



***School of Social Work***

**Revised September, 2012**

***Master of Social Work Program***

**FIELD PRACTICUM  
HANDBOOK**

**UMSL School of Social Work, Master of Social Work Program  
121 Bellerive Hall...One University Boulevard...St Louis, MO 63121-4400**

**FIELD PRACTICUM MANUAL  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – ST. LOUIS  
MSW PROGRAM**

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The following documents are available on the School of Social Work web page:

- a) SW5801 Syllabus Spring 2012
- b) Collaborative Manual (for Field Instructors)
- c) NASW Code of Ethics

September 2012



## School of Social Work

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Fall 2012

Dear Social Work Student:

You are about to embark on one of the most significant experiences in your development as a professional social worker – the practicum experience. Your field practicum will give you the opportunity to begin applying what you have learned in the classroom to real life social work practice situations.

This manual is designed to provide you with essential information for making your practicum a successful experience. Please familiarize yourself with its contents. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to contact Patti Rosenthal (314-516-6506), Director of Field Education, or to speak to your faculty advisor.

Best wishes for an exciting and rewarding field experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lois Pierce".

Lois Pierce, Ph.D.  
Director  
School of Social Work

**MISSION OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

The School of Social Work engages students and faculty in professional education, research and service, advancing knowledge and competence to promote human and societal well-being. Within a collaborative learning environment, students are prepared as culturally competent, critically thinking leaders committed to social and economic justice and professional values and ethics.

The School's mission and goals are closely linked to those of UM-St. Louis, a land-grant comprehensive research university committed to meeting the diverse needs in the state's largest metropolitan geographical area.

Generalist practice is the basic conceptual approach for the BSW degree and forms the foundation for the MSW degree. Building on a liberal arts background, the social work curriculum develops knowledge and skills to understand complex social issues and the ability to assess and intervene directly and indirectly at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, and/or policy levels. In each phase, students are taught to think critically and analyze and evaluate their social work practice.

With a solid liberal arts and generalist foundation, students undertake advanced practice in the MSW concentration. Concentration level curricula are guided by the systems and strengths perspectives aimed at empowerment and capacity-building of at-risk populations. Students develop advanced knowledge and skills in family practice, gerontology or social work leadership and management. The choice of these particular concentrations was based on several years of background study, which included analyses of (a) the St. Louis region's needs; (b) existing St. Louis area social work programs; (c) advice from field instructors and the School's Advisory Board; (d) a scan of two dozen MSW programs around the nation; (e) an internal scan of UM-St. Louis curricular and faculty strengths; and (f) student interest.

Finally, the School of Social Work's mission is enhanced through significant partnerships and cooperative relationships with area educational institutions, human service organizations, policy makers, citizen action groups, and business organizations. Further, student learning is enriched through the growing use of shared educational resources, and information and distance learning technologies that are generated in collaboration with other public and private social work programs in the metropolitan region and the state.

## GOALS OF THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The goals of the M.S.W. program of the University of Missouri- St. Louis are to:

1. **Prepare professional social workers with the knowledge, skills, values and ethics for effective social work practice.** Students learn to engage in professional behavior, to evaluate that behavior and adjust their behavior to engage in more effective practice. They are educated to intervene – at individual, family, group, organization, community, and policy levels, and using generalist and problem solving perspectives, integrate social work knowledge and skills with an understanding of social issues from local, national, and global perspectives.
2. **Prepare social work students to analyze and address dynamic issues and challenges facing diverse populations and to promote social justice and positive social change.** The School educates graduate level social work students for advanced practice with children, older adults, and families, and for leadership roles in community organizations. Students gain understanding of social problems and social issues, and how to build capacity and provide resources and opportunities, especially to populations affected by poverty, violence, and/or discrimination. Students are prepared to move into leadership positions, where they will promote social change and economic and social justice.
3. **Provide a professional social work education to a diverse body of students, who desire a public university education in social work in St. Louis.** Students are offered flexible educational opportunities, including course schedules and practicum placements that acknowledge their traditional or non-traditional student status. Diversity is embraced, as faculty and staff work with students individually, in groups, and in classes to maximize learning and professional development.
4. **Prepare students to conduct and utilize research to respond effectively to dynamic social contexts, issues and problems found in social work practice.** The promotion of life-long learning – including continuing professional education, on-going assessment of practice skills, critical analysis of economic and social structures and policies, and possible doctoral education – occurs through coursework, faculty mentoring, and continuing education programs offered by the School.
5. **Provide educational opportunities and diverse learning environments in partnership with public and private graduate social work, and related programs.** Students have opportunities to earn certificates in specialized areas, to participate in a university consortium for field education program among all St. Louis social work schools, to engage in special learning experiences (e.g., practicum placements for students interested in aging), to interact with students elsewhere in the state through distance learning, to access the shared library resources of the majority of institutions of higher education in the state, to participate in courses in other departments and institutions, and to participate in scholarly and professional conferences and other learning opportunities.

6. **Contribute to solving local, regional, and global problems and to promoting social change through teaching, research, and service.** The graduate faculty of the School of Social Work has expertise in social work education, research and scientific inquiry, micro and macro practice, and policy development. In their work, they focus on excellence in teaching, productive research agendas, and service to local, national, and international organizations. Furthermore, faculty and staff work closely with colleagues and institutions in St. Louis and elsewhere to maximize their capabilities and impact in teaching, research, and service.

**These goals are consistent with the land-grant public service mission of the University, the MSW feasibility study, and the educational mission statement of CSWE.**

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Program in the School of Social Work at University of Missouri-St. Louis is designed to prepare students to be competent professional social work practitioners. Graduates will have the knowledge, skills and values for direct social work practice with individuals, families, or older adults, or the knowledge, skills and values to effectively manage and lead non-profit and public human service agencies. Social justice principles will guide graduates in their practice at all levels of intervention particularly with persons who are oppressed because of their color, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation or physical or mental ability.

The MSW must be completed in four years. Full-time students will be able to complete the program in two years. Part-time students can complete the program in four years.

The MSW program requires 60 hours of graduate coursework. However, a student who has earned a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) within the past five years or who has taken graduate coursework, comparable to that required for our program, in another social work program or another department at UM – St. Louis or another university may receive credit toward the 60-hour requirement or, by passing a test-out exam, have content waived.

The MSW has two levels of study. In the first year, students complete 30 graduate credit hours of coursework, identified as *foundation* content. In the second year of study, students complete another 30 credit hours of coursework in their *concentrations*.

The three *concentrations* offered in the MSW program at UM-St. Louis are:

- Family Practice
- Social Work Leadership and Management
- Gerontology

Full time students complete practicums in their first and second years of study, although students entering with a BSW are exempted from the first-year practicum. Each practicum requires 300 hours or approximately two and one half days per week in an agency for one semester. The

MSW program curriculum at UM-St. Louis was developed in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards developed by the Council on Social Work Education.

### FOUNDATION CONTENT

In the first year of graduate study, the curriculum emphasis is on generalist social work practice. Students take courses, which provide a common base of knowledge across all practice settings and populations. Students gain the basic knowledge and skills to intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities and are able to apply this generalist perspective to advanced social work practice.

Upon completion of these 30 foundation credit hours, students will have the core knowledge, skills, and values of the profession to move into an area of specialization based on their career interests. Students cannot proceed to their concentration choice without having successfully completed most foundation courses. Full-time students will complete the foundation in one year; part-time students will complete the foundation coursework in two years.

It is anticipated that students who successfully complete the foundation courses will have gained and will be able to demonstrate (in observable ways) a measurable degree of achievement of the following underlined competencies. Each competency is followed by ways each will be observed and measured.

### Foundation Competencies

#### EP 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth.

- Students evidence the skills of advocacy by ***advocating for client access to the services of social work***. This is operationalized through students' recognition of the role of social workers as advocates, their ability to identify social movements, key figures/leaders, and major themes in the development of community practice, and apply knowledge of policy advocacy to empower vulnerable populations.
- Students ***practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development*** developing an understanding of the self and the use of self in the context of practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- Students learn to ***attend to professional roles and boundaries***, developing a sense of professional awareness in working with individuals, families and groups.
- Student ***demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication***, while working in communities and in organizations.
- By demonstrating the ability to extrapolate knowledge from the professional literature for ongoing professional development and commitment to the social work profession, the program believes that students will comprehend and internalize the expectation they should ***engage in career-long-learning***.
- The effective ***use of supervision and consultation*** are necessary for continued professionalism and development, and students are expected to understand the function of supervision and utilize it to maximize the quality of their practice.

#### EP 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

- Students become sensitive to their own values and biases and understand the need to adhere to professional standards of practice in work with individuals learning to ***recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.***
- Students are able to describe and ***apply major components and standards of the NASW Code of Ethics*** to ethical decision making in social work practice. They are able to demonstrate an understanding of ethical dilemmas facing social work practitioners and researchers and are able to take decisions based on ethical principles.
- Students will understand the complexities involved in the application of ethical principles to social work practice in real-world situations, ***and applying strategies of ethical reasoning*** they will learn to ***tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts*** as they seek to ***arrive at principled decisions.***

#### EP 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

- Students will gain the skills needed to identify, synthesize, critically assess, and analyze relevant information to inform social practice by ***distinguishing, appraising, and integrating multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.***
- Students will ***analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation*** and utilize assessment findings to develop appropriate interventions across all practice levels.
- Students will ***demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups and organizations communities and colleagues*** through oral presentations and, written assignments in classes and in field.

#### EP 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim.

- To ***recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power,*** students will be able to analyze the effects of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability on a individual's life course and the relevant implications for social work practice. They will develop an understanding of how the forces of oppression and inequality work through societal forces, including social policies, to weaken the power of disadvantaged and oppressed people and their access to resources.



- Students will discuss and explore community demographics and resources that may reflect a culture's structure and values and social influences on their own perceptions, developing a self-awareness of their attitudes and values that affect their practice with diverse groups. They will ***gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.***
- Students will be able to assess the impact of life-span issues on social and economic opportunities and vice versa, demonstrate an awareness of how intersecting diversity factors affect world-view and life experiences, ***and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.***
- Students view their clients as experts about their own life situations and view ***themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.***

#### EP 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

- ***Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination*** by demonstrating an understanding of social and political forms of oppression and discrimination, developing a fundamental understanding of the social histories and current status of diverse groups and the institutions that influence diverse groups' experiences in the United States and/or contribute to the inequitable distribution of resources.
- Students will increase awareness of social justice issues, develop skills and knowledge that will facilitate effective practice, and become allies to oppressed groups in ***advocating to advance human rights and social and economic justice.***

#### EP 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.

- Students will develop the ability to formulate and investigate research questions to identify risk factors and intervention approaches ***and use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry.***
- Students will become familiar with the process of dissemination of research findings for the development of evidence-based practice models and will ***use research evidence to inform practice.***

#### EP 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development.

- Students will gain a basic understanding of major theories of development as well as of social systems theory, the strengths perspective, and a person in environment approach, and will ***utilize such conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.***
- Students will critique the range of theories of human development to assess and critically apply the knowledge gained through them to ***understand the person and the environment.*** Utilizing the knowledge acquired through the liberal arts perspective, and the influence of biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual factors, students will understand the relationship of micro, mezzo, and macro variables in human functioning

EP 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development.

- Students will ***analyze*** major social and welfare policies, discuss how these have changed over time, and be able to ***formulate and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.***
- Students will view themselves and learners and engage those with whom they work as informants, ***collaborating with colleagues and clients for effective policy action*** and practice skills that advance social and economic justice.

***EP 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice***

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.

- Students will use relevant information and frameworks to critically assess the context of client functioning and funding, ***continuously discovering, appraising, and attending to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.***
- Students will evidence leadership in managing organizations, working in communities, and engaging in policy practice to ***promote sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.***

EP 2.1.10(a)–(d) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances, evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

**EP 2.1.10(a)**

- Using social work knowledge and with self awareness, students will understand the unique considerations for engagement to ***substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.***
- Students will evidence ***empathy*** and utilize skills of empathic communication, authenticity, active listening and ***other interpersonal skills*** in relationship building with client systems.
- Working with clients, students will ***develop a mutually agreed on focus of work and desired outcomes.***

**EP 2.1.10(b)**

- Students will develop multidimensional assessment skills including the ***assessment of strengths and limitations within client*** systems.
- Students will work with client systems to identify areas of concern or need to be explored in the social work helping process, ***developing a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.***
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical basis and scope and methods of design in conducting social work research, ***collecting, organizing, and interpreting client data*** to effectively inform practice.
- Students will work with client systems to identify and ***develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives*** and ***select appropriate intervention strategies.***

**EP 2.1.10(c)**

- Students will identify needs and ***initiate actions to achieve organizational goals.***
- Students ***will identify appropriate models and/or methods to implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities.***
- Students will be able to implement appropriate intervention strategies that ***enhance client capacities to resolve problems*** and will allow them to ***negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients.***
- Students will be able to demonstrate skills that ***facilitate transitions and endings*** as they terminate relationships with clients.

**EP 2.1.10(d)**

- Students will learn the various approaches to ***critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions*** that can be applied within varying practice settings.

## CONCENTRATION OPTIONS

At the time that students complete the Admissions packet they are asked to identify their career interests as they apply to the three concentrations offered in the MSW program. Each concentration requires completion of 30 hours of coursework, including 6 hours of advanced field practicum.

### Family Practice Concentration

Students wishing to work primarily with individuals and families will elect the Family Practice Concentration. Upon graduation, the new MSW will have the knowledge and skills to work in child welfare agencies, family service agencies, mental health clinics, health-care organizations, family violence service agencies, substance abuse prevention and treatment programs or correctional organizations.

The following tables summarize the Family Practice concentration curriculum for full-time and part-time students. Three to six hours may be taken in the summer.

<b>Family Practice Concentration</b> Full-Time Students	
Year 1	Year 2
<p><b><i>Fall</i></b> (15 credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3)</li> <li>• SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3)</li> <li>• SW 5350 Social Work &amp; Human Service Organizations (3)</li> <li>• SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice(3)</li> <li>• SW 5300 Community Practice and Social Change (3)</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Fall</i></b> (15 credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6160 Advanced Practice Strategies Across the Life Span (3)</li> <li>• SW 6200 Family Policy (3)</li> <li>• SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3) 300 hours/22 hrs/week: 3 days</li> <li>• SW 5450 Research Methods &amp; Analysis II (3)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Spring</i></b> (15 credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5410 Research Methods &amp; Analysis I (3)</li> <li>• SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3)</li> <li>• SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2)</li> <li>• SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Spring</i></b> (15 credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6150 Theory and Practice with Families (3)</li> <li>• SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3)</li> <li>• SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3) 300 hours/22/wk: 3 days</li> <li>• Elective (6)</li> </ul>

<b>Family Practice Concentration</b> <b>Part-Time Students</b>			
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
<b><i>Fall</i></b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5500 Social Work &amp; Human Service Organizations (3)</li> <li>• SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Fall</i></b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5350 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3)</li> <li>• SW 5300 Community Practice &amp; Social Change (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Fall</i></b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6160 Advanced Practice Strategies Across the Life Span (3)</li> <li>• Elective(3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Fall</i></b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Spring</i></b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3)</li> <li>• SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3)</li> <li>• SW 5410 Research Methods &amp; Analysis I (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Spring</i></b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5450 Research Methods &amp; Analysis II (3)</li> <li>• SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2)</li> <li>• SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Spring</i></b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6200 Family Policy (3)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> <li>• SW 6150 Theory and Practice with Families (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Spring</i></b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3)</li> <li>• SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>

The Family Practice concentration competencies, which are operationalized below, were developed after consideration of the knowledge, skills, and values that faculty believe are needed to be effective MSW family practitioners.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.1** Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly  
 Advanced family practice social workers recognize the importance of professional use of self in relationships, the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives, and adherence to ethical guidelines and social work values.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.2** Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice  
 Advanced family practice social workers are knowledgeable about ethical issues, legal issues and shifting mores that affect their relationships with clients.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.3** Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments  
 Advanced family practice social workers understand and differentiate among multiple theories and practice methods. They are able to evaluate how theories and methods relate to clients and client systems within their environmental context. They regularly reflect on their own assumptions and how those affect practice.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.4** Engage diversity and difference in practice  
 Advanced family practice social workers are knowledgeable about many forms of diversity and difference and how these affect professional relationships and client's presenting problems. Advanced practitioners understand how dimensions of diversity affect (a) explanations of illness,

(b) help-seeking behaviors, and (c) healing practices. They understand how clinical practice can be culture bound.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice**

Advanced family practice social workers understand how economic, social and cultural factors challenge clients and client systems. They understand the stigma and shame that face many clients who seek help. They also understand strategies for advancing human rights and social and economic justice in many contexts.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research**

Advanced family practice social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-based practice interventions, best practices and the evidence-based research process.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment**

Advanced family practice social workers understand how to differentially apply theories of human behavior and the social environment. They are familiar with diagnostic classification systems used in a comprehensive assessment. They understand how sociocultural contexts influence diagnoses and practice interventions.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services**

Advanced family practice social workers understand the connection between clients, practice and both public and organizational policy. They understand how legislation, policies, and program services are developed and funded and are able to advocate for effective policies that promote social well-being.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.9 Respond to the contexts that shape practice**

Advanced family practice social workers are knowledgeable about how relational, organizational, and community systems may affect clients. They anticipate and react to evolving cultural, technological, geographical, political, legal, economic and environmental contexts.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities**

Advanced family practice involves the dynamic, interactive and reciprocal processes of engagement, multidimensional assessment, intervention and practice evaluation at multiple levels. Advanced practitioners have a theoretically informed knowledge base that allows them to practice effectively with individuals, families and groups.

Students interested in developing expertise in working with women may elect to pursue the Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies offered at UM-St. Louis in addition to their social work concentration. Students wishing to work with older adults--either in direct practice or in an administrative capacity may elect to pursue the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology, although the Gerontology Concentration is usually more appropriate, and students interested in agency leadership roles should consider taking courses in the Non-profit Leadership and Management program.

### Social Work Leadership & Management Concentration

Students wishing to work in human service agencies and organizations as program planners, policy-makers, supervisors, administrators, or community development specialists may elect the Social Work Leadership and Management concentration.

The following tables summarize the Social Work Leadership and Management concentration for full- and part-time students. Three to six hours may be taken in the summer.

<b>Social Work Leadership and Management Concentration</b> Full-Time Students	
Year 1	Year 2
<b><i>Fall</i></b> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3)</li> <li>• SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment(3)</li> <li>• SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice(3)</li> <li>• SW 5350 Social Work and Human Service Organizations (3)</li> <li>• SW 5300 Community Practice &amp; Social Change (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Fall</i></b> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5450 Research Methods &amp; Analysis II (3)</li> <li>• SW 6300 Leadership and Management in Non-Profit Organizations (3)</li> <li>• SW 6250 Social and Economic Development Policy (3)</li> <li>• SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3) 300 hours/22 hrs/week: 3 days</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Spring</i></b> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3)</li> <li>• SW 5410 Research Methods &amp; Analysis I (3)</li> <li>• SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2)</li> <li>• SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Spring</i></b> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6311, 6312, 6313 (A,B,C) Management Issues in Non-Profit Organizations (1 credit each= 3 credit hours)</li> <li>• SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3)</li> <li>• SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3) 300 hours/22hr/wk: 3 days</li> <li>• Elective (6)</li> </ul>

<b>Social Work Leadership and Management Concentration</b> Part-Time Students			
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
<b><i>Fall</i></b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3)</li> <li>• SW 5100 Generalist Social work Practice (3)</li> <li>• SW 5300 Community Practice &amp; Social Change (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Fall</i></b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3)</li> <li>• SW 5350 Social Work and Human Service Organizations (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Fall</i></b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6250 Social and Economic Development Policy (3)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Fall</i></b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3)</li> <li>• SW 6300 Leadership &amp; Management in Non-Profit Organizations (3)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Spring</i></b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3)</li> <li>• SW 5410 Research Methods &amp; Analysis I (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Spring</i></b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5450 Research Methods &amp; Analysis II (3)</li> <li>• SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2)</li> <li>• SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I(4)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Spring</i></b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6311, 6312,6313 Management Issues in Non-Profit Organizations (3)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>	<b><i>Spring</i></b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3)</li> <li>• SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>

MSW students pursuing this concentration have the opportunity to complete the Graduate Certificate in Non-profit Management and Leadership, which is an 18 credit hour program. In addition, students may also consider a joint MSW/MPPA (Master's in Policy Administration) degree.

The core competencies that students in the Leadership and Management concentration are expected to achieve are listed below.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.1** Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly  
 Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize the importance of professional conduct and of person/professional development for organizational and community practice.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.2** Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice  
 Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management ascribe to the values and ethics advanced by NASW and CSWE for professional conduct and, thus, engage in ethical decision-making in working with communities and organizations. They understand the use of the IFSW/IASSW Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles for arriving at principled decisions concerning social justice and human rights. They also understand that work within complex systems can generate conflicting priorities and ambiguities that require professional value-based judgments.



**COMPETENCY 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments**

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management approach community and organizational problem-solving using logical, scientific and reasoned frameworks for analysis and synthesis toward intervention.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice**

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize diversity, including age, race, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, religion, political ideology, immigration status, sex and sexual orientation; and how these differences can influence oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation, as well as privilege and power in communities and organizations.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice**

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management are knowledgeable about the interconnections between oppression and theories/strategies to promote social justice and human rights. They adhere to the principles of human rights advanced through national constitutional laws and through international declarations of human rights, including the seven declarations and conventions listed in the IFSW/IASSW Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research**

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management utilize quantitative and qualitative research to understand the nature of communities and organizations and the best practices to improve well-being in these macro systems. They integrate members of communities and organizations in the process and outcome evaluations of macro system interventions.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment**

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize the central importance of human relationships, including the interconnection between people and place, between people and micro and macro social systems. They also appreciate the unique contributions of cultural, environmental, urban, and rural contexts to organizations and communities.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services**

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize that social work is a non-partisan political profession, and that political processes and policies affect the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and organization, as well as social work practice.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice**

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize and respond to the changing landscape of public, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations that comprise the social

service sector, as well as to the social, economic, political, and environmental contexts that shape these organizations and community life.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.10(a)–(d) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.**

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with organizations and communities and their constituencies. They understand participatory methods and the importance of the worth and dignity of persons in all engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation efforts. Develop mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

**Gerontology**

Students wishing to work with older adults—either in direct practice or in an administrative capacity—will elect the Gerontology concentration.

M.S.W. students can focus their attention on developing direct practice skills to work with the older adults and their families as professional case managers or develop administrative skills, allowing them to work as administrators of long-term care facilities, adult day care centers, respite programs, area agencies on aging, the Division of Health & Senior Services, and others.

The following tables summarize the Gerontology Concentration Curriculum for full-time and part-time students. Three to six hours may be taken in the summer.

<b>Gerontology Concentration</b> Full-time Students	
Year 1	Year 2
<p><b><i>Fall</i></b> (15 credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3)</li> <li>• SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3)</li> <li>• SW 5350 Social Work &amp; Human Service Organizations (3)</li> <li>• SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice (3)</li> <li>• SW 5300 Community Practice &amp; Social Change (3)</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Fall</i></b> (15 credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 6443 Health Care Policy (3)</li> <li>• SW 6150 Theory &amp; Practice with Families (3)</li> <li>• SW 5450 Research Methods &amp; Analysis II (3)</li> <li>• SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3) 300 hours/22 hrs/week: 3 days</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Spring</i></b> (15 credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3)</li> <li>• SW 5410 Research Methods &amp; Analysis I (3)</li> <li>• SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2)</li> <li>• SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4)</li> <li>• Elective (3)</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Spring</i></b> (15 credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SW6120 Theory and Practice with the Older Adults (3)</li> <li>• SW6400 Program &amp; Practice Evaluation (3)</li> <li>• SW6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3) 300 hours/22 hr/week: 3 days</li> <li>• Elective (6)</li> </ul>

<b>Gerontology Concentration</b> <b>Part-Time Students</b>			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<b>Fall</b> ( 6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice (3)</li> <li>SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3)</li> </ul>	<b>Fall</b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SW 5300 Community Practice &amp; Social Change (3)</li> <li>SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3)</li> </ul>	<b>Fall</b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SW 6150 Theory and Practice with Families (3)</li> <li>SW 6443 Health Care Policy (3)</li> <li>Elective (3)</li> </ul>	<b>Fall</b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II, 300 hours/22 hrs/week= 3 days (3)</li> <li>Elective (3)</li> </ul>
<b>Spring</b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SW 5200 Social Policy &amp; Social Services (3)</li> <li>SW 5410 Research Method I (3)</li> <li>SW 5350 Social Work &amp; Human Service Organizations (3)</li> </ul>	<b>Spring</b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SW 5450 Research Methods &amp; Analysis II (3)</li> <li>SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2)</li> <li>SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4)</li> </ul>	<b>Spring</b> (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elective (3)</li> <li>SW 6120 Theory and Practice with Older Adults (3)</li> </ul>	<b>Spring</b> (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3)</li> <li>SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III, 300 hours/22 hrs/week = 3 days (3)</li> <li>Elective (3)</li> </ul>

Each of the core competencies for Gerontology is operationalized through the following practice behaviors. These are described in the section below along with where and how we measure student competency in the curriculum.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.1** Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly  
Gerontological social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Gerontological social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth.  
Gerontological social workers address personal biases regarding aging, and they work to dispel myths surrounding aging.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.2** Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice  
Gerontological social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Gerontological social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.3** Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments  
Gerontological social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information including the application of concepts and theories of aging.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice**

Gerontological social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Gerontological social workers appreciate that as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice**

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Gerontological social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Gerontological social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research**

Gerontological social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Gerontological social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment**

Gerontological social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Gerontological social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services**

Gerontological social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Gerontological social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Gerontological social workers are able to apply the skills of advocacy to mold policies that are responsive to the needs of older people.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.9 Respond to the contexts that shape practice**

Gerontological social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Gerontological social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.

**COMPETENCY 2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities**

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Gerontological social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with older individuals, their families, groups, organizations and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances, evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

Students wishing to work with older adults -- either in direct practice or in an administrative capacity may also elect to pursue the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. Students interested primarily in administering programs for older adults are encouraged to pursue a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management and Leadership.

## Organization of Practicum Experience 3.1

The field practicum is an integral part of both the foundation and concentration curriculum of the MSW program. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) refers to field education as the “signature pedagogy” in social work education (Educational Policy 2.3). The practicum provides students the opportunity to draw upon the theories and practice skills they learn in the classroom and apply them to the practice setting. Students are offered social work experiences at increasing levels of complexity as they move through the practicum course sequence. By demonstrating specific practice behaviors, students are challenged to master the 10 core competencies outlined by the CSWE.

Some general field placement goals include:

- integrating social work theory and practice
- deepening understanding of social work principles, concepts, and values
- refinement of social work practice skills
- increasing self-awareness
- learning to use supervision and feedback constructively
- developing an understanding of agency functioning and organizational dynamics
- beginning the professional socialization process by observing and interacting with social work professionals
- learning to perform a social work role in a human service agency
- expanding understanding of how social policy applies to specific practice situations and target populations
- increasing knowledge of the social service delivery system
- refining oral and written communication skills
- providing opportunities to work with diverse populations
- acquainting students with research and evaluation methodology
- identifying areas of interest and areas for professional development

The foundation practicum (**SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I**) is designed to provide students with a generalist social work practice experience. This is a 300 clock hour practicum, which requires two and one half days per week of work during one semester. Typically, full-time students will take this course in the winter semester of the first year and part-time students will take this course in the winter term of their second year. In exceptional situations part-time students, with the approval of their advisor, may be granted the option of completing the foundation field experience over two semesters, beginning in the winter semester, and extending into the following summer. (Students who wish to pursue this option should meet with their academic advisor to make the appropriate arrangements. Students must work a minimum of 12 hour per week at the practicum site). Students receive four graduate credits for successful completion of the foundation field practicum. Students choose their foundation practicum from among agencies that have agreed to provide this generalist experience to MSW students.

**Students must have completed, or be concurrently enrolled in, all foundation courses (with the exception of SW5450) and have a GPA of 3.0 or better to register for the foundation field experience. Students on academic probation or on restricted status will not be permitted to begin Graduate Field Practicum I.**

In addition to taking the foundation field practicum, students take a 2-credit practicum seminar course (**SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar**) designed to examine the ethical and practice issues of the student placement. This course is taken concurrently with the foundation practicum. This course meets bi-weekly for two hours. A syllabus for the course is included as Appendix A.

The advanced concentration field practica (**SW 6800: Graduate Field Practicum II and SW 6850: Graduate Field Practicum III**) are selected by students to complement their career objectives. **Before entering advanced field practica students must have: a) completed all foundation courses and; b) completed or be concurrently enrolled in, at least one advanced practice course (SW6300, SW6311-12-13, SW6120, SW6250, SW6150 or SW6160 - *it is recommended that students take 6300 prior to 6311-12-13*); c) a GPA of 3.0 or better. Students on academic probation or on restricted status will not be permitted to begin Graduate Field Practicum II or III.** Students choose their concentration practica from among agencies that have agreed to provide these specialized experiences to MSW students. These practica reflect the student's choice of one of three possible concentrations:

- 1) Family Practice
- 2) Social Work Leadership & Management
- 3) Gerontology.

Students work at the practicum site three full days per week for two semesters. Full-time students will typically complete their advanced field practica in the fall and winter terms of their second year, part-time students will typically complete these practica in the fourth year of their studies. By working three days per week in an agency for two semesters, students will have accrued 600 clock hours in practicum. (In situations where working three days per week at the practicum site is not feasible, students may extend the practicum experience into the following semester. Students should meet with their academic advisor to arrange this. **The entire concentration field experience must be completed in one year**). Typically, students complete both advanced practica at the same agency. They are given 6 graduate hours for completing the two semesters of practicum: 3 hours per semester.

**Block placements** (completing both practica in one semester) **are allowed only in exceptional situations.** Students considering block placements should first speak with their advisor about their intentions. With the advisor's verbal permission, the student should make his/her request in writing to the Office of Field Education. The student should outline the reasons for requesting the placement option. Permission to take a block field placement will only be granted in situations where it is determined by both the student's advisor and the Director of Field Education that such an arrangement is in the student's educational best interest.

**Students are expected to select a site for the concentration practicum that differs from the foundation practicum.** This is to ensure that students have exposure to a variety of learning experiences. **Students may request an exception to this policy by submitting a proposal in writing to their advisor describing their rationale for remaining at the same site and explaining how the concentration experience will differ from the foundation experience.** Students' requests to remain at the same site will be reviewed by the advisor, as well as by the Office of Field Education, and approval will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. This proposal must be submitted the semester prior to enrollment in the concentration practica (SW6800 & SW6850).

**Students complete a total of 900 hours in practicum, 300 in foundation and 600 in advanced practicum.**

Students and departmental faculty use the practice-theory, policy and specialized research courses within their concentrations to discuss and review practicum issues to ensure integration of classroom content during the advanced practicum experience. For example, the practice-theory course of each concentration draws on examples from student practica to illustrate the concepts and skills taught in the course. Similarly, the policy courses use current issues that surface within the agencies to highlight the development, implementation and consequences of policies that affect clients. In the concentration-year research course, each student is expected to develop and implement a research study within her/his practicum setting. This experience integrates the content from the first-year research courses into the reality of agency-based research and program evaluation. All graduate students in practicum must have an MSW supervisor with two years of post-master's experience. All students must have passing grades in the field placements to graduate. Students who lack either the intellectual or emotional aptitude for professional practice, or who violate the code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers in field practica, will be reviewed for possible dismissal from the program.

**ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR LIFE EXPERIENCE AND PREVIOUS WORK  
EXPERIENCE WILL NOT BE GRANTED IN WHOLE OR IN PART IN LIEU OF THE  
FIELD PRACTICUM COURSES.**



## Practicum Planning Process 3.2

Practicum placement at UM-St. Louis is a structured, self-selection process. Before students contact social service agencies to inquire about field placements, they must participate in a planning process designed to help clarify their goals and interests, and to assess their readiness to begin practicum. Each student completes an application for the practicum and meets with the assigned faculty advisor to ensure that all academic requirements have been completed and to discuss practicum site possibilities. Students are also required to attend mandatory practicum planning meetings that are held during the semester prior to the first practicum. These meetings assist the student with selection of the practicum site and development of the learning agreement. Students are also encouraged to attend annual practicum/career fairs to learn about potential placements sites.

### **FORMS**

**\*\*All practicum-related forms may be downloaded from Field Education Forms at <http://www.umsl.edu/~socialwk/>**

**\*\*Students may access the searchable database of approved agencies at <https://apps.umsl.edu/webapps/ITS/socwork/field/students/login.cfm>**

**\*\*Agencies and Field Instructors may access the online application to become approved at <https://apps.umsl.edu/webapps/ITS/socwork/field/fieldforms/login.cfm>**

**The step by step process for practicum planning is as follows:**

- 1. Attend first practicum planning meeting**
  - a) Overview of the practicum process (including review of the practicum manual, forms and policies)
  - b) Selecting a practicum site
  - c) Professional Interviewing
  - d) Completing the learning agreement (concentration students only)
- 2. Student completes practicum application, reviews it with his/her advisor, and submits it to the Office of Field Education.**
- 3. Field faculty review applications and approve requests to interview at practicum sites.**

4. **Student contacts approved agencies, interviews and secures practicum.** (At the initial meeting, both the student and the agency explore the possibility/desirability of participation in the practicum at the agency. Either the student or agency can decide against the placement).
5. **Second practicum planning meeting to learn how to complete the learning agreement (foundation students only).**
6. **Student, in consultation with agency field instructor, drafts a learning agreement.**
7. **Learning agreement is reviewed by the Director of Field Education (foundation students), or the faculty advisor (concentration students), and necessary suggestions for revisions are made.** Once revisions are complete the assignment is signed by the student, the agency supervisor and the faculty advisor (concentration students only), and is approved by the Office of Field Education<sup>1</sup>.
8. **Copies of the learning agreement are distributed to the student, faculty liaison, and field instructor.** The original remains on file with the Office of Field Education.
9. **A faculty site visit to the agency is conducted when the student completes approximately 150 hours of the field placement.** The student, agency field instructor and university faculty liaison participate in the visit.
10. **The agency field instructor completes and submits a mid-term evaluation after the students completes approximately 150 hours of placement.** This evaluation should be reviewed with and signed by the student.
11. **After completion of 300 hours of placement, the agency field instructor completes a final evaluation, reviews it with the student and submits it to the Office of Field Education.** Both the student and the field instructor must sign this evaluation.
12. **The student submits time sheets signed by the field instructor and completes the Student Evaluation of the Field Experience form and submits it to the Office of Field Education.**
13. **A grade of Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) is assigned by the Office of Field Education<sup>2</sup>.**

*1. Students must submit final signed copies of the learning agreement by the due date. Failure to adhere to the deadline will result in the loss of hours accrued up to that point.*

*2. If evaluation forms and time sheets are not received by the Office of Field Education by the due date, the student may receive a delayed grade for the practicum course.*

### Practicum Site Selection Criteria 3.3

The Director and Assistant Director of Field Education are responsible for negotiating practicum-site agreements with agencies that meet the following criteria:

- A clearly articulated agency mission and purpose that is compatible with the philosophy and purpose of social work.
- Agency functioning that is consistent with the [NASW Code of Ethics](#)
- Identification of agency staff who meet the requirements for practicum supervision of MSW students and who are willing to serve in this capacity.
- Provision of learning opportunities that meet the educational objectives of the foundation and/or concentration curriculum.
- Provision of staff time for planning student learning experiences, instruction, and evaluation of students.
- Facilitate research activities by students designed to evaluate professional practice.
- Administrative stability and staffing that assure continuity of instruction for students.
- Physical facilities that permit students adequate space for activities related to practicum objectives.

***\*\*Students may access the searchable database of approved agencies from <https://apps.umsi.edu/webapps/ITS/socwork/field/students/login.cfm>***

***\*\*Agency representatives may access the online application to become an approved site at <http://www.fielddedu.com/fielddedu/>***

**Practicum Instructor Qualifications 3.4**

The qualifications for the instructors supervising students in the MSW Program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis include:

- Possession of the MSW degree.
- Post-Master's social work practice for a minimum of two years.
- Demonstrated competency in the field of practice being used for the practicum.
- Desire/interest in mentoring/supervising MSW students in their foundation or concentration practica, and a willingness to make reasonable adjustments to his/her schedule to meet the learning needs of students.
- Previous practicum instruction or supervisory experience is preferred.

*Field Instructors may access the online application to become approved at <http://www.fielddedu.com/fielddedu/>*

### Evaluation of Students in Practicum 3.5

The Learning Agreement is the chief mechanism by which the students, their supervisors and faculty of the School of Social Work evaluate the performance of students in their field placement. This form is used by students, their practicum instructors, and department faculty to review students' strengths and continuing learning needs.

Students and practicum instructors are asked to evaluate each student's performance in writing at mid-term and again at the end of the semester by completing mid term and final practicum evaluation forms. Information is also shared with the faculty liaison from the department at an agency-based meeting each semester. **The student grade, assigned by the student's faculty liaison, is based on the agency field instructor's written mid term and final evaluation of the student, and the on site conference between the agency supervisor and the faculty liaison.** A grade of S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory) will be given. According to Graduate school regulations, grades lower than C are recorded as a U. (For a further explanation of graduate school, see the UM-St. Louis Bulletin at [www.umsl.edu](http://www.umsl.edu)).

*Learning Agreements, Midterm and Final evaluation forms may be downloaded from Field Education Forms at <http://www.umsl.edu/~socialwk/>*

For more information please refer to the [Grade Appeal Procedure](#) link on the UMSL Division for Student Affairs, Student Planner web page.

**Notice of Non Discrimination 3.6**

It is the policy of the University of Missouri to provide equal opportunity for all enrolled students and applicants for admission to the University on the basis of merit without discrimination on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability, or Vietnam era veteran status. Sexual harassment shall be considered discrimination because of sex.

To insure compliance with this policy all University of Missouri prospective or enrolled students shall have available to them this student discrimination grievance procedure for resolving complaints and/or grievances regarding alleged discrimination.

This grievance procedure neither supersedes nor takes precedence over established University procedures of due process for any and all matters related to Academic dishonesty, Grade Appeals, Traffic appeals, disciplinary Appeals, or other specific campus procedures which are authorized by the board of Curators and deal with faculty/staff responsibilities.

Note: A grievance concerning specific incidents filed under this discrimination grievance procedure shall not be processed on behalf of any student who elects to utilize another University grievance procedure. In addition, the filing of a grievance under these procedures precludes the subsequent use of other University grievance or appeals procedures for the same incident.

For more information please refer to the [Discrimination Grievance Procedure for Students](#) link on the UMSL Division of Student Affairs, Student Planner web page.

**Students with Disabilities 3.7**

Students requiring an accommodation related to a disability should meet with their agency practicum instructor during the first week of the semester to ensure that they are appropriately accommodated. UM-St.Louis Office of Disability Access Services (314) 516-5211 may be contacted for information about general University policy and additional supports. If there are problems in negotiating arrangements with the practicum agency, please contact the Assistant Director or the Director of Field Education for guidance in resolving this issue.

For more information please refer to the [Students with Disabilities](#) link on the UMSL Division of Student Affairs, Student Planner web page.

### **Professional Liability 3.8**

The Curators of the University of Missouri maintain a self-insured professional liability policy for its various professional fields. This program covers duly registered social work students for events that may occur while performing duties in their field practicum. The policy provides in minimum amounts not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence on an occurrence basis, \$3,000,000 annual aggregate. Students wishing to obtain **additional coverage at their own expense** may contact the National Association of Social Workers Insurance Trust at (800) 638-8799, ext 387.

The University does not provide automobile liability coverage. Students who will be using their personal vehicle for agency business should negotiate automobile coverage with the agency at the time of the interview.



**Safety and Security of Students in Field 3.9**

Safety of students in field is a priority for the Office of Field Education. While it is impossible to remove all potential risk from social work practice, it is possible and desirable for students to exercise caution and take preventative measures to assure their safety while delivering services to clients. This topic is addressed in more detail at the MSW Student Orientation and in the foundation field practicum seminar course. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of university or agency sponsored workshops focused on personal safety. Students have the right, and are encouraged to raise issues of potential risk and safety with agency field supervisors during placement interviews and at any time thereafter.

**Paid Practica 3.10**

The Office of Field Education encourages agencies and organizations to offer paid practicum experiences to our social work students. In such cases, the student is paid a stipend for time served at the practicum. This is arranged between the student and the agency. The agency and practicum supervisor must be approved by the Office of Field Education as outlined in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this manual.

### **Policy for Practicum Placement in Agency in Which Student Works as an Employee 3.11**

Students who wish to explore the possibility of using their place of paid employment as a field practicum assignment must submit their written request to their advisor using the form “Application to Use Agency of Current Employment as Practicum Site.” The form can be downloaded under Field Education Forms at <http://www.umsi.edu/~socialwk>. This form must be completed the semester prior to the placement. Individual requests will be carefully reviewed using these five standards:

1. The agency must be approved as a field placement site based on the criteria established by the School of Social Work at UM-St. Louis. If the agency has not been previously utilized as a field placement, it will be reviewed as would any other potential setting.
2. The student must list all the positions he/she has held in the agency, including a description of employment responsibilities, schedule of work hours, and name of supervisor(s).
3. The student must be assigned --as their practicum—to a social work department, unit or program that differs from all prior or current employment units. This is to ensure that the student has exposure to new methods, client populations, and other new experiences for learning.
4. The agency must agree to provide an MSW field instructor who has not supervised the student in employment responsibilities. As in other settings, the designated supervisor must meet the criteria for approval as a Field Practicum Instructor as outlined in Section 3.4 of this manual. The proposed field instructor is required to submit an online application at <http://www.fielddedu.com/fielddedu/> to become approved.
5. The schedule of hours that are designated for the field assignment must be clearly delineated from the employment schedule.

Students are strongly encouraged to complete at least one of their field placement experiences at a site other than their place of employment.

**Abuse/Neglect Background Check / Criminal Background Check / Criminal Records History / Health Information 3.12**

Students should inform the Director of Field Education of any information regarding previous felony convictions and/or other information that may impact the student's ability to secure a practicum. The student will be asked to sign a release of information authorizing the UM-St. Louis School of Social Work to discuss this information with approved practicum sites.

Many field education placement sites will require students to obtain a child abuse and neglect background check and/or a criminal records background check. Health care settings may also require students to provide verification of immunizations or other medical information and/or require a physical examination. The School of Social Work does not conduct child abuse and neglect or criminal background checks, and it does not secure or maintain medical information on its students. It is the responsibility of the student to work in conjunction with the placement agency to obtain the required checks. Students may be asked by the agency to cover the cost of these checks.

**Sharing Sensitive Information 3.13**

The Office of Field Education and Student Services will share all relevant information with appropriate persons including the faculty liaison, the agency field instructor, the student's advisor, the Director of the MSW program and the Director of the School of Social Work. Relevant information is defined as information that may have an impact on the practicum site selection, placement or implementation process and that may impact clients, agency field instructors, staff or the learning experience. Such information will be shared to enable informed choice by field instructors, protect clients, protect students and facilitate the learning process. Agency field instructors are also expected to share relevant information with the Office of Field Education and Student Services.

**Withdrawing from Practicum 3.14**

The practicum is distinct from most other social work courses in that a field placement in the community entails not only the educational objectives of the student and faculty, but also professional responsibilities to clients, social service agencies and the community. When students engage clients and assume service responsibilities, they have ongoing professional, educational and ethical responsibilities to consider. Considerable effort is spent on the part of the faculty and field instructor planning and orienting the student to the placement. For this reason students should only consider withdrawing prematurely from a field placement site under extenuating circumstances.

Should a student desire or be requested to terminate a placement prior to the completion of the total hours required, the student's field faculty liaison should be contacted immediately to discuss the situation. Such a situation may occur as a result of: insufficient resources and/or experiences to provide for an adequate learning experience; agency restructuring; a personality or ideological conflict between the student and field instructor and/or agency; personal crises; a serious illness; or other educational considerations.

Only after consultation with the faculty liaison and the agency field instructor may the student terminate the practicum. The faculty liaison, in consultation with the Assistant Director or Director of Field Education and the student, will determine whether or not the student will be permitted to resume a practicum at a new site, and whether or not credit will be awarded to the student for hours completed at the first practicum site.

**Termination from the field practicum/and or MSW program for non academic reasons 3.15**

A student enrolling in the School of Social Work at the University of Missouri – St. Louis assumes an obligation to behave in a manner that is compatible with the institution and department educational enterprises. This applies not only to the student's behavior on campus, but to the field practicum as well. The Collected Rules and Regulations for the University of Missouri, Section 200.010, Code of Student Conduct (UM-St. Louis Bulletin, [www.umsi.edu/bulletin](http://www.umsi.edu/bulletin) ), and the School of Social Work Graduate Student Handbook clearly delineate conduct for which a student can be sanctioned and/or disciplined.

In addition, sanctions (including but not limited to termination from the field placement and/or the program) may be imposed upon any graduate student who has been found to have violated the professional expectations and standards described in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) (available on the School of Social Work web site).

The School and University processes for addressing violation of the standards outlined in the documents cited above are outlined in the School of Social Work Graduate Student Handbook.

**Reporting Suspected Incidents or Abuse or Neglect 3.16**

Students in field placement have an ethical responsibility and legal obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect to elders or children. Students should report incidents of suspected abuse or neglect to their supervisors immediately. Students should seek further direction from their supervisors about agency procedures for reporting such incidents to the child abuse or elder abuse hot lines.



**Responsibilities of the Field Education Office 4.1**

The Director and Assistant Director of Field Education are responsible for the administration of the field practicum for BSW and MSW students. Their duties include:

- Identifying prospective practicum opportunities that meet the needs of BSW and MSW foundation and/or concentration students.
- Identifying prospective practicum instructors within health and human service agencies in the metropolitan St. Louis area who are qualified to provide supervision of students.
- Providing orientation and on-going professional development in practicum-related issues to agency instructors. Orientation sessions for new instructors, practicum instructor meetings, and professional workshop are held each year.
- Evaluating agency instructors using formal student feedback instruments as well as site evaluations by the Assistant Director or Director of Field Education. In instances in which problems of supervision are found, the Director or Assistant Director of Field Education will document the problems and steps taken to remedy the problem. If problems cannot be resolved, the instructor and/or agency will be removed from the approved list of practicum agencies and/or field instructors.
- Helping students secure a practicum experience by providing orientation meetings, organizing an annual practicum fair, and providing individual advising sessions.
- Mediating problems between students and their practicum agencies, as necessary.

**Responsibilities of Agency Field Instructors 4.2**

The agency field supervisor plays a vital role in the education of MSW students. It is important that those who take on this role have a good grasp of practice theory, significant experience in the field of social work, a good measure of patience, a desire to teach, and a sense of humor.

Field supervisor responsibilities include:

- Assuming instructional and administrative responsibility for the student in the field setting.
- Orientation of the student to field placement.
- Assisting the student with preparation of the learning agreement.
- Provision of regularly scheduled individual supervision with each student (at least one hour per week), and where feasible additional group supervision.
- Providing the student with ongoing feedback about his/her performance.
- Meeting with the faculty field liaison from the University at least once during the semester, or as needed, regarding the student's progress.
- Informing the faculty liaison of all concerns relative to the student's fieldwork progress, activities, and any other issues that might affect the placement.
- Informing the Office of Field Education of significant changes at the agency (i.e. agency moves, changes in phone number, resignation of field instructor, etc.)
- Completing and submitting all necessary paperwork within the timeframes outlined.
- Attending an orientation and completing an 18 hour certification program for new field instructors.
- Updating affiliation materials every three years.
- Completing 15 hours of continuing education in their areas of practice every three years.

**Responsibilities of Faculty Liaison 4.3**

Before beginning practicum each student will be assigned a faculty liaison. The responsibilities of the faculty liaison include:

- Helping the student plan his/her field experience.
- Assisting students with preparation of the practicum learning agreement.
- Consulting with the agency field supervisor and student to review progress and assess performance.
- Assisting students with any concerns they have relating to the agency field supervisor, integration of classroom work with the field placement, or other issues related to field.
- Acting as an educational consultant to field instructors to enhance their teaching skills.
- Informing the Office of Field Education of any problems relative to students' performance in practicum.
- Assigning students a grade in practicum. (For further information see section 3.5 of this manual).

For students enrolled in SW5800 (Graduate Field Practicum I) the Director of Field Education also acts as the faculty liaison. For students in SW 6800 and SW 6850 (Graduate Field Practicum II & III) the student's faculty advisor will serve as his/her faculty liaison.

**Students' Responsibilities at Practicum Agency 4.4**

Students are to consider themselves as potential practicing social workers, visiting members of the social work staff, and are to perform assignments in a manner consistent with accepted MSW social work practices. The best guide to general agency customs and expectations will be the behavior of supervisors and the other professional social workers within the agency.

When in doubt, students should discuss questions such as mode of dress, ways of addressing clients and colleagues, and resources within the agency with the agency supervisor.

Students are expected to arrive on time, follow the scheduled hours meticulously, and practice good time management skills. All students should maintain a time sheet recording the hours spent at the practicum site. They are expected to observe provisions of the [Social Work Code of Ethics](#) (available on the School of Social Work web site) and other generally acknowledged guidelines for professional social workers. Students are also expected to comply with the [UM-St. Louis policy on sexual harassment](#). For more information please refer to the UMSL Academic Affairs web page.

Students are expected to participate actively in the assessment of their performance. Students experiencing problems at the practicum site should go first to the agency field instructor. If the problem is not resolved at that level, the student should next go to the faculty liaison for further consultation and direction. If the problem is not resolved with the intervention of the faculty liaison, the student and liaison should go directly to the Director of Field Education.