 3 agencies within the timeframe established by their UISSW center, even if they feel very strongly about a particular placement. Placements can be competitive and agencies can experience disruptions that cause them to pause accepting students, so having a back-up plan is important.

It is really important to read the agency's profile on IPT to see if the agency has any special application procedures, such as completing an agency online volunteer application, contacting a specific person, or attending a recruitment fair. Students could be disqualified from a placement option by not following procedures that the agency has laid out.

Many students feel more comfortable emailing agencies than calling. Agencies already listed in IPT are used to receiving emails from students regarding interest in placements.

The University of Iowa [Pomerantz Career Center](#) has many resources on their website to help students seeking internships and employment, including resources for developing a resume, writing cover letters, and interviewing for a position. Students can also schedule an appointment with a career advisor for coaching.

Resume

All students need to create a resume. Students are encouraged to have someone review their resume for clarity, content, and any editing issues.

Cover Letter

In emailing potential placement options, students can use the body of the email as the cover letter with the resume as an attachment. A sample cover letter is available on the UISSW Practicum Education website under Search Resources. Typically, the cover letter consists of the following three paragraphs:

- Opening: The student should explain who they are (BA or MSW student) seeking a placement in which term(s) (i.e. spring, summer, or fall-spring); why they are interested in that agency
- Main body: The student should justify why the agency should consider them; explain specific experience or skills but not just copy their resume
- Closing: The student should thank the person for considering them; provide information on how the agency can contact the student (usually email and phone number); can state that the student will follow up with the person in a week

Next Steps

Our agency partners are frequently very busy and it may take them a week to 10 days to respond. This waiting period can be anxiety-provoking for students, but is a normal part of the placement search and typical of employment searches, as well. If the UISSW center specified a timeframe within which to contact agencies, agencies may not respond to any students until that timeframe has expired. If the student stated in their cover letter that they would follow-up with the agency contact person, the UISSW expects them to do that. If 10 days or so have passed with no response, or if the student indicated they would follow-up, the student may reach out again via phone call or email, with a statement such as "I just wanted to see if you have had time to review my application materials. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have or arrange an interview."

Interviewing

Students are expected to dress professionally when attending an interview. This is the case even if the agency has a relaxed atmosphere. Once the student secures a placement, the agency can direct the student as to what is appropriate dress for the setting. Interviewing is often very stressful for students. We suggest that the student practice with someone to help build their comfort.

Students are sometimes unable to secure a practicum after multiple interviews. This is uncommon and often for reasons outside of the student's control. Sometimes, it is an indication that the student is not ready for practicum. The advancement process will be initiated for students who interview with 5 agencies and are not offered a practicum, so the practicum administrator and program director can help identify what barriers exist that prevent the student from obtaining a practicum.

Accepting a Placement

Students may give a verbal acceptance of a placement to an agency, but from the school's standpoint, the placement is not secure until the Placement Agreement Form is fully completed and turned in to the Practicum administrator. This form is available on the on the UISSW Practicum Education website under Practicum Education

Forms and IPT. The student is responsible for obtaining the necessary signatures from the practicum instructor and site supervisor (if applicable) by the deadline associated with the term in placement.

If a student has been offered more than one placement option, the student is expected to contact the agency they are not accepting to inform them of the decision. This helps maintain positive relationships between the school and our partner agencies and demonstrates professionalism.

Placement Approval

The practicum administrator for a student's center or program is responsible for approving each practicum arrangement. Most placements are approved. There are some circumstances when the practicum administrator should be consulted prior to accepting a placement with an agency:

- The student is in the Iowa City or Des Moines program and wishes to do a placement far enough from their center that they do not want to attend courses on campus. The practicum seminars for these centers are in-person, so special permission is required.
- The agency is new to University of Iowa School of Social Work.
- The student wishes to do an employment-based practicum (see related section for more information).
- The student wishes to do a specialist practicum at the same agency where they completed generalist practicum.

In addition to the above circumstances, there are situations when a practicum administrator might not approve a placement:

- The student has an advancement plan that includes special considerations during practicum.
- The agency does not employ a qualified practicum instructor and the practicum administrator has concerns about capacity for social work learning experiences.
- The agency's mission, values, culture, or program activities do not align with the student's professional goals or with the goals of social work practicum more broadly.
- There have been other past concerns with the agency. These are often not shared with the student.

Students in the Online Program

The online program is available to students living in Iowa or any contiguous state, and many students in the program live further than 50 miles from one of our center areas. Students are encouraged to start their practicum search early and should expect to apply to a number of agencies, since the agencies in their area may not have a relationship with UISSW and may have an internship process or expectations that are inconsistent with our program. Following up with agencies during the search process will be especially important to demonstrate enthusiasm and professionalism. The practicum administrator will assist by meeting with the student and a potential new placement site to clarify UISSW expectations and demonstrate how we support placements.

Special Considerations

Students with Prior Criminal Convictions

Some of our students come to us with past criminal convictions that may affect their placement options. Although this may limit options, it does not prohibit students from completing placement. In such an instance, students are encouraged to speak with their center's practicum administrator to identify potential placement options available to the individual student. It is never a good idea to hide prior criminal convictions from a practicum site and doing so could be unethical behavior.

Student Employment While in Practicum

The UISSW is committed to providing quality graduate and undergraduate social work education. The School endeavors to educate as broad a cross section of students as possible, including students who might need to maintain employment while completing their social work education.

Practicum education is a core component at both the graduate and undergraduate program levels and requires a substantial time commitment at all levels. Students may find it difficult to maintain even part-time employment in addition to practicum education and other course requirements. Students need to consider all personal and financial factors related to the need for outside employment while completing their placements. Each student will need to make the personal decision regarding what they can manage emotionally, physically, and financially.

Generalist and Specialist Practicum at the Same Agency

MSW students may request to complete a specialist practicum at the same agency as where they completed their generalist practicum. This is a possibility but the decision is conditional on the approval of the UISSW practicum administrator and related to whether or not a specialist practicum at the same agency will provide the student with new opportunities/tasks, advanced skill development, and more autonomous functioning.

Employment-Based Placements

Sometimes students are already working in social service agencies where they would like to do their practicum. This can be very appealing to students because it removes pressure in securing a placement and may mean an easier time scheduling school, work and practicum hours. A big draw to employment-based placements is being able to continue receiving income.

We recommend that students considering an employment-based placement put a lot of thought into it. This involves speaking with the agency where the student is already working and with the practicum administrator. Without planning, what seems like a very convenient situation could quickly become uncomfortable and could result in something jeopardizing the student's job and/or practicum.

It can be difficult for a student to get as rich of a learning experience in an employment-based placement. Co-workers sometimes have difficulty respecting the student in the different roles of employee and student. This can lead to work functions taking priority over learning opportunities. In addition, employment-based practicums can be more vulnerable to disruption because they can be impacted by termination or layoff. The safety practices for employees in agencies, particularly those agencies working with extremely vulnerable clients, sometimes do not meet the expectations of the University regarding safety in educational settings. This means that sometimes, social work employment environments are unsuitable for practicum.

Some advantages and disadvantages to employment-based practicum are summarized in the table below.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Continued Income	More vulnerable than non-employment-based because it could end due to termination/layoff as well as practicum-related reasons
Benefits to schedule	It can be difficult establishing and maintaining social boundaries time boundaries completing work tasks vs. practicum-specific tasks
Familiarity with agency can allow for more advanced practice opportunities	Narrow job role and lack of agency flexibility can limit learning
	Environment and job expectations might not meet UI standards for student learning, causing practicum termination

Employment-Based Placement Criteria

The criteria to complete an employment-based placement are:

- Practice opportunities appropriate for the placement level (Generalist or Specialist)
- Meaningful learning opportunities that allow students to demonstrate attainment of required competencies.
- The placement must be enthusiastically supported by agency management and approved by the UISSW practicum administrator.
- Must receive supervision for practicum distinct from regular employment supervision (i.e. a separate weekly meeting with a qualified practicum instructor to focus solely on the student's education)

Students can find the General Guidelines for Employment-Based Placements on the UISSW Practicum Education website under "Practicum Education Forms and IPT."

Placements Outside of Student's UISSW Center Area

Occasionally, students express interest in completing their placement in the area covered by a different center. Students often have connections or interests that lead them outside the area of the UISSW center they attend.

Students who are interested in completing a placement in another center's area first need to discuss the option with the center practicum administrator. The decision will be made by the program administrator and the involved practicum administrators. Students may be allowed to complete a placement in another area but still be required to participate in seminar at their home center, either in person or virtually, with seminar instructor approval.

Practicum Abroad: Students occasionally want to complete practicum working abroad in various social work contexts. This potentially can be an option, but the student needs to speak with the center practicum administrator early. To complete practicum abroad requires much more planning and coordination in arranging and completing the practicum. Students are expected to take the lead if they have interest in completing a practicum abroad; our program does not have structured relationships to promote practicum abroad.

BASW Generalist Practicum as Elective Credit

It may be possible for students to complete additional semester hours as elective credit but this must be discussed with their academic advisor. For BA generalist practicum, the general guideline is that 1 credit hour = 50 hours in placement. There is a cap of 15 credit hours for undergraduate students on the number of pass/fail classes that can count towards their degree. Students interested in taking extra semester hours of practicum for elective credit will need to take this cap into account when deciding with their advisor if practicum elective credit will work in their individual situation.

- Spring: Students can take up to 3 additional semester hours in practicum
- Summer: Students can take 1 additional semester hour in practicum. Summer students are more limited due to university credit hour restrictions on the shortened summer sessions.

MSW Specialist Practicum as Elective Credit

It may be possible for students to complete additional semester hours as elective credit but this must be discussed with their academic advisor. For specialist practicum, the general guideline is that 1 credit hour = 100 hours in placement. There is no restriction on the number of pass/fail credits for graduate students but there is a limit of 15 total credit hours per semester for full-time students.

Students are allowed to take 2 additional semester hours in specialist practicum, either in a single semester or split between the fall and spring semesters.

School Social Work Endorsement

There are specific specialist practicum requirements for students completing the School Social Work Endorsement:

- The specialist practicum site is required to be at any of the Area Education Agencies in the State of Iowa or other school districts by arrangement.
- Placement must occur in the school setting.
- Supervision of the student must be under an experienced School Social Work practitioner/Licensed Social Worker to include experiences in assessment; direct services to children and families; consultation; staffing; community liaison and documentation; which leads to development of professional identity and disciplined use of self.
- If the student has served two years as a school social worker, the practicum experience can be waived. This experience must be documented when application for licensure is submitted.

Students interested in obtaining this endorsement are encouraged to speak with the center practicum administrator during the selection process to ensure a possible placement meets the necessary requirements.

If a student is completing a School Social Work placement and is working toward the endorsement, they should register for SSW:7760 Practicum in School Social Work so that it appears on their transcript. They can be completing the course work for either specialization, clinical or leadership.

During the Practicum

Professional Liability Insurance

The University provides student professional liability insurance coverage during practicum. Students are covered the entire time they are in practicum, even if some hours occur during school breaks. Agencies can request a copy of the liability insurance certificate through their IPT agency profile or by emailing the Director of Practicum Education.

Information is obtained from the completed Placement Agreement form in order to purchase this insurance. For this reason, the deadline for the Placement Agreement to be received by the school is extremely important.

The liability insurance provided by the University does not cover transportation of clients. If students are required to provide client transportation using a company vehicle, the student will need to qualify under the agency's policy. If the student is required to use a personal vehicle to transport clients, the student will need to inform their auto insurance company to assure that this is covered.

Professional liability insurance provided by the University of Iowa covers students in practical education experiences. If a student is in an employment-based practicum, this insurance likely will not cover their practice. This insurance does not cover any supervisor or instructor of a practicum student.

Placement Hours

Start Date

Placement begins and ends with the official University calendar for that semester. If required by the agency, students can begin training prior to the start of classes but cannot engage in any service delivery or client interaction until the semester begins.

Completing Hours over Winter Break

MSW Specialist Practicum students may complete practicum clock hours over winter break. Liability insurance for Specialist Practicum students runs continuously from the start of the fall until the end of the spring semester while they are in practicum. Fall grades will be due at the end of fall term and therefore, the learning plan must be fully signed at that time. If the student has not completed 300 hours by the end of fall, the rest of the hours will be recorded in spring. The total between fall and spring must be at least 600 hours.

Generalist Practicum students may start their spring practicum before the start of spring term with agency approval. The earliest date students can start is established and communicated by the practicum administrator for the student's center.

Weekly Hours

We are often asked by students how many hours a week they should plan to be in placement. That depends on how many semester hours the student is doing and in which term. Students need to take into account time that they may be off for illness, spring break, vacation, and/or finals week. Only time involved in practicum related activities and practicum seminar class can count towards the student's required hours.

The following breakdown is the lowest number of hours per week a student should anticipate being in placement if they use every week in the semester. If a student wanted to take Spring Break and/or final week off, the student will need to adjust the number of weeks being divided by and adjust their hours accordingly. A student may need to complete more hours per week if they take breaks or miss some placement time due to illnesses, etc. It is always best to build in a contingency plan in case of unexpected absences.

- BA Generalist Practicum - Spring: 400 hrs/17 weeks = 23.5 hours per week minimum
- BA Generalist Practicum - Summer: 400 hrs/12 weeks = 33.33 hours per week minimum
- Master's Generalist Practicum - Spring: 300 hrs/17 weeks = 17.6 hours per week minimum
- Master's Generalist Practicum - Summer: 300/12 weeks = 25 hours per week minimum
- Specialist Practicum: 300 hours each semester/17 weeks = 17.6 hours per week minimum

More information about what can contribute to practicum hours can be found in the Attendance Policy.

Demonstrating Competence

The Social Work Competencies

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the accrediting body for social work programs across the United States and several other countries. CSWE provides Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards which inform UISSW policies and processes.

CSWE uses a competency-based framework “to identify and assess what students demonstrate in practice” (CSWE 2022 EPAS). There are nine social work competencies that students must demonstrate to successfully complete practicum. In addition, UISSW requires students to demonstrate more specific competency indicators which help students express the breadth of each competency. The social work competencies are assessed in practicum and at both the generalist and specialist levels of curriculum.

Here are the nine social work competencies (CSWE 2022 EPAS):

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

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

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

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

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

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

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

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

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

The competencies are enhanced at the specialist level to reflect either clinical or leadership specialization.

The Practicum Learning Plan

The UISSW utilizes a formal learning plan to measure a student's competency as a social worker. The practicum learning plan is developed once a student enters practicum. The student is expected to discuss the objectives of the learning plan with their practicum instructor and site supervisor (if applicable) to identify activities that the student can complete during the practicum to demonstrate their competency. The practicum liaison will provide input on the learning plan and will approve the initial document at the first site visit. The learning plan is a living document and can be modified throughout the practicum. More information about the practicum learning plan can be found in the Practicum Learning Plan section of this manual.

Liaison Site Visits

During a student's time in practicum, the assigned practicum liaison will visit the placement for meetings with the student, practicum instructor, and site supervisor (if applicable).

Some practicum liaisons take responsibility for scheduling these visits, but many expect the student to coordinate the scheduling between all required attendees. Students should make sure they understand their individual practicum liaison's expectations in this process and their timelines for getting these meetings set and completed.

There are two site visits expected for Generalist Practicum, when the practicum liaison visits the placement site to meet with the student, practicum instructor, and site supervisor (if applicable). Site visits may be in-person or virtual depending on the practicum liaison's preference and other factors. These visits occur once at the beginning of the semester and once at the end of the semester.

For Master's specialist practicum, practicum liaisons typically visit twice during the first semester (beginning and end) and once during the second semester (end of the semester) for a total of three visits.

Practicum liaisons may schedule additional visits to help a student be successful in a placement. Students or their practicum instructors/site supervisors can request an additional meeting by contacting the practicum liaison. Students and their practicum instructors/site supervisors at any time can contact the Coordinator outside of site visits to address any issues or concerns.

Seminar

Students are required to participate in a practicum seminar concurrent with their placement, as a separate academic course. Students are expected to attend their scheduled seminars and complete readings and assignments. Attendance at all seminar class sessions is mandatory. Students are expected to remain in practicum at least through the final seminar session so they can actively participate in seminar throughout the semester. Attendance at seminar class may count toward practicum hours.

UISSW Policies & Procedures

Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

All practicum courses are University of Iowa courses. As such, the placement sites are academic settings. The student's practicum instructor and site supervisor are considered part of the university community for the term of the practicum. Therefore, this policy applies to the student and anyone supervising the student in placement.

The following contains excerpts from the University of Iowa Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, located in the Operations Manual. The full policy – which is significantly longer than what is included here – is located at: <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/community-policies/sexual-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct>.

Rationale for Policy

Members of the university community have the right to be free from all forms of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, which subvert the university's mission and threaten the careers, educational experience, and the well-being of students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The university community seeks to eliminate sexual harassment and sexual misconduct through education and accountability. Everyone is encouraged to report concerns or make complaints, including third parties, when the respondent is a member of the university community or a visitor.

Complaints of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and/or Related Retaliation

If a practicum student experiences sexual harassment, they are encouraged to seek assistance to ensure emotional and physical safety. The student should address the situation as soon as possible with the practicum instructor/site supervisor and/or the practicum liaison if the practicum instructor/site supervisor is involved in the sexual harassment behavior. Students have formal and informal options for assistance, which can be found at this site: <https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/resources-complainants>.

Notice or complaints of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and/or related retaliation may be made using any of the following options:

- File a complaint with, or give verbal notice to, the Title IX Coordinator at Title IX and Gender Equity (319-335-6200; oi-e-tixge@uiowa.edu). Such a report may be made at any time (including during nonbusiness hours) by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address listed above in II-4.6a(1) for the Title IX Coordinator at Title IX and Gender Equity.
- Report online, using the reporting form posted at <https://diversity.uiowa.edu/report/report-problem>. Because reporting carries no obligation to initiate a formal response, and as the University of Iowa respects complainant requests to dismiss complaints unless there is a compelling threat to health and/or safety, the complainant is largely in control and should not fear a loss of privacy by making a report that allows the University of Iowa to discuss and/or provide supportive measures.
- Any person may make a report that a student, employee, or visitor has experienced or committed sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or related retaliation by contacting Title IX and Gender Equity, or any academic or administrative officer of the university.

Jurisdiction of the University of Iowa

This policy applies to the education program and activities of the University of Iowa, to conduct that takes place on the campus or on property owned or controlled by the University of Iowa, at University of Iowa-sponsored events, or in buildings owned or controlled by University of Iowa's recognized student organizations. The respondent must be a member of the University of Iowa's community, including patients, visitors, vendors, and contractors, in order for its policies to apply.

This policy can also be applicable to the effects of off-campus misconduct that effectively deprive someone of access to the University of Iowa's educational program, activities, or workplace. The University of Iowa may also extend jurisdiction to off-campus and/or to online conduct when the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct affects a substantial University of Iowa interest.

Prohibited Conduct

This policy contains definitions required in Part 106.3 of the U.S. Department of Education Title IX Regulations. These definitions also apply in situations that are otherwise not covered by Title IX (e.g., off campus). For a full list of prohibited conduct and definitions, please visit <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/community-policies/sexual-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct#4.14>.

Inappropriate Conduct of the Student

If a practicum student is the perpetrator of sexual harassment behavior, the practicum instructor/site supervisor is expected to address the situation formally with the student and with the practicum liaison. If the student continues such behavior, additional steps may need to be taken with the input of the practicum education director, including the dismissal of the student from the placement and/or the program.

Policy on Consensual Relationships

The University Consensual Relationships Involving Students Policy prohibits relationships in an instructional context involving academic instruction and evaluation/supervision of academic work or participation in University programs. Practicum is a course governed by the University and practicum instructors/site supervisors are considered to be the student's instructor for field education, in the same way an instructor would be in a traditional classroom. This means there cannot be a romantic relationship and/or sexual relationship between practicum instructors/site supervisors and students or between the student and anyone else supervising the student at the agency. For the full policy, visit <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/community-policies/consensual-relationships-involving-students>

If there are rules within the agency regarding dating among staff, the practicum instructor/site supervisor is expected to share that information with the student during the student's orientation. The student will not be aware of agency policies and may unintentionally form a relationship that can diminish the learning experiences because the student violated an agency policy. Communication between practicum instructor/site supervisor and the student about workplace rules is vital.

Student Advancement Policy

The UISSW strives to ensure that our students are well trained professionals who are ready to advance in the social work profession. As such, we have instituted a policy where students are intentionally rather than automatically advanced through their coursework. To advance in the UISSW program, students need to demonstrate the required level of achievement in:

- academic performance,
- professional behavior, and
- ethical conduct (including adherence to the Social Work Code of Ethics)

Feedback from practicum instructors/site supervisors is vital in evaluating student's advancement. Practicum allows students to put into practice the skills that they have learned in the classroom setting and provides the school with the ability to evaluate a student's preparedness to be a professional social worker.

The advancement policy for the student's program level (BA or MSW) can be found in the appropriate program handbook. The processes for concerns, problem resolution, and grievances are outlined fully in these documents.

Professional Behavior Standards & Expectations

The UISSW maintains standards for students' professional behavior while in practicum. Practicum is where students get the opportunity to put into practice what they have been learning in classes and begin the shift from student to professional. Students are expected to display professional behaviors in practicum and throughout the practicum process.

Social work students are expected to display professional behavior consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics. When students are working in practicum, not only do they represent themselves, they also represent the UISSW and every other student that will come after them. One student's professionalism can ensure that a practicum site is an option for future students.

Professional behavior is a component of the supervisor's evaluation of student performance in practicum and therefore directly related to the advancement in/completion of the social work program.

The UISSW has the following Standards/Expectations for Professional Behavior:

- **Appropriate attire:** Dressing in casual/business attire appropriate to the agency's protocol
- **Attendance and punctuality:** Establishing and maintaining a regular schedule; following the agency's (not the University's) operational schedule; maintaining a current time sheet/log of placement hours; arriving before the appointed time; being prepared to engage as a working professional; providing prompt notification of tardiness or absences
- **Respectful demeanor and interactions:** Demonstrating respect and deference to staff/clients/peers; conducting oneself in a manner consistent with the values and ethics of NASW and the profession
- **Professional language and communications:** Demonstrating professional oral and written (including electronic) communication skills; using discretion and appropriate professional language in addressing clients/staff/peers; "filtering" language to limit emotional reactivity/content; being very selective in communicating with colleagues outside of regular work hours (e.g. weekends, evenings)
- **Appropriate effort and initiative:** Collaborating with one's supervisor to identify and complete a weekly work plan/set of work tasks; completing higher priority tasks before secondary tasks; following through on appointed tasks and activities; spending placement hours in professionally useful activity; showing a genuine interest, initiative and engagement in the daily life of the organization; demonstrating intellectual and professional curiosity and insightfulness
- **Accountability and integrity:** Being accountable to the agency's practice guidelines and expectations; completing tasks and activities in a professional, high quality and timely manner; speaking and acting on behalf of the agency only as authorized by one's role and responsibilities; maintaining professional integrity and honesty in all activities/interactions; representing accurately the placement hours worked and tasks completed
- **Boundary maintenance and ethical practice:** Maintaining client/agency confidentiality standards, especially when using cell phones/electronic devices; upholding NASW ethical standards and seeking appropriate consultation when in doubt; maintaining strict personal-professional boundaries in the real and virtual work environment, especially in relation to social media (e.g. Facebook); restricting the use of electronic devices to professional purposes only while in the placement setting
- **Emotional self-regulation:** Attending to one's emotional reactivity and triggers; taking responsibility for one's feelings/behavior and avoiding blame; avoiding the expression of raw emotions; being personally and professionally centered when engaging with clients/staff; using appropriate professional language (spoken and written) to filter emotional content; demonstrating a willingness to resolve difficult relationships and modify one's behavior accordingly; not expecting special consideration or 'entitlement'
- **Responsiveness to feedback:** Demonstrating non-defensive receptivity to feedback and suggestion; showing a willingness to be self-reflective and self-corrective

Failing to demonstrate appropriate professional behavior is the most common cause of dismissal from practicum. To prevent that situation, the following steps should be taken:

1. The practicum instructor or site supervisor (whoever observed the behavior) should provide clear and supportive feedback to the student and help the student develop strategies to grow in this area.
2. If feedback and support do not improve the behavior within a reasonable time period, the supervisor should contact the practicum liaison for support. The practicum liaison will keep the practicum administrator informed of any serious and/or continued concerns regarding a student's professional conduct.
3. The practicum liaison will likely request a meeting with the supervisor(s) and student. The practicum administrator might also be involved. At the meeting, the issue will be explored and next steps determined, which may include a formal improvement plan, dismissal or exit from practicum, or further steps within UISSW's advancement process.

Student Safety in Practicum Education

In any practicum there is some degree of physical or psychological risk for the student. Steps can be taken to minimize the risk to students. The guidelines below may be helpful to students and practicum instructors in considering safety issues in their practice settings. For more information about safety, see NASW Guidelines for Social Worker Safety in the Workplace at <https://www.socialworkers.org/practice/practice-standards-guidelines>.

Students

- Students are responsible for reviewing, understanding, and following agency safety protocols and procedures, and for discussing questions or concerns with the practicum instructor.
- Students have the right to question any assignment where they are concerned about their safety. The student is responsible for discussing safety concerns with the practicum instructor before proceeding.
- In the event of a threat or injury to a student while in practicum, the student shall immediately contact the practicum instructor and practicum liaison.

Practicum instructors

- Practicum instructors are responsible for providing the student with agency protocols and procedures and discussing safety during the student's orientation to the agency.
- Practicum instructors are responsible for preparing students to handle situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, and abuse of others.
- Practicum instructors should immediately contact the practicum liaison when informed of a threat or injury to the student.
- Practicum instructors ensure that the student has a secure place to keep belongings while at placement, preferably a locked space such as a desk drawer, filing cabinet, or in a private office behind a locked door.

Home Visits

It is important to know something about the client prior to the home visit to screen for potential threats. Always inform another staff member the address of where you are going and when you expect to return. If there is a question of safety prior to going on the visit, students should consult with the practicum instructor to plan for the safety of the student. This may include meeting the client in a neutral setting, going with another social worker, canceling the visit or asking staff to go instead of the student.

When on home visits, students need to pay attention to their surroundings, ask the client to secure pets in another area, know where exits are, have an unimpeded route to an exit, and ask if there are other people currently in the home. If at any point a student feels unsafe during the visit they should excuse themselves, leave the area and contact their practicum instructor to process the situation. If the student or another person's immediate safety is at risk, the student should leave the area and contact law enforcement.

Personal Cell Phone Usage & Social Media Policy

Intertwined with professional behavior expectations are issues related to personal cell phone usage and use of social media while completing placement hours. Students are expected to not use their personal cell phone while completing hours for practicum. Just as many jobs limit the cell phone usage of employees while working, we believe it is important for students to focus on their learning experiences while completing their hours.

Social media is an important part of communication for many people. Although we recognize the utility of social media both in personal and professional capacities, we believe students need to engage in a mindful social media presence. Students should carefully evaluate any information they post on social media regarding their placement experiences. Confidentiality is critical and can easily but unintentionally be violated in social media posts.

UISSW expectations:

- Students will not post any identifying information regarding clients on social media.
- Students should consider how social media posts can be interpreted by others.
- Students will address any issues regarding a placement with their UISSW Practicum liaison rather than post grievances on social media.
- Students will not “friend,” “follow,” or accept friend requests from placement clients.
- Students will adhere to any social media policies within their placement agency.
- The practicum instructor/site supervisor will provide the student information on any agency policies regarding social media.

UISSW recommendations:

- Students should maintain strict privacy settings on all social media platforms.
- Students and practicum instructors/site supervisors should discuss any potential issues of becoming “friends” with any colleagues at the placement agency including the practicum instructor and site supervisor.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to start practicum in the first week of the semester; other start dates should be arranged with the practicum administrator prior to the start of practicum. The specific start date should be arranged before the start of the semester between the student and the practicum instructor/site supervisor based on the student’s class schedule and agency operating hours.

If the practicum instructor/site supervisor will not be available or present at the agency when the practicum begins (i.e. on vacation, attending a conference, etc.), the practicum instructor/site supervisor is responsible for arranging learning opportunities for the student within the agency and an agency contact person for the student until the practicum instructor/site supervisor returns. The practicum instructor/site supervisor is responsible for communicating all of this information to the student prior to the start of the semester.

Attendance in practicum is separate from attendance in practicum seminar. Seminar instructors may set their own attendance policy regarding seminar.

Students are expected to develop a schedule for practicum attendance with their practicum instructor/site supervisor. Once this schedule is established, students are expected to inform the practicum instructor/site supervisor in the event of an illness or emergency that prevents them from attending the placement as scheduled. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the practicum instructor/site supervisor to ensure that responsibilities are covered and to negotiate when the student can make up the missed hours.

On-going attendance issues need to be addressed by the practicum instructor/site supervisor with the UISSW practicum liaison. An additional site visit may be necessary to address the situation with the student. The UISSW practicum liaison will keep the practicum administrator informed of any serious and/or continued concerns regarding a student's practicum attendance.

Students are expected to make up hours missed due to illness or other events in order to complete the minimum required hours in placement. This may require the student to put in additional hours outside of the attendance schedule created at the beginning of the semester.

The UISSW does not require students to turn in a log of hours in the placement, but expects students to use a tracking tool to record their practicum hours. This document is invaluable if there are discrepancies between a student and the agency's report of the hours that a student has completed. Some agencies require students to complete a formal timesheet or use the agency's HR time-tracking system. A UISSW Practicum Timesheet template is available on the UISSW Practicum Education website as one option for tracking placement hours. When filled out correctly, the UISSW Practicum Timesheet will calculate the hours the student has accumulated in practicum.

Starting Before Term Begins: Generalist Practicum students completing their placement in the spring may start their practicum in early January per their Center's guidelines if their placement approves. Specialist Practicum students may start their practicum in early August per their Center's guidelines if their placement approves. To start early, students must have their practicum agreement turned in, have their practicum instructor assigned in IPT, be in good standing with the School, and must have their practicum administrator's approval. Professional liability insurance coverage is in place so long as our program has determined the student is in practicum.

University Holidays/Breaks: If a student is scheduled to be in practicum on a day the University is closed or classes have been cancelled, students are not required to attend placement. The hours the student would have worked that day do not count towards the student's clocked hours. Students may choose to attend practicum during University breaks to ensure completion of the practicum education requirements. The student is expected to inform the practicum instructor/site supervisor if the student will not be attending placement on a day when the University is closed, prior to the day itself, and to ensure that any responsibilities the student may have had are covered in the student's absence.

Winter Break: Specialist Practicum students are the only students allowed to clock practicum hours over winter break. If advanced practicum students will not be working in placement over the winter break or will be taking an extended break in that time period, they must inform their practicum instructor/site supervisor prior to the end of the fall semester. Some placements may expect students to complete practicum hours over winter break to ensure continuity of service, particularly in clinical settings.

Inclement Weather: In the event of inclement weather, students are expected to attend their placements if the agency is open and staff are reporting for work. If the agency closed due to inclement weather on a day the student is scheduled to be at practicum, the student is not required to attend practicum. The hours the student would have worked that day do not count towards the student's clocked hours. If the agency remains open but the student decides it is not safe to travel to the agency, the student is expected to inform the practicum instructor/site supervisor that they will not be absent. The student will need to make arrangements to make up missed hours.

Practicum Hours: Activities that contribute to practicum hours should be reflected in the learning plan. The following are guidelines for what activities can be counted towards the student's completion of practicum hours:

What can be counted towards placement hours:

Time spent in learning activities at the agency, including supervision meetings, site visits, and working on the learning plan

Travel to meetings, trainings, and other placement related activities, with approval by Practicum instructor

Professional development, trainings, staff meetings, etc. approved by practicum instructor

Webinars and/or reading placement-related material, with approval by Practicum instructor

Practicum-related research approved by practicum instructor

Practicum seminar class time

What cannot be counted towards placement hours:

Time the student was scheduled to be at placement but did not attend due to illness, inclement weather, etc.

Travel to and from home to placement agency

Meal breaks

Simulated practice experiences outside of the practicum setting

Assignments from other courses

Seminar assignments, readings, etc.

Troubleshooting Problems in Placement

Occasionally, difficulties occur during a practicum that may affect the student's learning. This can include difficulties in the student's relationship with the practicum instructor/site supervisor or other colleagues, disagreements about the student's role, differences in practice philosophy, or issues related to the student's performance. The UISSW is committed to addressing issues in a manner that supports the student's learning but satisfies both university policy and professional ethics.

It is important for the UISSW practicum liaison to be informed by either the student and/or practicum instructor/site supervisor as early as possible if issues arise. We recognize a developmental approach in students' learning experiences in practicum education. In supporting students based on these developmental stages, we believe that many issues in placements can be successfully resolved.

When possible, the UISSW practicum education faculty will work with the student and agency to develop a mutually-agreeable plan that allows the student to remain in the placement. In some cases, the school recognizes that issues may not be able to be resolved in such a manner for the student to be able to continue their placement at that agency. In this case, the UISSW practicum administrator will determine that the placement will be terminated. Steps will be taken to try to support the student in seeking a new placement, but placement disruptions may affect the student's ability to complete the degree program in the time planned. If a student is unable to secure a new placement with enough time to complete the agency orientation, develop a new learning plan, and complete the necessary learning experiences, the student may be required to re-start and complete the placement experience in a different term.

Intern Placement Database (IPT)

IPT is a web-based practicum education software program that is used by numerous social work education programs across the country. The UISSW practicum education department utilizes the Intern Placement Database (IPT) as a resource for our students to identify placement options and as the vehicle for developing the student's learning plan and as a tool for evaluating the student's performance at the end of the term.

Information specific to creating and evaluating the learning plan in IPT can be found in the Learning Plan section of this manual.

Log-in Information

Each student, agency, practicum instructor, and site supervisor will have their own IPT account. Default log-in information will be distributed to the individual when the account is created. At the first log-in, the user will be prompted to create a personal password. At any time, students, practicum instructors, or site supervisors can utilize the "Forgot Username or Password" option on the log-in screen if they are unable to access IPT.

The IPT login page can be accessed directly at www.runipt.com or through the link on the UISSW Practicum Education website. Do not search "IPT" as it will return results for other school's log-in pages. Additional instructions to access IPT are available on the UISSW website as well. The required Organization ID is: UISSW.

All information entered in IPT is confidential. The information can only be viewed by designated faculty or staff within the practicum education program. User information cannot be located through online search engines.

Users having difficulties using IPT may contact the UISSW center's practicum administrator for additional support.

Student Profiles

A profile is created for each student by an UISSW administrator in the term prior to the student entering placement. Students are expected to complete their profile information within IPT under the Student Details tab. This information is available to the UISSW practicum administrator to help the student in identifying potential placement options but cannot be viewed by agencies. Practicum administrators will also use the contact information provided in the student profile to contact a student if there is an issue regarding practicum. It is important that this information is complete and up to date.

Agency Profiles

A profile is created for each agency by an UISSW administrator. Sometimes agencies have multiple programs or areas of practice that may warrant separate profiles due to different requirements, application procedures, etc. This can be discussed with the practicum administrator and can be easily accomplished.

An agency contact person is identified whose contact information is linked to the agency profile. That contact person is expected to complete the agency's profile information and to keep it up to date. As students use IPT to view potential placement agencies, agencies with updated and complete profiles are better able to attract the interest of students. If the agency needs to identify a new contact person, which most often occurs when someone leaves the agency, please contact the center's practicum administrator.

Practicum instructor/Site supervisor Profiles

Each practicum instructor/site supervisor has an individual profile which is created by an UISSW administrator. This profile is to the individual but is linked to the appropriate agency where the practicum instructor/site supervisor will be supervising a student. The profile information is used as documentation for CSWE accreditation

standards to ensure practicum instructors/site supervisors meet CSWE requirements. Practicum instructors/site supervisors are asked to complete their profile information, including uploading a resume/CV.

If a practicum instructor is or has supervised students in multiple agencies, they will have a separate profile linked with each agency. These multiple practicum instructor profiles are linked to a single user account. The practicum instructor/site supervisor selects the account they need to view using an "Account" drop-down at the top of the page.

Agency Listings in IPT

Students can access agency profiles under the Agency List tab in the center of the page. Navigation links to move through the pages of agencies are in the center at the top of the page. An initial click on the tab provides an alphabetical listing of agencies. Students are only able to see agencies associated with the student's UISSW center. Students interested in placement options in other areas of the state can contact their center's practicum administrator for access to other center's listings.

Agency information is accessed by clicking on the agency's name in the listing. The profile contains contact information as well as information on what level of students an agency accepts and in what terms. Some agencies only accept students in certain terms due to agency staffing and programming circumstances. Some agencies only accept Specialist Practicum students due to service provision requirements. That being said, some agencies are willing to accept students outside of the levels and terms identified on IPT if that student has applicable experience, skills, or interest, and agency circumstances can change. Unless clearly specified in the agency profile that certain program levels are not accepted, students are encouraged to contact an agency to ask.

Students need to be aware of any information listed under "Special Procedures/Site Requirements" at the bottom of the agency's profile. This is typically where agency's list information regarding required recruitment fairs, application procedures, or other requirements, such as access to transportation.

Sort: From the main Agency List page, students can perform a sort of the listings by clicking the "Sort" button on the left hand side of the screen within the gray bar. Good sort methods include choosing "Type(s) of Students Accepted" or by "Primary Classification." With any sort, the first listings typically do not have anything identified in the right hand column. This means that the agency profile was not complete for the information the sort was based on. Using the navigation links under the heading "Agency List," later pages will begin to show the information by the sort criteria.

Search: From the main Agency List page, students can also perform a keyword search. This searches the information provided by agencies in their agency profiles. Because the return is contingent on what has been written in the profile, students are encouraged to search multiple terms (i.e. children, kids, youth; veterans, military). The results highlight in red where the keyword was found in the agency's profile. Page navigation is found at the top of the page, rather than at the bottom. Always check the top of the page to see if additional returns were found.

Contacting Agencies: Agency contact information is provided on the agency profile page. This is the most current information we have for the agency. Please contact a practicum administrator if you identify profile information that is no longer correct. Students can email the agency's primary contact person by copying the address into a message through their uiowa email account.

The Practicum Learning Plan

The practicum learning plan outlines competencies and competency indicators in which the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires students to demonstrate proficiency. The learning plan is a requirement of this program and is used by the school to demonstrate a student's competency for accreditation purposes. Students develop their learning plan in IPT, where it is accessible by their practicum instructor, site supervisor, and practicum liaison. The learning plan is both a planning tool and an evaluation tool, and the practicum instructor will score the learning plan at the end of the academic term.

The Format

There are three components to the learning plan which students, practicum instructors, and site supervisors need to become familiar with: competencies, competency indicators, and learning activities.

Competencies

There are nine broad competencies identified by CSWE (2022).

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency Indicators

A student demonstrates competency through more specific competency indicators. The number of competency indicators varies by level and specialization. Students must demonstrate all competency indicators.

Learning Activities

Students identify learning activities based on the specific practicum and the opportunities that placement brings. This is how UISSW assures a student has demonstrated a specific social work skill while also allowing flexibility to explore various areas of social work practice.

- The student is responsible for writing learning activities for the learning plan with input from the practicum instructor and site supervisor.
- At least one learning activity is required to meet each competency indicator.
- Learning activities must be measurable/observable by the practicum instructor or site supervisor.
- Learning activities may include experiences, activities, projects, trainings, direct practice, etc., available to the student through the placement.
- Learning activities can and usually will apply to multiple competency indicators.

Developing the Learning Plan

Students are expected to develop the learning plan with their supervisor within the first two weeks of the placement. The learning plan is a living document, which means that it can be changed and adapted as a placement progresses.

The first step for many students is brainstorming a list of things that the student would like to do or learn in placement based on the agency's work. The student should discuss possible additional activities with their practicum instructor/site supervisor to meet each competency indicator.

The practicum liaison is another resource to help students determine possible activities to include in the learning plan. Students are expected to reach out to the practicum liaison for help if needed. The practicum liaison will review the learning plan before the first site visit. Many practicum liaisons require the learning plan to be completed before they will come for the site visit. Students are given feedback by the practicum liaison at the site visit and asked to make revisions to meet school requirements.

Additional resources to help students develop learning plans are available on the UISSW Practicum Education website, including sample learning plans.

Accessing & Editing the Learning Plan

The learning plan can be accessed through IPT by the student, practicum instructor, site supervisor, and practicum liaison. Once practicum has begun, the form will be available in a menu on the left hand side of the screen under My Forms after logging in. Click "View" to the left of the form's name.

Students should complete the information at the top of the learning plan, including names and email addresses of the appropriate people. Under each competency, students can fill in learning activities in the provided boxes by clicking the paper and pencil icon. A text box will open where the student can type in the learning activity. Always click "Save" or "Save Work" when making changes in the learning plan.

Evaluating Student Performance in Practicum Education

Evaluation of student performance is completed at the end of the term through the learning plan in IPT. This evaluation must be complete prior to the last day of the term (end of finals week).

Evaluation is a dynamic process which includes assessment of progress towards the mutually agreed upon goals in the learning plan. Ideally, this assessment occurs throughout the placement experience at regular intervals. The required hour of weekly supervision is an opportunity for the practicum instructor and student to assess opportunities for learning and the student's performance in placement.

Scoring & Grading

The practicum instructor/site supervisor evaluates the student within the learning plan. This involves individual scores for competencies and an overall recommended grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

Students are evaluated on the following scale for each competency:

- 5. Superior Competence** - Student adapts the skill to the setting and demonstrates mastery of the skill in novel, diverse, and difficult contexts.
- 4. Competence** - Student consistently understands the skill and its applicability and effectively and routinely demonstrates the skills in practice. The student shows an ability to function independently with appropriate supervision and support.
- 3. Emerging Competence** - Student understands the skill and demonstrates a beginning or growing ability to apply knowledge to practice. The student predominantly functions semi independently with appropriate supervision and support.
- 2. Limited Competence** - Student demonstrates limited and/or inconsistent understanding of essential knowledge and/or the application of knowledge to practice. More than the usual amount of supervision may be required. There is significant concern about the student's knowledge and/or practice level. A remediation plan is required.
- 1. Not Competent** - Student does not demonstrate command of essential knowledge and/or does not demonstrate application of knowledge to practice. The student is practicing well below a satisfactory level. A "1" at end of term receives an "unsatisfactory" grade.

N/O Not observed yet - only an option for specialist practicum fall term.

Rating scale adapted from Appalachian State University – Department of Social Work BSW Learning Plan and Evaluation (Midterm and Final) 2020-2021.

Students must achieve a minimum score of 3, demonstrating Emerging Competence, for every Competency. If the practicum instructor/site supervisor anticipates a lower score, they must contact the practicum liaison as soon as possible.

Students often equate the 1-5 scale with traditional letter grades (i.e. 5=A, 4=B, etc.). This is not an equivalent match and the scale scores should not be interpreted as letter grades. Some students are very focused on achieving 5's and are disappointed with 4's or 3's. A score of 5 implies that student has no more room for growth. Students typically achieve 3's and 4's, which demonstrates the necessary social work competence.

Students must achieve a recommended grade of "Satisfactory" to successfully complete practicum.

Evaluation of the Student in IPT

Student Responsibilities

The student is responsible for ensuring the learning plan is up to date at the end of the semester, adding learning activities that occurred during the placement and removing activities that were unable to be completed. In this process, the student must ensure that each competency indicator is related to at least one “met” learning activity.

In the learning plan matrix, the student is responsible for completing the left hand column, identifying each learning activity as Unmet, In Progress, or Met. If the student has completed their part of a project, even if the agency is still working on it, the activity is still graded as “Met.” Some learning activities may be “unmet” or “in progress,” so long as all competency indicators are met by the student. Students in specialist practicum also need to identify the term that the activity is related to in this column.

Students then complete the competency narratives section. Students should review the full language of a competencies from the competency handout and then write a brief narrative describing how they demonstrated each competency during the practicum. This can include knowledge, skills, affect, and cognitions. This narrative will help the practicum instructor evaluate student competence and is therefore important to complete thoughtfully.

At the bottom of the form, the student is responsible for filling in the Number of Registered Credits and the Total Hours of Practicum Logged. The Total Hours should be filled in once the required number of hours is met. The student also needs to respond to the two questions at the bottom. Click the paper and pencil icon next to “Student Comments.” A text box will appear. Click “Save” once the narrative is complete.

Practicum Instructor/Site Supervisor Responsibilities

Throughout the learning plan, the practicum instructor/site supervisor is responsible for completing the “Supervisor Score” in the right hand column. A score is required for each competency. If the student has both an site supervisor and an outside practicum instructor, the two should discuss and agree on scoring for the student. Supervisors should reflect on their observations of and discussions with the student as well as the information provided in the learning plan to score the student.

At the bottom of the document, the practicum instructor is responsible for selecting a “Recommended Grade,” either Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory, and entering narrative comments by clicking on the paper and pencil icon. Finally, the practicum instructor/site supervisor must sign the document. The practicum instructor signs the document first, and then if applicable, the site supervisor.

Practicum Liaison Responsibilities

The practicum liaison is responsible for ensuring that the final learning plan meets the CSWE requirements in terms of completed measureable learning activities associated with each competency behavior. The practicum liaison finalizes the evaluation of the student in placement as the final signature at the end of the document.

The practicum liaison can clear any signatures as necessary by clicking the Tools (wrench & screwdriver) icon in the top right hand corner of the learning plan form. From there, the practicum liaison can clear the necessary signature. Any cleared signatures will prompt an automatic email to the person informing them that their signature was cleared from the document.

Signing the Final Learning Plan

The final step for each person involves electronically signing the document. Once a person has electronically signed the learning plan, they are locked out of editing the document. The practicum liaison is able to clear signatures if needed so further changes can be made.

Electronically signing the learning plan should occur in the following order:

1. Student

2. Practicum instructor
3. Site supervisor (if applicable)
4. Practicum liaison

After each signature, the next person in line will receive an email directing them to complete the document.

Evaluation of Agency & Practicum instructor

The UISSW is committed to ensuring that our students obtain high-quality education experiences through our partnerships with local agencies. We value these partnerships and hope that hosting/supervising our students is mutually beneficial for our agency partners, practicum instructors, and site supervisors as well. The UISSW engages in on-going evaluation and continuous improvement of our practicum education program.

At the end of the placement, students are asked to complete an evaluation of their practicum instructor/site supervisor, agency, and practicum liaison. The information is used for UISSW quality assurance evaluations and for CSWE accreditation. The student's evaluation will not be disclosed directly to the placement agency or practicum instructor/site supervisor. In most instances, data will be aggregated across years for distribution of an overall evaluation of placement agencies and practicum instructors without identifying specific students.

In instances where major concerns are reported (i.e. ethical and/or legal issues), the practicum administrator will address the issue directly with the agency and/or practicum instructor. In such a case, future students may not be able to complete placements at that site until a resolution is reached.

Feedback from practicum instructors and site supervisors is highly encouraged regarding UISSW's Practicum Education program. Practicum instructors and site supervisors are encouraged to contact the center's practicum administrator directly to provide feedback.

Unsatisfactory Performance

Occasionally, students are unsuccessful in completing their placement. If students have been unable to complete the required hours due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness, a student may take an "Incomplete" for the term to have more time to finish the required number of hours. This must be discussed with the practicum administrator.

There are instances where students are unsuccessful due to other life circumstances. It is assumed that all students entering practicum have inherent abilities which, combined with knowledge, skills, and professional orientation gained in the classroom, can allow them to succeed. However, if life circumstances severely impact performance it is possible that a student may fail to meet practicum education requirements.

It is imperative that practicum instructors and site supervisors consult with the practicum liaison at the earliest sign that such dynamics may affect a student's ability to be successful in placement. The practicum liaison is available to troubleshoot, coach the practicum instructor, site supervisor, or student, assist in creating an improvement plan, or to brainstorm additional interventions and supports.

Any unsatisfactory performance issues should be directly addressed first with the student by the practicum instructor/site supervisor. The practicum liaison is able to make additional site visits in order to participate in addressing such issues.

Unsatisfactory performance resulting in grade of "U"

The grade of "U" is used in those instances when the level of performance for the entire term has been judged unsatisfactory by the practicum instructor/site supervisor and practicum liaison. Relevant documentation of student performance, including a copy of the learning plan with ratings completed by the instructor, must be provided. Practicum liaison documentation must be provided to support the evaluation. The student's advisor should be informed of the unsatisfactory performance in the practicum.

Retaking a course in which a grade of D, F or U is recorded

When a student fails a required course, a letter of concern is written and the Advancement Policy is invoked. A student may petition to retake the course as part of the resulting remediation plan. In general, decisions are based on evidence that:

- There are clear reasons why the student was unable to show their full capability when taking the course the first time;
- There is reason to expect that they would be able to pass the course on the second try;
- Re-taking the course is generally advisable educationally.

If there is agreement that the student should not be dismissed from the program but rather repeat the course, consideration should be given to the following options:

- Maintaining student placement in the current agency.
- Referring the student to an alternative site within said agency, if available.
- Delaying the second attempt until the learning problems have been alleviated.

If the decision of practicum instructor, student and practicum liaison is to continue at an alternate placement site, required practicum hours may be increased. The number is to be determined by the practicum liaison in consultation with the student's advisor and the practicum administrator and practicum education director.

Appendix

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Social Work Competencies for Generalist Practicum

Social Work Competencies for Practicum with Clinical Specialization

Social Work Competencies for Practicum with Leadership Specialization

Overview of Practicum Requirements

Social Work Competencies for Generalist Practicum

Adapted from the CSWE Social Work Competencies (2022)

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 behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication appropriate to the practice setting and in accordance with social work values and UISSW professional behavior standards;
- c) Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes;
- d) Manage value conflicts between self, social work profession, and agency;
- e) Manage affective reactions and emotional self-regulation; and
- f) 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, recognizing intersecting systems, at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels;
- 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; and
- c) Engage in continuous learning around anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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 organizational and/or governmental 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, person-in-environment, and interprofessional collaboration to engage with clients, constituencies, and other professionals; 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 from anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Social Work Competencies for Practicum with Clinical Specialization

Adapted from the CSWE Social Work Competencies (2022)

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, and models for ethical decision-making to clinical practice;
- b) Demonstrate behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication appropriate to the practice setting and in accordance with social work values and UISW professional behavior standards;
- c) Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate clinical practice outcomes;
- d) Manage value conflicts between self, social work profession, and agency;
- e) Manage affective reactions and emotional self-regulation; and
- f) Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior in clinical practice.

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

- a) Implement strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to protect human rights and advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice

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

- a) Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive clinical social work practice at the individual, family, and group 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 in clinical settings, 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 select, inform, or improve clinical practice, policy, and/or 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 clinical social work and evaluate client outcomes.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

- a) Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to apply coalition-building strategies to inform policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, and Groups in Clinical Practice

- a) Apply theoretical perspectives that inform clinical practice to engage with individuals, families, and groups; and
- b) Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive clinical practice with individuals, families, and groups.

Competency 7: Use Clinical Practice to Assess Individuals, Families, and Groups

- a) Apply theories of clinical practice, as well as other culturally responsive and anti-oppressive conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients in clinical settings; and
- b) Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients to develop mutually agreed-upon treatment plans.

Competency 8: Use Clinical Practice to Intervene with Individuals, Families, and Groups

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

Competency 9: Use Clinical Practice to Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups

- a) Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of client outcomes; and
- b) Critically analyze outcomes and apply and disseminate evaluation findings to enhance and improve practice effectiveness.

Social Work Competencies for Practicum with Leadership Specialization

Adapted from the CSWE Social Work Competencies (2022)

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 in leadership practice;
- b) Demonstrate behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication appropriate to the practice setting and in accordance with social work values and UISSW professional behavior standards;
- c) Use technology, including social media, ethically and appropriately to facilitate clinical practice outcomes;
- d) Manage value conflicts between self, social work profession, and agency;
- e) Manage affective reactions and emotional self-regulation; and
- f) Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior in clinical practice.

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

- a) Implement strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to protect human rights and advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice

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

- a) Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive leadership practice, research, and policy practice; 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 stakeholders, including colleagues, groups, constituencies, organizations, and communities, acknowledging stakeholders as experts of their own lived experiences.

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

- a) Apply research findings to select, inform and improve programs, organizations, communities, policy advocacy, and/or policy implementation;
- b) Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that engage communities and stakeholders to address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation methods to advance practice with groups, organizations, and communities

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

- a) Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to apply coalition-building strategies to inform policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

Competency 6: Engage in Leadership Practice

- a) Adapt professional social work engagement practices from an understanding of the theoretical perspectives and values that inform the perspectives and standpoints of stakeholders.
- b) Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with stakeholders.

Competency 7: Use Leadership Practice to Assess Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- a) Apply culturally responsive, anti-oppressive theories of leadership practice when assessing stakeholders; and
- b) Demonstrate respect for stakeholder self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with multiple stakeholders in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.
- c) Make assessment decisions in the face of conflicting goals when collaborating with multiple stakeholders.

Competency 8: Use Leadership Practice to Intervene with Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- a) Engage with stakeholders to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve stakeholder goals; and
- b) Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of stakeholders.

Competency 9: Use Leadership Practice to Evaluate Practice with Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- a) Select and use culturally responsive strategies for evaluation of outcomes;
- b) Select an evaluation design and implementation plan that engages the expertise and leadership of stakeholders, especially marginalized communities; and
- c) Critically analyze outcomes and apply and disseminate evaluation findings to enhance equity and improve programs, policies, and organizations.

Overview of Practicum Requirements

	BA Generalist Practicum	Master's Generalist Practicum	MSW Specialist Practicum
Purpose	Final preparation for entering bachelor's level practice by applying classroom curriculum to experiential learning in a supported practice setting.	Introduction to master's level practice through agency-based learning for students without an accredited undergraduate degree in social work.	Final preparation for entering master's level practice by applying classroom curriculum to experiential learning in a supported practice setting.
Duration	1 semester - Spring or summer	1 semester - Spring or summer	2 semesters - Fall and spring
Hours	min 400 clock hours (8 s.h.); max 550 clock hours (11 s.h.)	min 300 clock hours (3 s.h.)	min 600 clock hours (6 s.h.)
Supervision	One hour weekly by BSW or MSW professional with at least two years post-graduate experience.	One hour weekly by MSW professional with at least two years post-graduate experience.	One hour weekly by MSW professional with at least two years post-graduate experience.
Learning Opportunities	Hands-on learning opportunities that reflect the student's interest, experience, and skills; mutually determined by student and agency.	Hands-on learning opportunities that reflect the student's interest, experience, and skills; mutually determined by student and agency.	Masters-level hands-on and solo learning opportunities that reflect the student's interest, experience, and skills; mutually determined by student and agency.
Student Generalist Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior 2. Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice 3. Engage anti-racism, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice 4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice 5. Engage in policy practice 6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities* 7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities* 8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities* 9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities* <p>*Students in specialist practicum focus on either clinical (individuals, families, groups) or leadership (organizations, communities) practice</p>		
Seminar	Concurrent with practicum, students attend a seminar designed to integrate classroom learning with agency practice (conducted in a confidential setting).		
Site Visits	Two visits minimum, one in first month and one at end of semester.	Two visits minimum, one in first month and one at end of semester.	Three visits minimum, one in first month and one at end of fall and spring semesters.
Evaluation	Based on the learning plan and narrative assessment provided by the practicum instructor, to be completed at the end of each semester. Graded S/U.		
Planning Process	Begins in early fall. Students identify placement options, complete interviews, and match based on mutual agreement between agency and student.	Begins in early fall. Students identify placement options, complete interviews, and match based on mutual agreement between agency and student.	Begins in fall/early spring. Students identify placement options, complete interviews, and match based on mutual agreement between agency and student.
Questions?	Contact the practicum administrator for the student's center or Sarah Witry, Practicum Education Director, at sarah-witry@uiowa.edu or (319) 335-1256		