

# **BUSSW GUIDE TO PRACTICUM EDUCATION**

**ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026**

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

### **VISION, MISSION & VALUES**

Our mission is to develop dynamic and diverse social work practitioners, leaders, and scholars through rigorous teaching, innovative research, and transformative community engagement.

Our vision is to advance a just and compassionate society that promotes health and well-being and the empowerment of all oppressed groups, especially those affected by racial, social, and economic inequities.

Our values are to:

- Develop visionary social work practitioners who use effective clinical, community, and policy methods to enhance strengths in urban and other contexts.
- Promote equity, especially in the area of health, through high-impact prevention and intervention research and scholarship, characterized by trans-disciplinary and inter-professional collaborations.
- Advance graduate social work education through innovative instructional methods and promotion of life-long learning.
- Further social justice through local, national, and global partnerships and service that value community capacities and expertise.

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## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Boston University prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, or because of marital, parental, or veteran status. This policy extends to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities, including admissions, financial assistance, educational and athletic programs, housing, employment, compensation, employee benefits, and the providing of, or access to, University services or facilities.

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## **THE MSW PROGRAM**

The School is committed to graduating social workers who have successfully developed the nine CSWE competencies and who practice within an ecological framework and social change context. Boston University School of Social Work alumni are professionals who are open to and ready for innovation and change, and who possess the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations.

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## **A GUIDE TO “THE GUIDE”**

The *Guide to Practicum Education* is designed to:

1. Articulate the Vision, Mission and Values of the School of Social Work

2. Present an overview of practicum education
  3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of the School, the agency, the practicum instructor, and the student in the practicum education experience
  4. Define the educational components of the practicum experience(s), including generalist and advanced social work competencies students are expected to demonstrate
  5. Define Practicum Education policies and procedures.
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## **AN OVERVIEW OF PRACTICUM EDUCATION**

Through Practicum Education, students have the opportunity to apply knowledge, skills, values and cognitive and affective processes to work with individuals, groups, families, communities, organizations and engage in policy work. Practicum Education enables students to develop a professional social work identity in the context of social work practice and receiving intensive individualized practicum instruction from MSW supervisors. Student assignments are developed to build on and complement students' goals, interests and previous internship and work experiences. The nine competencies developed by the Council on Social Work Education form the curriculum and assessment framework for student learning in both their classroom courses and their practicum internship(s).

Students entering the generalist placement are assigned to settings that enable them to acquire a broad understanding of the practicum of social work, to recognize and use generalist principles and concepts, and to select intervention methods to meet individual, group, family, and community needs based on a careful and comprehensive assessment. While students in generalist placements will focus primarily on either clinical or macro practice, they should have exposure to all methods of practice within the parameters of the agency's services. Advanced Year and Advanced Standing students (and Human Service Experience in the latter part of their practicum) are assigned to practicum agencies that foster development of advanced competence in the student's social work method concentration (clinical or macro practice).

Practicum education is an applied learning course for which students earn credits and are provided support and instruction through the Practicum Education department and Practicum Instructor.

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## **THE SCHOOL ROLE IN PRACTICUM EDUCATION**

- Kanako Okuda – Assistant Dean for Practicum Education & Associate Clinical Professor
- Terese Romano – Assistant Director of Practicum Education for Charles River Campus (CRC) & Off-Campus Program (OCP)
- Robbie Sanders – Assistant Director for Practicum Education for Online Program

- Thahisha Delma – Practicum Education Senior Program Coordinator for CRC & OCP
- Jenna Landsman – Practicum Education Senior Program Coordinator for OLP & Worcester Hybrid

### **Practicum Education Coordinators:**

- Susan Lundon
- Vicky Mateu
- Kerlyne Pacombe
- Lily Ghrear
- Emily Shalev
- Eliana Freeman
- Diane Crowley (Macro Practicum Placement Coordinator)

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## **AGENCY SELECTION**

The Practicum Education Department is affiliated with many nonprofit and public agencies in Massachusetts, New England, and throughout the country. In keeping with BUSSW's historical commitment to urban issues and to the range of communities where our students live and work, agencies are located in cities, suburban towns and rural communities. Agency availability for student internships is constantly changing in response to a number of factors, including funding, community needs and priorities, and staffing. As a result, some placements may not be available for internships in a given semester.

- The Practicum Education Department develops new placements to match students with factors that include students' interest and learning goals. BUSSW Practicum Education Department approves, monitors, and evaluates an agency's ability to meet the BUSSW's requirements and other considerations.
- Recommendations from students for new practicum placement sites are always welcome. Students interested in placements at agencies not currently affiliated with BUSSW should first discuss their interest with the Practicum Education staff member they are working with before reaching out to the agency.

## **THE PLACEMENT PROCESS**

The Practicum Education Department is responsible for arranging and approving the practicum placements of all students. Students should not contact an agency directly without approval from the Practicum Education Department. Similarly, agencies interested in requesting the placement

of a particular student should contact the Practicum Education Department. Such requests from agencies are given careful consideration and are met whenever feasible.

**Placement Process:**

Placement assignments are made based on a review of the following information by the Practicum Education staff:

1. Student Placement Form — A form completed in the practicum education database by the student indicating practicum interests, career goals and any specific logistical needs.
2. Student Résumé and Bio Statement
3. Agency Profiles in Practicum Education Database — Information from each agency outlining specific characteristics of students who would benefit most within that setting, programs and clients/consumers served, required previous student experience or skills, and potential student assignments, location, and transportation accessibility.

Each student has an individual in-person or virtual interview with a Practicum Education staff before a referral to a specific agency is made. Prior to the individual meeting, the student should review the practicum agreement attestation and raise any questions at the individual meeting. Students are encouraged to share with the Practicum Education Department any information which might be important in making a practicum placement assignment. The Practicum Education Department assumes that this information may be shared with prospective agencies unless the student indicates otherwise. Routinely, the Practicum Education Department sends a copy of the student's resume to prospective practicum placements.

Placement assignment is confirmed only after the student has been interviewed with the prospective agency. Having access to a car increases placement opportunities for all students. Some types of agencies including hospitals, college counseling centers and some outpatient mental health centers may not be available for Generalist year given the nature of the placement opportunity.

Some placement agencies conduct their own placement process through which students are invited to submit applications directly to the agency. Since these agencies tend to be quite competitive, students are asked to inform the Practicum Education Department about the agencies to which they have applied.

Students that reside or work in areas outside their home campus are placed by the campus that has oversight of the area. This system of placing by geography, rather than by program, ensures that students have equal access to agencies in their desired area and that the Practicum Education Department is not assigning more students to an agency than it has the capacity to accept.

If a student rejects or is not offered a placement at three or more agencies, the student will be required to meet with the practicum education team.

**Campus Specifics:**

Campus specific details are available in the appendix section.

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**Identifying Competencies**

BUSSW has the primary responsibility of identifying the nine competencies students are expected to demonstrate by the end of their MSW program. This is in keeping with educational standards set by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the accrediting body for social work programs in the United States. These competencies are included in the Appendix to this guide, as well as, on the School of Social Work [website](#), the SSW learning contract form, and the SSW evaluation forms used to document students' progress in their practicum learning.

**Practicum Advisement**

Advising within the Practicum Education Department utilizes both an individual and a seminar model of support for students. It is designed to best serve the needs of students and fit within the various program structures.

**INDIVIDUAL ADVISING**

Individuals who support students in their practicum placements are titled as either Practicum Advisors (CRC/OCP/OCHP) or Liaisons (OLP).)

The chief practicum-related responsibilities of advisors/liaisons are:

- Serves as a liaison between BUSSW and the agency; reaches out to practicum instructor regularly to check in, answer questions, and address concerns as needed.;
- Orient the Practicum Instructor to School expectations and required competency development and provide ongoing support for the duration of the placement. Orientation and guidance must include but not limited the learning contract and student evaluation;
- Provides support to students to achieve placement success and professional mentorship with behavioral expectations as needed; reaches out to students regularly to check in, get updates, and address questions.
- Consults with the student and practicum instructor about assignments, learning contract, supervision, evaluation, etc.;
- Serves as the advocate for the student's education by ensuring that the School's expectations of the agency are being met and that the student is meeting the agency's requirements;

- Serves as a collaborative problem-solver and mediator in the event that a problem in the practicum placement is identified;
- Schedules virtual site visits with practicum instructor, secondary supervisor (if applicable) and student at least once each semester to meet with the student and practicum instructor(s) in order to assess progress toward goals and developing competencies;
- Recommends grade for Practicum Education course.
- May serve as sounding board, referral source, and general support regarding personal problems or life issues that arise while the student is in school, e.g. health, mental health, family, financial, housing, workload, etc., as it relates to student's ability to succeed in the program.

## **ADVISING SEMINAR/GROUP ADVISING**

### **Generalist Practicum Education Seminar**

- Generalist practicum education seminar serves as a place where students integrate their classroom learning and agency-based practicum experiences.
- The seminar meets virtually in real time, seven times per semester, following the life cycle of the practicum education experience and integrating social work competencies.
- Full-time incoming generalist students, continuing part-time generalist students, and advanced standing and HSE students starting placement in the fall are required to attend the Practicum Seminar over the course of the academic year.
- Advanced Macro Students without MSW supervision provided within their placements are required to attend a monthly seminar facilitated by a BUSSW licensed macro advisor. This seminar provides support to students in practicum placements without an MSW supervisor.

## **THE PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR AND AGENCY ROLES IN PRACTICUM EDUCATION**

Both practicum instructors and agencies play vital roles in the professional education of students. BUSSW partners with practicum placement agencies whose work and service to their communities reflect the mission of the social work profession and BUSSW. Likewise, practicum instructors demonstrate their commitment to the profession's knowledge, values, and skills through their supervision and support of students, as well as through their own competent and ethical practice.



## **Practicum Instructors**

The practicum instructor plays a primary role in the professional education of the social work student. The practicum instructor has the closest and most continuous relationship with the student, serving as both a mentor and a teacher.

Practicum instructors are qualified staff members selected by agency administrators and approved by BUSSW. Students in two-semester placements are required to receive structured and consistent supervision from a primary MSW practicum instructor. If a placement agency is unable to provide supervision by a qualified MSW, BUSSW Practicum Education will arrange virtual supervision. In such cases, the agency must designate a task supervisor—an employee of the agency—who will oversee the student's day-to-day tasks.

In addition to time spent with the students, practicum instructors are expected to complete the Learning Contract in collaboration with the student, read and give feedback on students' process recordings, conduct mid-term oral evaluations, complete the placement evaluations at the end of the first and final semesters, consult with the student's advisor and other school representatives, and approve student timesheets. Practicum instructors of students in three or four semester placements will also complete interim assessment progress reports. All practicum instructors are invited to participate in seminars and workshops offered by BUSSW. See more about [practicum instructor benefits](#) below.

Many agencies assign a contact person who is responsible for coordinating student placements with BUSSW and for transmitting information between the school and the agency. The contact person is often a member of HR, a higher-level administrator or can be a practicum instructor.

### **The following are criteria for the selection of practicum instructors:**

1. Master's degree from a CSWE accredited school of social work. \*Exception: Practicum instructors for Traditional Track advanced macro students are expected to have an advanced degree in a relevant practicum (e.g. Public Policy, Public Health, Management). The University provides supplemental MSW group supervision for these students.
2. Minimum of two years, relevant full-time, supervised post-MSW experience. \* Exception: Practicum instructors for Traditional Track advanced macro students who do not have an MSW should have two years of post-master's experience
3. Licensure at the LICSW or state equivalent for practicum instructors in advanced clinical placements (Traditional Track, HSE and Advanced Standing) is preferred. Practicum instructors who supervise clinical students in generalist placements should have an LCSW or equivalent state license (when one exists). Exceptions may apply in some agencies.
4. Sufficient terms of employment at or affiliation with the agency to ensure familiarity with agency policies and procedures and availability to plan the student's internship and provide the required supervision.

5. Commitment to act as a practicum instructor on a continuing basis during the full placement period.
6. Commitment to:
  1. Understanding of and ability to teach all CSWE competencies.
  2. Provide students with real world exposure and experience to the practicum of social work.
  3. Provide appropriate assignments for the student at the start of placement.
  4. Ensure that the required hours of weekly supervision are provided (see above). **It is the responsibility of the primary practicum instructor to ensure both the quality and quantity of supervision.**
  5. Develop a written learning contract with the student.
  6. Read student process recordings and other documentation. Use recordings as a teaching tool in supervisory conferences. See Process Recording Handbook.
  7. Meet with the student's advisor during site visits and consult with the advisor as necessary.
  8. Review and sign off on students Timesheet. (It is the responsibility of the practicum instructor to monitor the students required placement hours and to report any concerns to the students' advisor or BUSSW Practicum Education Department)
7. Practicum instructors who are acting as primary supervisors to MSW students for the first time are required to participate in the Seminar for new practicum instructors (SIFI) which examines the content and process of practicum instruction. Prospective primary practicum instructors who are unable to participate in the seminar may not be considered even though they may meet all other criteria listed above. Social workers who have served as a primary practicum instructor for MSW students from another school are not required to take the seminar but may do so if they wish.
8. If the practicum instructor and the student have had a pre-existing professional or social relationship, this information should be shared with the Practicum Education Department in order to determine appropriateness of the placement.
9. The practicum instructor is expected to evaluate the student's practice on a continuing basis and provide written evaluations consistent with the School's calendar and deadlines.
10. On occasion BUSSW, will provide a virtual supervisor for students placed at agencies without a qualified MSW supervisor. Placements are approved on an individual basis based on a variety of factors. If a BUSSW supervisor is not a viable option, then an alternative placement will be identified with a qualified supervisor.

### **Practicum Instructor Benefits:**

- Practicum instructors are eligible for a variety of benefits:
  - Networking and support with other BUSSW practicum instructors in our Spring Appreciation Workshop which provides CECs and is offered at no cost.
  - Ongoing 50% discount on CADER online programs on Aging & Older Adults, Behavioral Health, Suicide, Hoarding, Human Services Management, and monthly webinars via the Network. Since space is limited, these are available on a

first-come, first-serve basis, at the discretion of the instructor. Please check The Network Learning Catalog to see what webinars are available.

- Additional competency based online virtual training opportunities provided by BUSSW throughout the academic year free of charge with CECs provided

## **Expectations for Agencies**

Agencies are expected to support the mission, goals, and values of the social work profession and the educational objectives of BUSSW. To ensure the student's learning in the practicum, the agency is expected to provide the student with the following:

1. A sufficient number and variety of assignments to support the progression of learning. Students are expected to become involved in practice activities within two to three weeks of the start of the placement, in keeping with agency needs and student readiness. This can include observation and shadowing and/or partnered activities as appropriate.
2. An orientation to the agency's missions, programs, and communities served.
3. An orientation to the **agency's safety policies and procedures** and ongoing support to maximize safety in the practicum.
4. An orientation to legal and ethical issues and documentation requirements specific to the agency's mission and programs.
5. Adequate workspace and access to telephone, computer, agency email, databases, telehealth platforms, records, etc., to fulfill the requirements of the agency and School.
6. Reimbursement for expenses involved in rendering agency services, e.g., home visit travel costs.
7. Adequate insurance coverage for students who are expected to use agency vehicles for agency purposes.
8. Access to staff, committee, and seminar meetings when appropriate.
9. Use of selected agency records (appropriately disguised to ensure client and agency confidentiality) for class assignments.
10. Access to agency consultation resources when appropriate, including access to legal counsel, when needed.
11. Adequate time for the practicum instructor to meet the School's criteria for supervising a student.
12. BUSSW asks agencies to cover the cost of agency eligibility check requirements. If the agency is unable to do so, students are responsible for these costs.

## **THE STUDENT IN THE AGENCY**

### **Hours and Personal Time**

BUSSW recognizes that policies and procedures vary from agency to agency. Students are expected to adhere to their assigned agency's personnel practices, policies, and procedures. They are expected to adhere to the same workday hours as the professional social work staff in their

assigned agency. Students are provided **two personal days per semester** to utilize for illness or other personal needs. These days are to be used at the students' discretion and do not need to be made up to meet BUSSW placement requirements. Students do not need to use a full day but can break the hours into multiple days totaling 16 hours. Used personal days should be recorded on the SONIA timesheet like other placement activities. Students must still communicate their intended absence with their site supervisor and follow their site's protocols regarding absences. In addition, these days will expire at the end of each semester (days do not roll over from one semester to another). Protracted absences of more than two consecutive weeks will be reviewed on an individual basis by the practicum instructor and the advisor. If student learning and/or services to clients are disrupted due to repeated or protracted absences, a decision regarding the student's continuation in the practicum placement will be made in accordance with the Problem Resolution and/or Status Review process.

Requests for time off for religious observance and professional conferences should be assessed on an individual basis with the practicum instructor. Arrangements to make up such time should be made in accordance with clients' service needs and the student's learning needs.

**In all cases, students should ensure that they meet the required number of hours for the practicum placement (480 for generalist placement; 720 for advanced placement; 1000 for Advanced Standing and Human Service Experience placements).**

## **Vacations**

Student vacations should be taken according to the **BUSSW calendar** unless otherwise negotiated with the practicum instructor and documented in the student's learning contract. In some cases, an agency may be closed for religious and local holidays, and in those settings, students may take those days off. Students should be mindful about the impact of days off on the total accrual of hours and plan accordingly to make up hours as needed. In some school-based placements, students will be required to adapt their vacations to the placement school's calendar. **In all cases, students should arrange their schedules to ensure that they meet the required number of hours for the practicum placement (480 for Generalist placement; 720 for Advanced placement; 1000 for Advanced Standing and Human Service Experience placements).**

## **Disclosure of Student or Trainee Status**

The School of Social Work requires social work interns to disclose to clients and consumers their status as trainees in accordance with state regulations and, in keeping with the professional responsibility to ensure informed consent. Students should check their state Patients' Bill of

Rights and/or the state's social work licensing law. In some instances, in which disclosure is not indicated based on client/constituent need or capacity, the student and practicum instructor can make this determination.

### **Background Check Policy**

Many agencies require social work interns to complete a criminal background check before beginning placement. Some agencies conduct these checks through their Human Resources Department and will review the process and results directly with the student. In other cases, agencies ask the School of Social Work to verify a student's eligibility. To support this, BUSSW contracts with an outside vendor and provides students with the necessary information. Only the eligibility determination is shared with the Practicum Education Department and agencies—specific findings are not disclosed.

If a background check reveals a felony history, the agency will make the final decision about whether the student will be offered an internship. Students who have a record of a felony conviction may have difficulty being accepted for any internship. In that case, the student will not be able to complete the requirements for the MSW program and will not be eligible for a refund of tuition and other fees paid to the University. In addition, agencies may require that students undergo medical and drug screening or fingerprinting, and any costs related to these requirements will be the responsibility of the student.

Students who have any concerns about undergoing a background check are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their advisor or with staff working with them to secure placement. Many employers and state licensing boards also have policies regarding criminal histories, which may limit employment and licensure options. We recommend that students check their state licensing regulations regarding this issue. Additional information is available on the BU **Master of Social Work Licensing Disclosure** site.

### **Health Information**

In some settings (e.g., hospitals, clinics, schools) interns may be required to show evidence of immunizations or other health records. Students will be responsible for obtaining these records and for any costs associated with meeting this requirement. Students may also be required to undergo health (e.g. COVID-19) or substance use screening during the internship based on the policies of the agency.

## **EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE PRACTICUM PLACEMENT**

An early focus of practicum instruction with the student is a preliminary assessment of their learning needs and strengths, which will shape the pace, structure, and range of responsibilities

the student will have. This process considers the student's knowledge, skills, strength, and areas for growth and will form the generalist of the learning goals and plan as outlined in the learning contract. The educational assessment is based on: a review of previous education and work history; an evaluation of learning style and developmental stages of learning; an understanding of the student's professional goals; an understanding of cultural factors which influence both the student's approach to learning and the agency context; and identification of the strengths and challenges with which the student approaches the identified learning tasks.

The overarching framework of the nine CSWE social work competencies supports the content and focus of each student's assignments. Competencies for generalist, advanced clinical (including HSE and advanced standing) and advanced macro (including HSE and advanced standing) placements are included in the Appendix to this Guide. They are also included in the Learning Contract form and the student evaluation forms.

It is important for practicum instructors to be aware of their personal teaching style, knowledge, skills, strengths and limitations, and cultural perspective, as these will influence their relationship and interactions with the student. Practicum instructors may be called upon to develop new approaches to the teaching tasks to meet the learning needs of individual students.

## **Supervision**

Practicum instruction is an essential part of a student's overall experience at the internship and their development of knowledge, skills, values and affective and cognitive processes over time. While administrative issues are a component of supervision, the educational and supportive aspects of supervision should be the primary focus of the individual supervision hour. The student is practicing under the auspices of the agency and the practicum instructor's license, so it is important that there be enough time to discuss the student's work. This individual hour of supervision can include:

- role play
- discussion of process recordings
- attention to ethical dilemmas and agency related policies and practices
- application of relevant theories and research that are raised through the work that the student is doing
- other activities that help the student develop and achieve competence.

Observation of the student's professional activities and immediate **feedback** from the practicum instructor should also be incorporated into supervision.

Additional supervision may be provided more flexibly in the context of the agency culture and an assessment of the students' learning needs. Task supervision can be provided by someone with an MSW, another related master's degree, a PhD., or by another staff person with significant expertise and program responsibility. All secondary supervisors must be approved by the BUSSW Practicum Education Department. Possible formats include:

- Individual supervision provided by the primary MSW practicum instructor
- Several shorter interactions with the primary practicum instructor (e.g., after client contacts, on the way to home or other site visits)
- Individual supervision provided by the secondary supervisor
- Group or dyad supervision
- Internship training program, a weekly clinical case conference, or other team meeting which focuses on the student's practice and learning rather than on administrative issues.

Supervision should be structured and consistent, described in the student's learning contract and should include the format, who will provide the supervision, responsibilities of both the student and practicum instructor/secondary supervisor (if relevant), and days and times that supervision will take place.

### **The Learning Contract between Practicum Instructor and Student**

BUSSW expects each practicum instructor and student to develop a written learning contract that outlines the student's educational and professional goals and the role of the practicum placement in helping the student achieve required social work competencies. BUSSW uses a standard Learning Contract, which is available on our SONIA database site. The form should be completed collaboratively by the practicum instructor and the student, within the first four to six weeks of the placement. When complete, it is reviewed by the student's practicum advisor/liaison. The Learning Contract should be reviewed regularly by the student and practicum instructor and revised to accommodate changes in learning goals, circumstances in the agency, or logistical considerations, such as schedule changes. Reach out to your designated practicum liaison/advisor to gain access to editing after the learning contract is submitted.

### **Process Recordings as Learning/Teaching Tools**

The Practicum Education Department has developed a **Process Recording Handbook** Process Recording Handbook that can serve as an important resource for students, practicum instructors and advisors.

#### **1. Recording Policies**

- BUSSW requires all students to write at least one process recording for every 48 hours of time at placement.
  - All students in their generalist year must complete 10 process recordings throughout the generalist year placement. A good pace is roughly one every three weeks.
  - All students in their advanced year placement must complete 15 process recordings throughout their advanced year placement. A good pace is roughly one every three weeks in a three-semester placement or one every two weeks in a two-semester placement.

- All Advanced Standing and Human Service Experience (HSE) students must complete 20 process recordings throughout their time in placement. A good pace is one every two weeks in a three-semester placement or one every three weeks in a four-semester placement.
  - Process recordings should be used flexibly to support the student's learning goals and level of knowledge and skill. ***Practicum instructors may require more than these minimum numbers of recordings, and this expectation should be clarified in the interview process and documented in the student's Learning Contract.***
  - Practicum instructors should provide timely written feedback on all process recordings, and they should be discussed during supervision as well.
  - Recordings are in addition to the documentation required by the agency for its own records or files.
  - Time may be allotted in the student's schedule at the agency to work on recordings, although students may need outside time to complete them.
  - **Students should be informed of and adhere to the agency's policies regarding removal of case records and recordings from the agency premises.**
  - **Recordings should be sufficiently disguised to protect the confidentiality of clients or consumers** in accordance with HIPAA requirements (see below Section 2).
  - Other forms of recording—e.g., audiotape, videotape, log—can be very useful learning tools, but do not serve the same educational or supervisory functions as written recordings. At the discretion of the practicum instructor, these forms of recordings may be used in limited numbers in place of standard templated ones.
  - Direct observation of the student's work by the practicum instructor is also recommended when feasible as this provides an opportunity for immediate feedback on what the practicum instructor observes. Again, this does not take the place of written recordings.
  - **A student's failure to adhere to the policies and procedures regarding recordings may lead to the convening of a Problem Resolution Process meeting.**
  - In addition, please note that teaching recording skills is primarily the responsibility of the practicum instructor, although this learning is supported and reinforced in practicum and professional development seminars at BUSSW.
2. **Guide for Disguise of Confidential Practice Material** (e.g., Process Recordings, Case Records, Meeting Minutes, Group Recordings).

Students and practicum instructors should ensure that agency documents and recordings are de-identified in accordance with HIPAA regulations. Agencies are expected to provide students with the same training provided to employees regarding HIPAA regulations related to the specific setting. In settings which are not covered by HIPAA, students are expected to protect client, constituent and agency confidentiality in accordance with professional practice standards, including but not necessarily limited to the following:

- Delete any reference to the agency name and/or staff names.
- Change client/community member names (first and last) and initials.



- Delete any reference to address or any information specifying geographical area, such as street names, businesses, or hospitals.
- Delete any information that would enable identification of clients, community members, agencies, or agency personnel.

## **Practicum Placement Assignments**

The Practicum Education Department expects students to become involved in supervised independent practice activities within the first few weeks of practicum placement. Early work with clients, groups, committees, or projects allows students to begin integrating learning from class and practicum, and it enables practicum instructors to begin the educational assessment of the student.

Generalist placement students are expected to spend **half** of their placement time in independent practice activities—e.g., face-to-face contacts with clients (in-person or virtually), preparation for practice activities, family meetings, team meetings and case conferences about their clients, participation in committee or community group meetings, resource development, policy analysis, event organizing, telephone contacts, and recruitment for groups. Advanced placement (advanced, advanced standing and Human Service Experience) students should spend **two-thirds** of their time on these activities. The remaining hours for all students include time for supervision, in-service training, administrative meetings, team meetings and documentation. Any questions regarding sufficiency of assignment load should be addressed with the practicum advisor/liaison.

Assignments are determined based on service needs, the student's skill development and learning goals, and, in some cases, the student's personal and professional experiences that may shape the learning process. Most importantly, assignments are designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate observable practice behaviors, which are used to assess their social work competencies.

## **Additional Practicum Education Assignments:**

- Students are required to attend the Practicum Education Seminars.
- Reflection Assignments: At the end of each placement, students will write a 2-3 page reflection on the development of their knowledge, skills, values, critical thinking and self-awareness related to specific competencies. Detailed guidelines for these reflections are on Blackboard. Reflection assignments are submitted to the student's practicum advisor/liaison for comments.
- Policy Activity: Advanced placement students (including HSE and Advanced Standing) are required to complete a policy practice activity related to federal, state or local social welfare policy that impacts the agency's clients, services, funding, access, etc. Detailed guidelines for this assignment are on Blackboard and students are required to submit the report of their activity to their practicum advisor/liaison.

- Students should be documenting their practicum placement hours on a weekly basis within the practicum education database using the provided categories without overlapping documented hours. Practicum instructors are expected to approve these hours on a weekly basis.

## **Evaluation and Feedback**

Assessment of the student's learning should be an ongoing process, and the student and practicum instructor should regularly give feedback to each other regarding the practicum education experience. Feedback in the written evaluation should **not** be new to the student or the practicum instructor. Students and practicum instructors should discuss any concerns as they emerge, and not just at the formal evaluation time. Any significant concerns should also be discussed with the student's practicum liaison/advisor prior to the evaluation process. Student participation in the evaluation process is required and should be discussed early in the practicum process. If a student believes they have been evaluated unfairly or incorrectly, even after discussing this with the practicum instructor, the practicum advisor/liaison should be contacted for help in resolving the differences. If the student continues to believe that the evaluation is not accurate, the student is encouraged to write an addendum to the evaluation describing the differences in assessment and including any other relevant information. If these differences are representative of significant problems in the supervisory relationship or the practicum placement experience, a Problem Resolution meeting will be convened.

Practicum evaluation results are also used by the school's program assessment committee for the purpose of determining how the school is meeting its education goals.

At the end of the placement, students have the opportunity to complete an assessment of their internship experience. This information is reviewed by the Practicum Education Department and is one tool used to monitor the practicum experience. In addition, students and practicum instructors can provide feedback to the Practicum Education Department about their experience working with their advisors, practicum instructors and placement agencies.

## **Grade for Practicum Education**

Practicum Education is a credit-bearing course which spans 2, 3 or 4 semesters. The final Practicum Education grade of Pass or Fail is given upon successful completion of the practicum education requirements (placement time at the agency, completion of agency/ placement assignments, process recordings, attending supervision, completion of required practicum readiness trainings, policy and reflection assignments, learning contract, appropriate evaluations/assessments and submission of time sheets). For each semester prior to the end of the placement, students who have met the requirements for the placement to date are given a "J" grade. The "J" grade signifies that the student is progressing satisfactorily. In addition, students

who receive a “J” grade are covered by the University’s liability insurance for any time they are at their internships during the semester breaks.

Here’s a polished and clearer version of your passage:

Students cannot delay the start of their practicum for more than six (6) weeks from the first day of the semester. If a student has a delayed start, unanticipated absences, missed practicum assignments, or does not make satisfactory progress toward the nine competencies, they will receive an “Incomplete (I)” grade. The “Incomplete” will remain until the missed time and/or assignments are made up and/or sufficient progress has been demonstrated in competency development. Students who receive an “Incomplete” in Practicum Education remain covered by the University’s liability insurance while completing their internships, including during semester breaks.

Would you like me to also make a **student-handbook version** that explains this more simply and emphasizes support (so it feels less punitive and more reassuring)?

If a student receives a failing grade for practicum education (e.g. for unethical practice, inability to demonstrate development of competence, inappropriate behavior at the agency, and/or failure to attend placement) the student will be referred to the Status Review Committee.

Students need to be attentive to additional practicum seminar requirements specific to each platform which are graded separately but are part of degree requirements. Students need to complete Integrative Practicum Seminar (for CRC generalist year, Advanced Standing and HSE students) or the Professional Development Seminar (for OCHP and OLP students) in order to meet graduation requirements.

## **Values and Ethics**

Professional social work practice is guided by social work values and ethics. Students are expected to understand their personal values as well as those of the profession and to examine the application of these values in their work with clients, consumers, agencies, community partners and colleagues. In addition, students should be helped to identify and sort out, in an open atmosphere, value and ethical dilemmas that emerge in their work and in the larger agency context, and to make thoughtful decisions with appropriate supervision regarding their practice in these situations. The practicum liaison/advisor is also available to consult with the practicum instructor about ethical and value issues that emerge in the student’s experience at the agency. Practicum instructors should refer to the NASW and other relevant codes of ethics and to state licensing laws in their discussions with students about ethical behavior.

## **Legal Issues**

Students should be informed of the relevant legal aspects of practice within the particular agency setting. Examples include, but are not limited to, confidentiality and its exceptions, duty to warn, mandated reporting, informed consent, definitions of malpractice, and record-keeping. In situations where legal issues are involved, students should be given appropriate supervision, administrative sanctions, and access to and support from legal expertise. Students should ensure their practicum liaison/advisor is made aware of any legal issue that may arise in placement.

## **PLACEMENT HOURS, SCHEDULE AND OPTIONS**

### **Required Hours**

For students in the Traditional Track MSW program, the generalist placement is 480 hours (over two semesters), and the advanced placement is 720 hours (over two or three semesters). The placements for Advanced Standing and Human Service Experience (HSE) are 1,000 hours (over three or four semesters). Occasionally, students are able to do a block placement of 30-36 hours a week, depending on their individual circumstances, the appropriateness of the placement and concurrency with practice courses. Practicum Education is done concurrently with practice courses, so that the practicum experience can be integrated with classroom learning.

### **Charles River Program: Timetable for entering practicum education**

- Traditional Track Full-Time Generalist Placement – 1<sup>st</sup> semester and Advanced placement 3<sup>rd</sup> semester
- Traditional Track Part-time Generalist Placement – 3<sup>rd</sup> semester and Advanced placement 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> semester
- Advanced Standing Full-time placement – 1<sup>st</sup> semester
- Advanced Standing Part-time placement – 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> semester
- Human Service Experience Part-time placement- 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> semester

**Off-campus, Hybrid and Online Program students enter practicum education according to their track, campus, and program plan.** Students who require a revised program plan may begin one or both of their placements at different times.

### **Off-Campus Program and Online Program**

- Traditional Track Generalist placement – 4<sup>th</sup> semester
- Traditional Track Advanced placement – 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> semester
- Human Service Experience – 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> semester
- Advanced Standing – 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> semester

## Worcester Hybrid Program

- Traditional Track Generalist placement – 4<sup>th</sup> semester
- Traditional Track Advanced placement – 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> semester
- Human Service Experience – 4<sup>th</sup> semester

## Schedule

Students arrange their practicum schedules according to mutually agreed upon days/times with the practicum instructor. While some agencies can accommodate evenings or shorter blocks of time spread out over the week, students should plan to be at the placement during regular agency hours to provide services and be able to participate in the “life of the agency.” The agreed upon schedule should be included in the Learning Contract. Regardless of the student’s schedule, an agency staff person in a position of authority should always be on site when the student is at the placement. Some agencies may require student attendance on specific days to accommodate agency needs, meetings, supervision, and so on. Agencies may require students to complete onboarding or training prior to the official start of practicum. These hours may be counted in the total accrual of hours. These should be specified in the student’s learning contract as requirements. There is limited availability of placements with non-traditional hours, and students should expect to have at least 1 full business day available for practicum placement.

## Placement Reassignment

If at any time after the student has started the placement, the agency or student raises questions about the viability of the placement, the situation is reviewed by the practicum advisor/liaison in consultation with the Practicum Education staff and the parties involved. In some situations, a Problem Resolution Process meeting may be convened to facilitate the decision-making process. A plan to resolve the issue may be developed or a decision may be made to replace the student in a different setting. When a placement is disrupted, the student will re-engage with a member of the Practicum Education team to re-initiate the placement process search. **When a practicum placement is changed, the student may need to extend the placement beyond the normal ending date to accommodate the agency’s need and/or to develop required practicum education *competencies*.**

## Employer Agency Placements

The Practicum Education Department recognizes that some students are employed in agencies which can provide them with excellent learning experience while they continue their

employment at the agency. The employer agency option enables students to do **one, and in some cases both, of their placements** at their place of employment as long as specified criteria are met. Students cannot be granted practicum education credits for prior work experience and can only be granted practicum education credits for a placement at their work site that meets the following criteria:

- the agency and practicum instructor meet the requirements for all practicum placements outlined in the “Criteria for Practicum Instructors and Agencies.”
- the practicum placement time at the agency (16 hours/week for generalist placements and 16 or 24 hours/week for advanced, advanced standing and HSE students) is spent in a capacity as a student learner.
- BUSSW supports students and practicum instructors in translating work tasks into meaningful learning experiences that allow students to practice all nine social work competencies.
- While in support, BUSSW is not involved with the exchange of money.

Students who wish to have an employer agency placement need to complete an Employer Agency Proposal Form available in the SONIA practicum placement database. All employer agency proposals must be approved by the Practicum Education Department before the start of the placement.

If a student completes two placements at their employing agency, each placement must be in a qualified social service setting where the student’s tasks align with social work practice and provide opportunities to develop all nine social work competencies.

If for any reason an EAP placement disrupts due to loss of employment, a new practicum placement site will be identified via the standard placement processes. If this occurs off cycle, the process will commence immediately but may not result in an immediate replacement if agency opportunities do not align with off-cycle placements.

## **PRACTICUM EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

BUSSW has policies and procedures that apply in all aspects of a student’s educational experience, including practicum education. Students and practicum instructors are encouraged to review the following policies and procedures, which are described in detail in the Master of Social Work Academic Policies & Procedures:

- BUDDW Problem Resolution Process (a formal problem-solving process)
- BUSSW Status Review Process (a standing faculty committee that determines a student’s status in the program)
- Boston University Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures

The following describe policies and procedures from these sources that relate to students in their practicum placements:

### **Behavioral Standards for Social Work Students**

Becoming a social worker involves acquiring knowledge and skills as well as demonstrating attitudes and values that are congruent with professional standards. Attention to these standards will be paid by faculty responsible for evaluating students' classroom performance, practicum instructors, advisors, and other agency personnel responsible for evaluating practicum performance, and administrators and others with whom the students interact within the BUSSW community.

Social work students are expected to adhere to standards in the classroom, practicum, and within the larger BUSSW community.

- **Behavior:** In interactions with faculty, administrators, staff, agency personnel, clients/consumers and other students, act in accordance with the mission of the BUSSW and the goals and standards of social work as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, [e.g., commitment to social and economic justice, client self-determination, integrity, human dignity and human diversity], the Boston University Code of Student Responsibility, the Boston University School of Social Work Academic Standards, and the Boston University School of Social Work Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures
- **Self-awareness:** Openness to new ideas, differing opinions and feedback from others, and integration of these into professional and student roles and performance; an understanding of the effect of one's statements and behaviors on others; the ability to modulate one's behavior to promote a productive professional environment and appropriate relationships; a willingness to examine one's beliefs, values, and assumptions, and change one's behavior to ensure ethical professional practice.
- **Academic:** Critical evaluation and application of knowledge and research findings to professional performance; classroom participation that promotes academic freedom, complies with guidelines for respectful classroom behavior, complies with instructor's directives, and allows for course instruction and participation of all students.
- **Interpersonal:** Interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to students, faculty, school personnel, agency staff, clients, and other professionals; these include compassion, empathy, integrity, respect and consideration, reliability, and responsibility for one's own behavior.
- **Self-care:** The ability to engage in appropriate self-care and seek resources and/or treatment for medical and emotional concerns that may interfere with academic and professional performance.
- **Appropriate use of existing channels of communication:** (e.g., advisor, classroom instructors, department chairs, BUSSW administrators, practicum instructors) and procedures for addressing problems and concerns at the School of Social Work as outlined in the Master of Social Work Academic Policies & Procedures and this Guide.

Failure to act in accordance with these standards may result in suspension or termination from BUSSW. In addition to any sanction imposed by the University's Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, a student who has been found guilty of a violation of the University Code of Student Responsibilities is subject to suspension or termination, following the procedures of the BUSSW Status Review. If in the judgment of the BUSSW's Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, interim steps are appropriate, pending the determination of a matter by Status Review, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, may impose such interim conditions, which may include an interim suspension from courses and/or practicum placement.

### **Sexual Harassment and Practicum Education**

While practicum instructors and other agency personnel are not employees of Boston University, and, in most cases, students are not employees of the agency, the School of Social Work is committed to the protection of all parties in the practicum education process from sexual harassment. Accordingly, all agencies are expected to apprise students of their policies regarding sexual harassment and to discuss agency procedures for reporting incidents of sexual harassment.

### **BUSSW Procedures for Sexual Harassment in Practicum Education**

- A student who believes they have been sexually harassed by a practicum instructor, other agency employee, or client should contact the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education, the SSW Title IX officer or the University Equal Opportunity Office to discuss the situation and to determine what steps should be taken regarding their status at the agency. The Assistant Dean for Practicum Education, in consultation with the University's Equal Opportunity officer, will investigate the complaint. This investigation could involve discussions with the practicum instructor, other relevant agency personnel, and the person alleged to have committed the harassment. It should be noted that the investigation may be restricted by the jurisdiction the School has over the agency. In addition, the student may have the right to file a complaint with the agency and have it investigated by the agency itself or any appropriate government agency. At the conclusion of the investigation(s), the Assistant Dean for Practicum Education and the student will make a judgment regarding the student's status at the agency. Possible outcomes include:
  - The agency has satisfactorily addressed the complaint, and the student is willing to remain in the placement.
  - The agency has satisfactorily addressed the complaint, but the student should be placed in another setting.
  - The agency has not responded satisfactorily, and the student should be placed in another setting.
  - The complaint of sexual harassment is unfounded, and further investigation into the situation is not warranted.
- Where a complaint against an agency or its personnel is found to be justified, the agency's response and corrective action will also be considered by the School in determining whether that agency will be used for future placements.
- If a complaint of sexual harassment is made by a client or agency employee against a student, the School will invoke the above procedure and will cooperate with any



additional steps taken by the agency. The School's goal in such a situation is to work collaboratively with the agency toward a mutually acceptable outcome. The School recognizes the agency's right to terminate the placement of any student who has violated the law and/or agency policy. The School of Social Work may use the Problem Resolution Process or Status Review process to address the situation further.

## **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

The Boston University "Policy on Illegal Drugs and Alcohol" describes the University's position on alcohol and drug use on campus. In addition, social work students have a professional obligation articulated in the NASW Code of Ethics, to "not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility." Accordingly, students are expected to abide by the University's policy and to refrain from drug or alcohol use while at their internships or engaged in activities on behalf of their internship assignments.

## **Safety Policy and Procedures**

The Practicum Education Department is responsible for overseeing students' practicum experiences and ensuring their safety in the field. The following guidelines, procedures, and tips acknowledge the realities of both the physical vulnerability of social workers and the potential for violence in the lives of clients, consumers, and communities. This policy outlines the roles of the School, the agency, and the student, with the goal of fostering collaboration to promote safe practice.

We recognize that safety concerns are relevant in all communities and settings. All students entering practicum are required to complete the online safety training available on Blackboard. In addition, all BUSSW faculty and staff (full-time, part-time, and semester-based) must immediately report any concerns regarding a student's emotional, mental, or physical safety—whether or not full or identifying information is available—to the Assistant Dean of Practicum Education and/or the Assistant Directors of Practicum Education.

### **1. Responsibilities and Roles**

***Boston University School of Social Work will:***

- Provide students with an overview of safety in the practicum through the Integrative Practicum Seminar. (FE 800 or IS 600)
- Provide students with a copy of the School's Safety Policy and Procedures.
- Provide training for students to teach knowledge and skills that promote safe social work practice. (Practicum Readiness Safety Training)

- Encourage faculty to incorporate content related to safety into lectures and discussions in the classroom.
- Provide training to practicum liaisons/practicum advisors about student safety and orientation to the School's Safety Policy and Procedures. Practicum liaisons/practicum advisors will discuss safety issues at the site visit.
- Offer workshops that address social worker safety to practicum placement agencies through the BUSSW Professional Education Programs, and other continuing education opportunities provided by the Practicum Education Department.

***Practicum Placement Agencies will:***

- Orient students to the safety policies and procedures of the agency. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency building(s), and with clients. Security of personal belongings should be included. Students should also be informed of and trained in health precautions and protocols appropriate for the setting. Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed.
- Include in the Learning Contract information about the agency's orientation to safety and the training opportunities it provides to students to develop skills and knowledge that will maximize safe social work practice.
- Not require students to engage in assignments in which they feel physically at risk.
- Make the same accommodation to ensure students' safety as they do for their staff.
- Contact the student's practicum liaison/practicum advisor if the student's concerns about safety interfere with the learning process. In consultation with the practicum liaison/practicum advisor (and in some instances with a member of the Practicum Education staff) develop a plan that addresses the student's educational needs and the agency's requirement to provide services.
- Support the student in receiving immediate medical attention, as needed.

***Social Work Students should:***

- Read and be familiar with the safety policy and procedures of BUSSW and of the agency where they are placed and abide by health precautions and protocols related to the specific agency setting.
- Attend orientation, workshops, and training programs related to safety and safe social work practice offered at BUSSW and their agency.
- Read and be familiar with Safety Tips for Students in the Practicum.
- Not engage in assignments in which they feel physically at risk. If a student is concerned about their safety, the student should inform the practicum instructor. The practicum liaison/practicum advisor and practicum instructor should consult to determine the best course of action to support the student's education.

## **2. Procedures for Reporting an Incident**

- If an incident occurs at a placement site, in which the student is threatened or hurt, the student should request an incident report from the practicum education department. Students should immediately notify their practicum liaison/practicum advisor and then provide their designated practicum coordinator/program director and their practicum liaison/practicum advisor with a copy of the completed incident report.
- Following any incident reported under the above procedures, the Assistant Dean of Practicum Education will review the incident with the practicum coordinator/program director, the Assistant Director of Practicum Education, the placement supervisor or designee, and the practicum liaison/practicum advisor to determine any follow-up action needed and to evaluate any needs of the impacted student. Based on this review the practicum liaison/practicum advisor and agency practicum supervisor will conduct a meeting with the student to discuss any changes, offer any recommended services, and learn of any additional needs or concerns of the student.

## **3. Safety Tips for Students in the Practicum**

### ***Agency Protocol***

- It is important for students to know the agency's protocol for safety and security. The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, practicum instructors, and faculty advisors as they consider the safety issues in their settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will obviously have to be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc. The agency should always know the student's schedule and whereabouts, especially when the student is working outside the building.

### **Security of Belongings**

- The agency is responsible for providing students with a secure place to store their belongings while at placement. Ideally, this should be a lockable space (e.g., a desk drawer or filing cabinet). Students should avoid leaving cell phones, laptops, backpacks, purses, or other personal items visible and unattended, even in a closed office. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings whenever possible. Items of value should not be left in cars, especially just before leaving the vehicle. Students are ultimately responsible for securing their own belongings. BUSSW is not responsible for any loss, theft, or damage to personal property during the practicum experience.

## **Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients**

- Social work students work with clients/consumers in a range of settings and situations. Some of these include working with individuals dealing with overwhelming emotions and environmental stressors that result in behaviors that are or appear to be threatening. These behaviors may include (but are not limited to) swearing, yelling, insulting, threatening or acting to cause physical harm, and other out-of-control behavior.
- Some individuals may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Others may be intoxicated, high on drugs, in withdrawal, or may have other medical, psychiatric, or neurological disorders. Again, we would like to emphasize that students should always consult with agency practicum instructors regarding preparation for and handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons. The student can decline to perform a task if they deem it as unsafe. Should this arise, the student should immediately talk with their practicum instructor and inform their Practicum Advisor/Liaison.

## **Safety Tips for Office Meetings**

- When considering the location of an office meeting, it is important to consider what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person will sit. When scheduling an appointment, it is helpful to think about whether other people should be around and available at the time of the meeting for help if needed. Also, it is important to have a plan for assistance if a client/consumer becomes agitated. This may include having another staff person in the meeting.
- Certain clothing may impede one's ability to act in an unsafe situation. Be attentive to your clothing choices. Jewelry can also be used to injure the worker.

## **Safety Tips for Travel**

- When a student is traveling by car for practicum education activities, it is advisable to have clear directions and know where they are going. In general, it is important to be alert and attentive to one's surroundings, and to lock doors and close windows. Valuables should be placed out of sight in one's vehicle prior to parking at the destination.
- When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students carry as little as possible. Money, license, keys, and other essentials should be carried in a pocket if possible. If a bag or briefcase is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is advisable to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting, and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert, and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area, without staring at or maintaining eye contact.

## **Safety Tips for Home Visits**

- Prior to making a home visit, the student should discuss any issues related to safety with their practicum instructor. On an initial home visit, it is often advisable to go with another worker. Most agencies will want to know the location and scheduling of the home visits. Some agencies require a confirming telephone call upon arrival and departure from the home visit. If the student feels unsafe upon arrival or at any time during the visit, they should not proceed with the meeting. It might be preferable to meet at a neutral location.

Students and Practicum Instructors can access helpful information and resources related to the safety of social workers in the practicum on the national NASW website: <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Practice-Standards-Guidelines>

## **Injury Procedures**

### **Student Injuries**

If injured at placement site, the student should request an incident report from the practicum education department. Students should immediately notify their practicum liaison/advisor and then provide their designated practicum coordinator/program director and their practicum liaison/advisor with a copy of the completed incident report.

Following any incident reported under the above procedures, the Assistant Dean of Practicum Education will review the incident with the practicum coordinator/program director, the Assistant Director of Practicum Education, the placement supervisor or designee, and the practicum liaison/advisor to determine any follow-up action needed and to evaluate any needs of the impacted student. Based on this review the practicum liaison/advisor and agency practicum supervisor will conduct a meeting with the student to discuss any changes, offer any recommended services, and learn of any additional needs or concerns of the student.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who may need accommodation in the practicum placement are strongly encouraged to talk with their practicum advisor/liaison and a member of the Practicum Education staff. The Practicum Education staff will work with prospective agencies and practicum instructors to help students receive the support they need to function well within the agency setting. Students may also apply for accommodation at Boston University Disability and Access Services at <https://www.bu.edu/disability/>.

## **Professional Liability Coverage for Students**

Students in the practicum are covered by the University's liability insurance **only** for the semesters in which they are registered for a Practicum Education course, or if they are completing practicum education hours due to having received an Incomplete grade in a practicum education course. If a student begins placement prior to the first day of the semester or continues beyond the last day and has not received an incomplete, the student is considered a volunteer or, if paid, an employee of the agency and should be covered under the agency's liability policy. Students may complete onboarding, training and/or shadowing prior to the start of placement but cannot engage in any activities that would require liability coverage. A certificate of insurance is available from the Practicum Education Department ([sswfed@bu.edu](mailto:sswfed@bu.edu) or [sswolpfe@bu.edu](mailto:sswolpfe@bu.edu)).

### **Intern Use of Vehicles for Agency Business**

Practicum placement agencies occasionally require or request that student interns use vehicles in the performance of their internship activities, which may include transporting patients/clients. The possible scenarios include the student intern as the driver of their own vehicle or an agency vehicle or the student intern as the passenger in an agency or agency staff vehicle. The use of a vehicle for purposes of carrying out internship activities is acceptable in some internship situations, provided that adequate safeguards are in place to manage the potential risks and documentation is in place to clearly identify each party's responsibilities. This policy is intended to assist in identifying the safeguards that are **minimally** necessary and allocating responsibilities among the parties appropriately.

#### *Responsibilities of the School of Social Work Practicum Education Department:*

- Inform student that they should inquire prior to the placement about agency expectations regarding use of agency and/or personal vehicle for placement assignment
- Ask agencies about vehicle use expectations to be included in information in our database
- Give students the option not to use their vehicles or drive/ride in agency vehicles for their internship, with the understanding that this will limit the internship options available to the students
- Document understanding with students as necessary.

#### *Responsibilities of Practicum Placement Agencies:*

- Have a vehicle safety policy which addresses the use of agency and students' personal vehicles to conduct agency business (including transporting clients) with specific attention to:

- Driver eligibility including driving record checks
- Liability insurance coverage including the type of insurance coverage students are expected to have on their own vehicles, evidence students need to provide of their coverage; agency insurance coverage for use of agency vehicles
- Provide safe driving tips
- Procedure for reporting to designated agency personnel any incidents including, but not limited to, accidents, moving violations, disruptive or concerning client behavior while being transported
- Procedures for assessing, always in consultation with an agency supervisor or other qualified staff person, appropriateness of clients to be transported including whether an additional staff person should be in the vehicle
- Steps to take if a client evidences concerning behavior during transport
- Ensuring that the School of Social Work Practicum Education Department receives a copy of the vehicle safety policy and evidence of liability insurance
- Ensuring that interns receive a copy of the agency's vehicle safety policy and appropriate safety training and supervision especially in regard to transporting clients.

#### *Responsibilities of Students:*

- Agree to use agency or personal vehicle according to the agency's policies and procedures, or inform the Practicum Education Department and agency that they are not willing to do so (which may require a change of placement)
- Have automobile insurance coverage for their personal vehicle as required by the agency and provide evidence of this to the agency
- Agree to a driving record check by agency or School if required by agency
- Report to designated agency personnel any incidents, including but not limited to accidents, moving violations, concerning client behavior, that occurred during transport

#### *Liability Coverage*

Boston University does not ensure students in the use of their personal vehicles or provide coverage should the vehicle incur damage. Students are therefore encouraged to:

- Use agency vehicles whenever possible.
- Request that personal vehicle is insured by the agency, especially if transporting clients is required.
- Review current insurance coverage to assess liability.
- Students can decide they do not want to use their personal vehicle in the performance of their placement and alternative options will be explored.

BUSSW has Safety Policies and Procedures that address general safety issues that may be applicable in practicum placement sites.

## **APPENDIX: CAMPUS SPECIFIC PLACEMENT PROCESS**

## **Placement Process for Charles River Campus, Off-Campus and Worcester Hybrid Program Students**

### *Incoming Full-Time Generalist and Advanced Standing Students:*

The placement process for incoming full-time Generalist and Advanced Standing students occurs during the spring and summer months prior to enrollment in the program.

Students will be provided specifics regarding the placement process via initial welcome packets upon submission of acceptance deposit. Students complete a placement form and submit a resume to begin the placement process. Practicum Department presentation of the placement process and discussion of professional goals and agency settings will be coordinated on an individual basis based on entry to the program.

### *Charles River (Boston) Campus Continuing Students:*

Continuing part-time students entering the generalist placement complete a placement form and submit a resume in December to beginning the placement in September. This typically happens at a Placement Process orientation meeting with the Practicum Education Department staff. For continuing students entering the advanced (second) placement, the process begins in the late October or early November session via a Practicum Department presentation of the placement process and discussion of professional goals and agency settings. Simultaneously, students consult with their advisors to complete a placement form which includes an educational assessment, agency profile, and other preferences.

## **Placement Process for Students in the Online Program:**

The process for both the generalist and the advanced year placement are introduced through your group advising sessions within the first one to two semesters. Additional information can also be found within the Professional Development Seminar.

1. All students (generalist and advanced traditional track, advanced standing and Human Service Experience track) are required to complete the placement form in the practicum education database detailing their learning goals, areas of interest and logistical needs, and upload an updated résumé in the SONIA database.
2. Once the required forms are completed, each student will meet individually with a member of the Practicum Education team to discuss areas of interest, career goals, setting preferences, and logistics. Based on the conversation an outreach plan will be developed. These steps include identifying specific placement agencies, discussion of student and staff knowledge of the community, past agency experiences, and outreach to specific agencies by a BUSSW Practicum Education Coordinator.
3. Agency identification will be determined based on past partnerships, student knowledge, professional referral or web search.
4. A Practicum Education Coordinator will make initial contact with the agency to determine if there is an opportunity for placement. Once interest in hosting a student is determined, the FE team member will gain an understanding of the agency mission, services offered and learning opportunities for the student to ensure competency skill development across all 9 CSWE competencies can be achieved.
5. Once an opportunity is identified, the BUSSW Practicum Education Coordinator will contact the agency to share information about the BUSSW program, discuss criteria for



practicum placement and review the school's affiliation agreement. Routinely, the student's resume is shared as part of the referral process to a prospective agency.

6. The student then schedules an interview with the agency to determine if the assignments and learning opportunities meet their interests and goals. Similarly, the agency has an opportunity to assess the student's fit for the placement.
7. If both the agency and student agree to the match, the Practicum Education Coordinator is notified to review the placement for approval prior to final confirmation.
8. If a student rejects or is not offered a placement at three or more agencies, the student will be required to meet with the practicum education team. If a student is unable to be matched after three interviews or placement rejections, the Assistant Director of Practicum Education for that program is engaged in a conversation to discuss barriers to securing a placement and help determine the next steps.

## **APPENDIX: SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES**

### **Generalist/Generalist Competencies**

Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. This framework for teaching and for assessing students' performance takes a holistic view of competence; that is, the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the student's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to specific practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. The student's progress in mastering holistic competence is developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning.

Each of the nine competencies describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision

making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

1. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context; The Nine Social Work Competencies 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards;
2. demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
3. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
4. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior

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

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

1. advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and

2. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice**

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

1. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
2. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

### **Competency 4: Engage In Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision-making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an

anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social workers:

1. apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
2. identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers identify social policies at the local, state, federal, and global level that affect wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social workers:

1. use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
2. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

1. apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
2. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Social workers:

1. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
2. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social workers:

1. engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
2. incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

1. select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
2. critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities on behalf of clients and constituencies.

## **ADVANCED COMPETENCIES**

Students in the advanced practicum 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. BUSSW is in the process of aligning our competencies to reflect CSWE 2022 standards.

Some students may concentrate in Clinical Practice with a Macro sub-specialization. Students in the CRC may also choose to focus their studies in one of the MSW certificate or specialization programs (Behavioral Health, Children Youth and Families, Lowy Specialization in Aging Practice, Policy, and Social Justice, Trauma and Violence).

Practicum education guidelines for method specializations:

- Clinical Practice with a Macro sub-specialization: 15-20% of the student's assignment should include a substantive macro practice project with practicum instruction that incorporates a macro practice framework.
- Gerontological Social Work: the student's assignments should focus on services and programs for older adults and their families.

## Advanced Clinical Competencies

### 2022 Competencies: Specialized Clinical Practice

Social work competence is the intentional integration and application of social work knowledge, values, and skills to promote human and community well-being in practice. ***A holistic view of competence is multidimensional and involves:***

- knowledge
- values
- skills
- critical thinking
- cognitive and affective processing
- exercise of judgment

The nine competencies below represent the essential components of social work practice. Mastery of these competencies is demonstrated in an interrelated fashion. The process of learning is both developmental and dynamic and may involve a focus on individual competencies. The goal of social work education is the integration of competencies into holistic practice.

Each of the nine specialized clinical competencies describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

#### 1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice. Social workers apply principles of critical thinking to frameworks of ethical decision-making in practice. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers also understand the role of other professions in inter-professional settings. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social work interns:

- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior and appearance with awareness of differential norms across identities, organizations, and communities.
- Demonstrate self-reflection, self-regulation, and respect for others in clinical practice
- Actively engage in supervision, collaboratively setting an agenda and demonstrating openness to feedback regarding professional strengths and challenges.
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes
- Make ethical decisions in clinical practice using NASW Code of Ethics, other professional social work codes, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, and consultation.



- Communicate clearly and professionally in a timely manner in writing and verbally with sensitivity to the needs, and norms of various constituencies and partners.

## **2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person has fundamental human rights including freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice, and strategies to promote social, racial, economic and environmental justice. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, racial, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social work interns:

- Integrate knowledge of how human rights shape the individual/ group/family/community relationship, assessment, goals, and intervention in social work practice.
- Advocate for equitable access to clinical and other social services to insure the protection of human rights.
- Apply a comprehensive understanding of human rights principles to co-create therapeutic goals that address the unique social, racial, and economic injustices experienced by clients.
- Employ cultural humility in clinical practice, integrating cultural self-awareness with knowledge of and openness to learning from clients/families/communities about their own culture to guide interventions.
- Critically evaluate and address the influence of social work's historical and contemporary roles in perpetuating systemic inequities, using this knowledge to inform anti-oppressive clinical practices.

## **3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Social workers understand how race and other forms of diversity characterize and shape human experience and are critical in forming identity. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of racism and other forms of oppression and recognize the extent to which a culture's structure and values, including social, economic, political and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, and/or alienate individuals and groups with certain identities and create privilege and power for others. They also understand the role that intersectionality of identities plays in these processes.

Social work interns:

- Integrate knowledge of the effects of racism, oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma on clients to address clinical goals and interventions.
- Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive clinical social work practice with individuals, groups, and families in social work practice.
- Employ cultural humility in clinical practice, integrating cultural self-awareness with knowledge of and openness to learning from clients/families/communities about their own culture to guide interventions.

- Utilize advanced anti-oppressive practice strategies to co-create therapeutic goals with clients, centering their lived experiences and cultural strengths in assessment and intervention planning.
- Collaborate with clients to navigate and challenge structural inequities that affect their well-being, integrating advocacy and empowerment into clinical practice.

#### **4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers understand anti-racist and other anti-oppressive research methods and their respective roles in advancing social work research and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice must derive from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing, including the lived experience of impacted individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

Social work interns:

- Use an evidence-based process to identify and apply effective clinical interventions for different populations, problems and settings.
- Where possible, apply practice experience to the development of new knowledge through participation in research.
- Use research methodology from multi-disciplinary sources to evaluate clinical practice effectiveness and/or outcomes.

#### **5. Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers understand the impact of policies at the organizational, local, state, federal and global levels on the wellbeing of individuals, groups, and communities, including the advancement or restriction of human rights and racial and social justice. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, and the ways in which policy impacts service delivery. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings and engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers identify and influence social policies at organizational, local, state, federal, and global levels that impact client well-being and service delivery.

Social work interns:

- Assess how social policies impact the delivery of and client access to social services
- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice, especially for-marginalized and underserved individuals, groups, and communities

#### **Competencies 6 - 9**

There are several shared principles related to engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation of practice that apply to Competencies 6 - 9. These include:

- Value the importance of human relationships, the basis of all social work practice.

- Critically evaluate and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment, as well as theories of community and organizational development, to facilitate practice with individuals, communities and organizations.
- Value the importance of inter-professional collaboration and communication recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary and inter-organizational participation.
- Understand how their personal experiences, demeanor and affective reactions may impact their practice with and among individuals, communities and organizations.
- Apply knowledge about human diversity that characterizes and shapes human experience and relationships.

## **6. Engage with Individuals, Families, and Groups**

Social workers utilize strategies to engage clients to achieve shared goals and advance practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- Effectively engage with individuals/groups/families using empathy, humility, self-reflection and other clinical and interpersonal skills
- Develop relationships with individuals/groups/families that are professional, purposeful, collaborative, and authentic - characterized by clear boundaries and centering the voices and experiences of impacted individuals, groups, and communities.

## **7. Assess Individuals, Families, and Groups**

Social workers engage with various constituencies and partners in utilizing a range of methods to conduct comprehensive assessment of individuals, families, and groups and recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process.

Social work interns:

- Clarify the individual/group/family need, readiness for change and presenting problem.
- Gather and organize relevant and necessary information to create a multidimensional biopsychosocial assessment in a written format.
- Formulate an understanding of the individual/group/family including precipitants to the presenting problem, interpersonal dynamics, historical events, and cultural influences.
- Utilize this formulation to inform clinical decision-making including diagnosis when indicated.

## **8. Intervene with Individuals, Families and Groups**

Social workers partner with various constituencies in utilizing methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve individual, family and group goals.

Social work interns:

- Collaborate with the individual/group/family to define goals within the context of the agency's mission and services.
- Collaborate with individuals/groups/ families to initiate and implement intervention plans to meet goals, based on clinical and human behavior theory and research evidence.

- Utilize clinical concepts such as transference/countertransference and differential use of self in clinical practice.
- Collaborate with other practitioners and human service personnel to achieve beneficial outcomes.
- Facilitate effective transitions and endings that promote mutually agreed-upon goals.
- Document as required by agency.

## **9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups**

Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand the value and use of qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- Select and implement useful methods to monitor and evaluate outcomes.
- Collaborate with individuals, families, and groups to apply evaluation findings to inform and/or improve practice effectiveness.
- Document client progress in agency records as required by agency.

## ADVANCED MACRO COMPETENCIES

### 2022 Competencies: Specialized Macro Practice

Social work competence is the intentional integration and application of social work knowledge, values, and skills to promote human and community well-being in practice. **A holistic view of competence is multidimensional and involves:**

- Knowledge
- Values
- Skills
- Critical thinking
- Cognitive and affective processing
- Exercise of judgment

The nine competencies below represent the essential components of social work practice. Mastery of these competencies is demonstrated in an interrelated fashion. The process of learning is both developmental and dynamic and may involve a focus on individual competencies. The goal of social work education is the integration of competencies into holistic practice.

Each of the nine specialized macro practice competencies describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

#### 1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice. Social workers apply principles of critical thinking to frameworks of ethical decision-making in practice. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers also understand the role of other professions in inter-professional settings. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social work interns:

- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior and appearance with awareness of differential norms across identities, organizations, and communities.
- Demonstrate self-reflection, self-regulation, and respect for others in macro practice.
- Actively engage in supervision, collaboratively setting an agenda and demonstrating openness to feedback regarding professional strengths and challenges.
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.

- Make ethical decisions in macro practice using NASW Code of Ethics, other professional social work codes, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, and consultation.
- Communicate clearly and professionally in a timely manner in writing and verbally with sensitivity to the needs and norms of various constituencies and partners.

## **2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person has fundamental human rights including freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice, and strategies to promote social, racial, economic and environmental justice. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, racial, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social work interns:

- Utilize advanced critical analysis of power and privilege within organizational and community systems to promote policies and programs that prioritize social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
- Participate in the development of community-based interventions or policies that address the intersecting impacts of racism and other forms of oppression, and systemic inequities.
- Use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma on individuals, groups, organizations, and communities in developing policies and project plans.
- Advocate for equitable access to resources and services to ensure the protection of human rights.
- Engage with and provide support to community members who have the least power and are often the most marginalized in terms of access to community resources, opportunities, and decision-making mechanisms.
- Advocate for inclusive change strategies that support all community members in reaching their full potential.

## **3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Social workers understand how race and other forms of diversity characterize and shape human experience and are critical in forming identity. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of racism and other forms of oppression and recognize the extent to which a culture's structure and values, including social, economic, political and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, and/or alienate individuals and groups with certain identities and create privilege and power for others. They also understand the role that intersectionality of identities plays in these processes.

Social work interns:

- Critically address the impact of systemic oppression and historical trauma on organizations, communities, social structures, and policies.

- Advocate for equitable access to resources and services, addressing systemic barriers that disproportionately impact marginalized and underrepresented groups and communities.
- Participate in the development and implementation of policies and practices that integrate anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles at every level of planning and policy and program development.
- Integrate knowledge of how racism and other forms of oppression, as well as the centering of diversity, equity, and inclusion, shape their professional relationships and interactions with others, as well as dynamics of power and privilege within organizations and communities and in policy making.
- Employ cultural humility in practice, integrating cultural self-awareness with knowledge of and openness to learning from community members about their own culture in planning and implementing change in communities, organizations, and policies.
- Build professional relationships with diverse consumers, constituents, communities and organizations to provide culturally relevant services and programs.

#### **4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers understand anti-racist and other anti-oppressive research methods and their respective roles in advancing social work research and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice must derive from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing, including the lived experience of impacted individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

Social work interns:

- Utilize multiple forms of evidence-based research to understand the nature of communities, organizations and policies and best practices to achieve agreed upon goals.
- Use research methodology from multi-disciplinary sources to evaluate the effectiveness of planning and implementing change strategies in communities and organizations and in policymaking.
- Where possible, apply macro practice experience to the development of new knowledge through participation in research.

#### **5. Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers understand the impact of policies at the organizational, local, state, federal and global levels on the wellbeing of individuals, groups, and communities, including the advancement or restriction of human rights and racial and social justice. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, and the ways in which policy impacts service delivery. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings and engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers identify and influence social policies at organizational, local, state, federal, and global levels that impact client well-being and service delivery.

Social work interns:

- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice, especially for marginalized and vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities
- Actively engage in the policy arena on behalf of community and organizational interests, especially those that impact individuals and groups that are typically marginalized and/or vulnerable.

#### Competencies 6 - 9

There are several shared principles related to engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation of practice that apply to Competencies 6 - 9. These include:

- Value the importance of human relationships, the basis of all social work practice.
- Critically evaluate and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment, as well as theories of community and organizational development, to facilitate practice with individuals, communities and organizations.
- Value the importance of inter-professional collaboration and communication recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary and inter-organizational participation.
- Understand how their personal experiences, demeanor and affective reactions may impact their practice with and among individuals, communities and organizations.
- Apply knowledge about human diversity that characterizes and shapes human experience and relationships.

### **6. Engage with Individuals, Groups, Organizations and Larger Systems**

Social workers utilize strategies to engage individuals, groups, communities, organizations and larger systems to achieve shared goals and advance practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- Effectively engage with various stakeholders as equal partners using empathy, humility, self-reflection, and other interpersonal skills.
- Develop partnerships with and among individual stakeholders, groups, organizations, and communities that are based on meaningful participation, shared power, and authentic collaboration, centering the voices and experiences of impacted individuals, groups, and communities. Utilize a range of skills that facilitate engagement e.g., outreach and recruitment, partnership, and coalition building.

### **7. Assess Groups, Organizations and Larger Systems**

Social workers engage with various stakeholders in utilizing a range of methods to conduct comprehensive assessment of groups, communities, organizations, and other larger systems, as well as policies and recognize the implication of the larger practice context in the assessment process.

Social work interns:

- Formulate an understanding of the environment including precipitants to the issues being addressed, interpersonal dynamics, historical events, and cultural influences.
- Identify assets, resources, and strengths as well as needs of relevant groups, organizations, and communities and the barriers they may face.



- Engage formal & informal (nontraditional) sectors of the community in the assessment process and in developing plans, strategies, and goals.

## **8. Intervene with Groups, Organizations and Larger Systems**

Social workers partner with various stakeholders in utilizing methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed approaches to achieve group, organizational, community or larger system goals.

Social work interns:

- Collaborate with individuals, groups, communities, and organizations to identify desired outcomes and strategies for achieving these outcomes.
- Collaborate with partners to implement change strategies
- Co-create necessary documents for projects or actions, (e.g., strategic plan, grant proposal, personnel manual, marketing materials, documentation);
- Complete necessary steps in activity or project and plan for ongoing maintenance where appropriate.

## **9. Evaluate Practice with Groups, Organizations, Communities and Larger Systems**

Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand the value and use of qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- Collaborate with partners to utilize a variety of methods/tools to evaluate and document change strategies' outcomes and effectiveness (e.g., program evaluation, consumer survey, external review).
- Utilize and demonstrate skill in a variety of evaluation methods that emphasize participatory principles.
- Collaborate with partners in using evaluation results to inform and/or improve practices and/or policy and future change strategies.