UMSL

School of Social Work

Tips for Writing your Learning Agreement

SW5800 Learning Agreement

Getting started

Be sure to complete all sections of the face sheet.
Be DETAILED in your description of what you will be doing. List out activities in the narrative section and then plug them in to the practice behaviors.

Turn in your draft by the due date.
Make revisions as suggested.
Turn in the narrative of your final agreement electronically. Electronic signatures in any format are accepted for all practicum documents.

Sample activities

USE COMPLETE SENTENCES WHEN YOU DESCRIBE ACTIVITIES

Below are samples of the kinds of activities that might be appropriate to demonstrate each practice behavior. **Actual agreements should be more detailed and specific to your setting**.

Competency 1

PB1

Help client's access services (providing transportation, referrals, etc.)
Accompany clients seeking assistance from other organizations.
Make phone calls/linkages on the client's behalf.
Attend professional meetings aimed at providing access to services.
Work to make agency services more accessible to those in need.
Participate in advocacy efforts for legislative changes to increase access to services.

PB2

Identify professional roles in agency
Read agency policies and follow agency procedures
Articulate boundary issues and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with clients.

Follow agency protocol
educates other disciplines about social work roles.

PB3

Dress in a way that is appropriate to agency context
Communicates respectfully with clients and co-workers
Make a professional presentation to other staff
Adapt communication style to professional context
Learn professional social work terms used in setting and apply them appropriately

PB4

Attend individual and group supervision meetings and utilize expertise of supervisor and professional colleagues
Come prepared to supervisory sessions with an agenda and questions
Use supervisory sessions to ask questions, discuss concerns, address ethical issues, review work and grow in self-awareness.
Consult with other professionals as appropriate about cases.

Competency 2
PB1
Discuss value conflicts in individual or group supervision and brainstorm strategies for managing them.
Use a journal to process and manage personal values

PB2

Discuss ethically ambiguous situations with supervisor
Use a journal to process ethical uncertainties
Read about or interview staff about ethical conflicts that have arisen in the organization specific to the client population served.

PB3
Interview staff about ethical decision making model utilized by the practicum organization.
Apply ETHIC or alternate model to ethical dilemmas encountered.
Describe factors considered to reach decision regarding an ethical dilemma in the organization or around a particular case.

Competency 3
PB1
(Make sure to have at least one oral and one written activity)
Document in client records
Write assessments and treatment plans
Speak to a community group on behalf of the organization
Make a presentation at a staff meeting

PB2
Locate peer reviewed journal articles on specific areas of practice
Seek practice wisdom from social workers employed in the organization.
Discuss how agency integrates different forms of knowledge to make professional judgments.
Integrate and use different forms of knowledge to develop an intervention, policy, new practice, etc.

Competency 4
PB1
Attend a conference or workshop on diversity.
Journal regarding personal values and biases as they relate to specific situations encountered in the practicum.
Discuss values and biases in group supervision and consider strategies for managing them.

PB2
Read about how differences shape experiences and make a presentation in a staff meeting on the topic.
Reflect in your journal on the effect that different opportunities may have or have had on life choices for yourself and your clients.
Compare outcomes among clients and consider the influence of difference on outcomes.

PB3
Listen openly to clients to learn about their unique situations.
Put clients in the role of experts about their own life situations.
Articulate to clients the collaborative nature of the helping relationship.

Competency 5
PB1
Attend a conference or workshop that related to social or economic justice
Attend a coalition meeting or visit an organization that works towards social and economic justice and explore how you might collaborate in these efforts.

Competency 6
PB1

Interview staff to learn how research is used in the agency.
Use research to select assessment tools and interventions.

Competency 7
Identify frameworks utilized by the organization (strengths, perspective, ecological systems framework, etc.).
Articulate how you have incorporated conceptual frameworks into your assessments, interventions, and evaluation of your work.

Competency 8
PB1
Join a coalition or attend a meeting focused on policy action related to your specific client population.
Organize clients to advocate for policy change (lobby day, letter writing).
Join with clients or colleagues to develop testimony in support or in opposition of a particular ordinance, bill, etc.

PB2
Research specific local, state or national policies that impact your client population or your organization.
Review the policies of the practicum organization and discuss their impact (positive or negative) on service delivery.

PB9
Identify one area for service improvement in your organization and develop a proposal for change.
Assist with the implementation of a new program.
Assist with the evaluation of a particular aspect of a program and make recommendations for change based on the outcome of the valuation.

Competency 10

PB1
Shadow an experience social worker as a way to prepare for work with clients.
Prepare and practice a presentation
Plan for a new group by . . . .
Thoroughly review and intake or case file prior to seeing a client for the first time.

PB2
Use empathy and active listening skills in work with clients.
Use professional communication skills when interacting with co-workers and colleagues.

PB3
Utilize assessment instruments used by the organization.
Learn how to use agency data base to organize and interpret data.

PB4
Incorporate client strengths and limitations into assessments and treatment plans.
Engage clients in assessment of strengths and limitations.
Read about and utilize methods of assessing strengths.

PB5
Collaborate with clients on development of goals incorporating their frame of reference.
Prioritize goals based on client need and preferences.

PB6
Seek practice wisdom regarding interventions. What are current practices in agency?
Consider contextual factors when selecting interventions
Research EBPs for particular client population or issue
Discuss intervention options with client.

PB7
Work to bring about successful outcomes for clients.
Help raise funds to achieve goals.
Assist with grant writing to achieve goals.

PB8
Determine resources available to help resolve problems
Refer clients to appropriate resources to help solve problems.
Identify how the agency can help resolve problems
Discuss social worker's role in helping client resolve problems.

PB9
Advocate for clients within the agency.
Help clients receive services they need with another organization.
Teach clients to navigate available services.

PB10
Understand agency policies regarding termination.
Help transition clients to a new worker or service.
Process termination in journal.

PB11
Monitor client interventions and outcomes. Make adjustments as necessary.
Participate in a program evaluation.
Compare agency interventions to interventions in professional literature.

Evaluation

Be sure to complete the evaluation section for each practice behavior by checking the appropriate box and filling in the name of the person who will evaluate the practice behavior.

All practicum forms, calendars and agency supervisor instructions are available in the Field Education section of the Social Work web page.