

Field education learning objectives

Introduction

The Boston University School of Social Work educates social work practitioners who will possess the knowledge and skills to address the needs and potentials of individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities using clinical and macro practice methods. The integrated program of classroom and field education emphasizes the engagement of personal and community strengths to understand, prevent and resolve individual and social problems, particularly in urban and diverse communities. The Boston University School of Social Work is committed to education which furthers social and economic justice in the urban environment. This urban mission emphasizes empowerment of oppressed groups, leadership that strengthens urban communities, and the unique capacities and challenges in urban settings with diverse populations. Students should have the opportunity in their field placements to gain knowledge and skills that will prepare them to practice in accordance with the mission.

The School's MSW program learning objectives guide the sequencing, content and structure of both the classroom and field curricula. The following field education learning objectives outline the essential social work values, knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate in their work with clients and consumers. Accordingly, both field placements incorporate all of the curriculum areas – social work practice, human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy, research, ethics and values.

Students come to both placements with a range of educational, internship and work experiences and some may require a more sustained introduction to the social work profession and to their professional roles and activities. However, by the end of both placements, all students are expected to have developed competence in the majority of the following learning objectives.

SOCIAL WORK IDENTITY WITHIN THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

Agency Context

The student is expected to:

1. **understand the agency** mission, history, organizational structure, policies and programs, and community.
2. **understand** the agency as it reflects **U.S. social welfare history, policies and priorities.**
3. **understand and identify with the role of urban social work in the agency** including the profession's potentials and limits in the agency context.
4. **understand the assets and capacities** as well as the needs of the geographic and membership community/ies served by the agency particularly in urban settings.
5. understand and foster a **productive role for the agency** in the community/ies.

Values and Ethics

The student is expected to:

1. be aware of her/his **own value orientations, particularly regarding urban populations and communities.**
2. be familiar with the values and ethical standards of social work, including the **NASW Code of Ethics** and practice within that framework.
3. identify **competing values and ethics** that result in dilemmas both in her/his own practice and in the larger agency context.
4. demonstrate behavior consistent with the values of the profession and **resolve ethical dilemmas** in consultation with field instructors, colleagues, faculty members, and other professionals whose expertise and authority are available.
5. be responsible for **her/his ethical conduct** and for the **quality** of her/his practice.

Diverse Populations

The student is expected to:

1. recognize the influence of **his/her cultural identities** on his/her perception of and approach to working with people who are both similar and different.
2. identify and value **differences and similarities** in values, experiences, beliefs, strengths and needs of diverse groups of people.
3. **discuss with field instructor** this awareness of self and others to enhance practice.
4. take into account **race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, and religion.**
5. assess **policies, procedures, and practices** of the agency as they relate to **accessibility, availability, and appropriateness** for the diverse populations served by the agency.

Social and Economic Justice

The student is expected to:

1. assess the influence of **oppression and economic injustice** on clients, organizations and communities, social policies, and the availability and quality of resources, with special emphasis on urban environments.
2. identify, develop and implement **goals and strategies** to promote social change and economic justice.
3. base his/her practice on **empowerment of clients, groups, organizations and communities.**

THE STUDENT AS SOCIAL WORK INTERN

Professional Behavior

The student is expected to:

- 1.. **form and maintain professional relationships** e.g., demonstrate the ability to collaborate, function within a team, work within the organizational structure, appropriately address conflicts.
- 2.. demonstrate appropriate **professional behavior** (e.g., appropriate dress, punctuality, attendance, time and workload management, completing School-required recordings and agency documentation in a timely manner as required).
3. act in accordance with the directives of the **field instructor and/or other agency personnel in positions of authority.**
4. act in accordance with the School's **Behavioral Standards** as outlined in the **Curriculum Guide for Field Education.**

Supervision

The student is expected to:

1. **share responsibility** with the field instructor for developing educational goals consistent with those set by the School.
2. **actively participate in supervision** by sharing challenges, questions and accomplishments, and by being self-reflective about her/his professional development.
3. use supervision to discuss and apply **awareness of self and others** with particular emphasis on issues related to **social and economic justice and diversity.**
4. use a **range of learning tools**, e.g., School-required recordings, role plays, discussion, audio and video recording.
5. be open to **feedback from field instructor.**
6. give **thoughtful feedback to field instructor** about supervision.

Critical Thinking

The student is expected to engage in critical thinking by:

1. integrating knowledge from **multiple sources**, including coursework, relevant research and agency resources.

2. **analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating** points of view, biases, completeness, and empirical validity.
3. taking into account **personal values, beliefs, assumptions, and their impact** on one's practice.
4. **developing decision making and implementation strategies** for practice based on the steps described above.
5. **transferring relevant knowledge and skills** learned from each assignment to successive assignments.
6. facilitating consumers'/community members' identification of **issues for change** based on their priorities and **developing goals and strategies** for accomplishing their agendas.

Communication

The student is expected to:

demonstrate verbal, written and electronic communication skills appropriate for professional practice, e.g, with clients, consumers, colleagues and field instructor.

FOUNDATION PRACTICE SKILLS

The student is expected to:

1. develop **purposeful professional relationships which are characterized by conscious and differential use of self** with clients, consumers, communities and organizations.
2. **demonstrate the following practice skills** within an urban social framework (i.e., values and ethics, professional role, cultural diversity, social and economic justice):
 - a. engagement
 - b. assessment
 - c. contracting
 - d. intervention
 - e. mutual evaluation of practice
 - f. termination

3. use a **strengths-based perspective, a systems framework, and an ecological model of practice.**
4. utilize **empirically-based and other theories of human behavior and life span development** in their professional practice.
5. In **interactions with individuals and families:**
 - a. demonstrate **empathy, respect, warmth and authenticity.**
 - b. explore by asking **relevant and well-formulated questions.**
 - c. observe and make note of **non-verbal behavior.**
 - d. enable client(s) to recognize **available choices** and make decisions about alternatives.
 - e. facilitate client's use of **external resources and concrete services**, and when appropriate, advocate directly.
 - f. understand and work with a **range of client's feelings and expressions of emotion.**
 - g. appropriately provide **information and knowledge.**
 - h. facilitate timely and appropriate **termination.**
6. In **work with groups**, the student is expected to:
 - a. **articulate the purpose of the group** as defined by the agency, the group worker and the members.
 - b. use the appropriate **group work model** based on agency mission and group members' goals and needs.
 - c. understand and consider factors related to **group composition** in forming and working with groups.
 - d. **prepare group members** for participation in the group (e.g., discussion of group purpose and structure, confidentiality, protection of individual and group interests).
 - e. arrange for **adequate space, programming supplies and equipment.**
 - f. create an atmosphere of **acceptance and trust.**
 - g. **establish goals** with the group as a whole, and with individuals, if appropriate.
 - h. develop and implement a **range of activities and techniques** consistent with group purpose and type.

- i. apply knowledge of *stages of group development*.
 - j. if *co-leading a group*, work collaboratively to plan and review sessions with co-leader and group supervisor.
7. In **work with communities and organizations**, the student is expected to:
- a. demonstrate skills in *identifying and analyzing different types and models* of communities and organizations.
 - b. utilize an *assets approach* to communities with particular emphasis on undervalued groups and urban communities.
 - c. recognize how indigenous *community resources and members* are involved in the helping process.
 - d. demonstrate an understanding of *power relationships* in communities and organizations including different leadership styles.
 - e. apply the principles of *empowerment, capacity enhancement and participatory democracy* to community and organizational analysis and interventions.
 - f. understand and utilize the elements of a *planned change framework* to:
 - (1) identify and define *issues and goals for change based on an analysis of data gathered from multiple sources*
 - (2) conduct a *force field analysis* to assess change potential and pitfalls
 - (3) build a base of *support for planned change*
 - (4) *develop and implement strategies and tactics* to maximize support and overcome resistance
 - (5) evaluate *progress, effects and outcomes*.

ADVANCED PRACTICE SKILLS

Students in the advanced field placement concentrate in either Clinical or Macro Practice and a majority of their assignments should reflect their area of concentration. In addition to mastering new skills, advanced students are expected to demonstrate increased independence and initiative in their assignments and in supervision.

Some students may concentrate in Clinical Practice with a Macro sub-specialization. Students may also choose to focus their studies in one of the MSW certificate or specialization programs (Clinical Social Work and Behavioral Medicine, Family Therapy, Group Work, Gerontological Social Work, Human Service Management, Trauma).

Field education guidelines for method specializations:

- Clinical Practice with Macro sub-specialization: 15-20% of the student's assignment should include a substantive macro practice project with field instruction that incorporates a macro practice framework.
- Clinical Social Work and Behavioral Medicine Certificate: the student should have the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills related to the behavioral aspects of complex illnesses and disorders such as Alzheimer's, the addictions, HIV/AIDS and mental illness.
- Family Therapy Certificate Program: the student's assignment should include clinical practice with families, with field instruction that incorporates a family systems theoretical framework.
- Gerontological Social Work: The student's assignments should focus on services and programs for older adults and their families.
- Group Work Specialization: the student should work with at least two groups in a leadership or co-leadership role with field instruction that incorporates group work theory.
- Trauma Certificate Program: the student should have the opportunity to practice with clients who have experienced significant trauma with field instruction that incorporates a trauma theory perspective.
- Management Certificate: