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# BACHELOR'S OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM MANUAL

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COLORADO MESA  
UNIVERSITY

BACHELOR SOCIAL WORK  
PRACTICUM MANUAL

2018-2019

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## WELCOME PRACTICUM STUDENTS AND AGENCY SUPERVISORS

Welcome to field education at Colorado Mesa University, Bachelor Social Work Program. This field practicum manual is designed to inform students, agency supervisors, and faculty at Colorado Mesa University of all of the expectations for field practicum courses, placement, and processes.

This comprehensive field practicum manual is designed to provide students with essential information and forms to successfully navigate their senior year practicum at Colorado Mesa University. Additionally, it will provide Agency Supervisors specific information about policies and procedures, practicum expectations, evaluations methods, and roles and responsibilities.

The Colorado Mesa University, Bachelor of Social Work practicum requirements intend to help students understand the social work philosophy, expectations, and approach to the social work profession. The practicum is a critical component of the social work curriculum as it exposes students to the professional roles of social workers, allowing them to integrate academics and professional practice.

Please read this handbook thoroughly as you prepare for your practicum experience. We look forward to an exciting year in the field. Please let me know what we can do to make your part of the practicum experience a positive one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MSunkel" followed by "DSW LCSW LAC MBE" in a smaller, less legible script.

Michelle Sunkel, DSW, LCSW, LAC, MBE  
Director of Field Education  
Assistant Professor of Social Work  
1100 North Avenue  
Houston Hall 221A  
Grand Junction, CO 81501  
[msunkel@coloradomesa.edu](mailto:msunkel@coloradomesa.edu)  
970-248-1723

## INTRODUCTION: FIELD PRACTICUM

The Social Work Program at Colorado Mesa University provides a learning environment for those who seek to acquire knowledge and skill in order to effectively create change for individuals, groups, and society in accordance with the social work philosophies, educational policies, and accreditation standards set forth by Council on Social Work Education. Field education is an essential component of the Colorado Mesa University Bachelor of Social Work curriculum. Field practicum allows students the opportunity to integrate social work theories, ethics, knowledge and practice in developing professional competence and identity. The field practicum represents a culmination of social work education, values and skills, which define the social work profession as a whole.

Social Work's signature pedagogy is field education, which permits students the opportunity to apply skills from the classroom environment into practice. Field practicum is designed to supervise students as they develop their practice competencies in a structure environment with supervision.

Colorado Mesa University Bachelor of Social Work Program is developing unique partnerships and collaboration with multiple agencies in the Grand Valley. The field practicum will provide opportunities in an array of agencies, including public, non-profit, multidisciplinary, inpatient and outpatient services, human services, end of life, addiction, law enforcement, senior care facilities, schools, community clinics, medical, and with mental health and students will have access to work with children, adolescents, adults, and geriatric populations. The diversity of practicum sites is to ensure student have exposure to ample social work career paths and to create field opportunities to meet all student needs and interest. Colorado Mesa University strives to place student in field practicum sites that offer diversity in both the community and populations in which they serve.

Students are expected to complete 450 hours (approximately 15 hours a week for both, fall and spring semesters) of field training during their senior year practicums. The Bachelor of Social Work field practicum is a binding contract through both semesters. Students cannot start or complete their hours early.

## OVERVIEW OF FIELD PRACTICUM IN SOCIAL WORK

### **Generalist Social Work Practice:**

The social work curriculum prepares graduates for entry-level generalist social work practice through the mastery of the nine core competencies. The Program has adopted the definition of Generalist practice from the 2015 CSWE, Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and is designed to prepare students to be competent social workers through generalist practice.

#### **Educational Policy 2.0—Generalist Practice**

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

The baccalaureate program in social work prepares students for generalist practice. The descriptions of the nine Social Work Competencies presented in the EPAS identify the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with competence at the generalist level of practice. (CSWE, 2015, p.11)

### **CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards**

Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of social work knowledge, values, and skills. The goal of field education is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

The social work program seeks to accomplish its mission through a curriculum that enables students to develop professional competencies. The field practicum addresses all the CSWE core competencies:

- Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
- Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
- Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities



## Signature Pedagogy: Field Education

The 2015 Educational Policy 2.2 states:

Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline—to think, to perform, and to act ethically and with integrity. Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies. Field education may integrate forms of technology as a component of the program.

## Social Work Ethical Behavior

All social work students are expected to follow the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. Professional ethics are the core of social work and set forth our values, principles, and standards of practice.

The NASW *Code of Ethics* serves as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This Code includes four sections:

(1) *Preamble*

Summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values

(2) *Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics*

Provides an overview of social work values and ethics as a profession  
Provide a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas

(3) *Ethical Principles*

Presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values that inform social work practice

(4) *Ethical Standards*

Specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct  
Provides a basis for adjudication.

We expect all of our BSW students to become familiar with the *National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics* and to abide by its guidelines during the practicum and in their professional career.

Social Workers Code of Ethics: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

## **Colorado Mesa University Bachelor Social Work Program Mission and Goals**

### **Bachelor Social Work Mission**

To educate students as generalist social work practitioners who embrace the mission and core values of the social work profession, including issues of diversity, service, the dignity and worth of all people, and social and economic justice.

### **Bachelor Social Work Program Goals (Student Learning Outcome).**

1. Demonstrate proficiency in utilizing the social work professions 9 core competencies and 31 practice behaviors through a senior-year practicum in a social service agency in our community (specialized knowledge). (CSWE Core Competencies 1-9)
2. Demonstrate the ability to use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and use research evidence to inform practice (quantitative fluency). (CSWE Core Competency 4)
3. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues through professional documentation and oral presentations (communication fluency). (CSWE Core Competency 6-9)
4. Demonstrate critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments through distinguishing, appraising, and integrating multiple sources of knowledge; and through analyzing models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation (critical thinking). (CSWE Core Competencies 1-4)

## **Colorado Mesa University Bachelor Social Work Field Education Mission and Goals**

### **Practicum Mission**

The mission of the field education is to foster social responsibility through the promotion of the social workers core values: service, justice, dignity and worth of persons, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. Field education provides an opportunity to practice generalist social work skills and apply social work knowledge, ethics, values, and critical thinking; in addition to, practicing professional use of self, boundaries, and empowerment.

### **Practicum Learning Goals**

To gain knowledge and understanding of social work in a practical setting.

- Objective 1      Students will demonstrate and understanding of generalist social work practice in the context of a social service agency and demonstrate effective services to clients.
- Objective 2      Students will be able to demonstrate the application of social work principles from a micro, mezzo, and macro perspective.
- Objective 3      Students will integrate social work academic materials with practicum experience, specifically in the areas of diversity, social and economic justice, at-risk populations, human bio-psycho-social development, ecological perspectives and systems theory while upholding the social work values and ethics.

Upon completing this program, students will be able to:

- Apply critical thinking skills within the context of the social work profession
- Understand and apply social work values and professional ethics and behave accordingly
- Understand the application of social work from an ecological perspective
- Analyze, formulate, and understand mechanisms of influence when responding to social work policies
- Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice
- To demonstrate values, knowledge, and skills required to function in a specific field of practice.
- To demonstrate and apply the 9 core competencies and 31 practice behaviors into practice
- To demonstrate respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all people and their right to self-determination.

## Developmental Stages of an Internship (Practicum)

Sweitzer and King (2014) identified the developmental stages of an internship. This concept/ model was developed from observing students encounter issues and concerns at certain stages throughout their experience in field. Students' progress through five cyclical stages: anticipation, disillusionment, confrontation, competence and culmination in a predictable manner and order, but not at the same rate or speed. Students sometimes cycle back through earlier stages when confronted with new or challenging learning situations.

By understanding the five stages of development, students and agency supervisors are able to anticipate challenges and develop appropriate responses to manage each unique learning experience. This allows students the ability to identify and confront ongoing challenges by engaging in self-evaluation and self-correction that facilitates professional growth and development.

Colorado Mesa University has adopted this model to conceptualize the experience of the Bachelor of Social Work students during their 450-hour practicum experience.

### The Developmental States of an Internship Explained:

#### Stage 1: ANTICIPATION

**Concerns:** Dealing with expectations and anxieties of self (roles, self disclosure, authority role), Supervision (style, expectation, perception and acceptance, assessment), Coworkers (organizational structure, standards of behavior, acceptance), Agency (philosophy, norms, values, workload, hiring potential), Clients (acceptance and perception, needs and presenting problems), Life context (responsibilities, support system).

**Response:** Set realist, clear, specific goals; clarify and assess expectations; commitment.

#### Stage 2: DISILLUSIONMENT

**Concerns:** Unexpected emotions, frustration, anger, confusion, panic, adequacy of skills, breadth of demands, relationship with clients, values of organization, disappointment.

**Response:** Acknowledge gap between expectations and reality; normalize feelings, behaviors, and experience, acknowledge and clarify specific issues and feelings.

#### Stage 3: CONFRONTATION

**Concerns:** Achieve independence, gain confidence, experience effectiveness, changes in opportunities, interpersonal issues, and intrapersonal blocks.

**Response:** Reassess goals/ expectations; reassess support systems; develop strategies.

#### Stage 4: COMPETENCE

**Concerns:** Achieve independence, gain confidence, experience effectiveness, changes in opportunities, interpersonal issues, and intrapersonal blocks.

**Response:** Reassess goals/ expectations; reassess support systems; develop strategies.

#### Stage 5: CULMINATION

**Concerns:** Termination with clients; case management issues, redefine relationships with supervisor, coworkers, faculty, and peers; ending studies; future

**Response:** Identify feelings; recognize unfinished business; meet with supervisor; gather with colleagues; write final reflections

## FIELD PRACTICUM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Colorado Mesa University, Social Work Program seeks to implement the accrediting standards established by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE). This is accomplished by setting clear roles and responsibilities between the Director of Field Education, Field Liaison, the Agency, the Supervisor, the Student, and the Advisory Board. The division of responsibility in practicum requires a high degree of cooperation among all of the participants to provide the student with a professional and educational experience of the highest quality. Primary responsibility for implementing the CSWE standards is assigned to the Director of Field Education.

### **Responsibilities of the Director Field Education**

1. Administers the field program and approves practicum sites
2. Prepares students for field placement
3. Oversees program structures, procedures, operating policies, and evaluation processes of the practicum is to align with the CSWE Policy and Accreditation Standards.
4. Acts as an advisor and mentor to faculty, field liaison, agency supervisors, and students related to experiential learning in field education.
5. Acts as a mediator by assisting in the resolution of problems between student and agency supervisors and/ or other agency personnel.
6. Essential leader in the social work department for practicum, as this position links the community, the students, the social work program, and Colorado Mesa University.
7. Facilitates the field orientation, agency supervisory training, and provides educational opportunities for task/ agency supervisors.
8. Chairs the Field Advisory Board, which advises the development of the field education program.
9. Handles day-to-day function of the Field Education Program, provides advice, insight, and guidance to students during their placement process.
10. Recruitment, selection and training of field agencies, and field supervisors.
11. Collects assessment information and evaluates data on program effectiveness
12. Facilitate integration of learning in the field through practicum seminar I and II.

### **Responsibilities of the Field Liaison**

1. Acts as an advisor and mentor to agency supervisors, and students related to experiential learning in field education.
2. Acts as a mediator by assisting in the resolution of problems between student and agency supervisors and/ or other agency personnel.
3. Essential leader in the social work department for practicum, as this position links the community, the students, the social work program, and Colorado Mesa University.
4. Assist in the field orientation, agency supervisor training and provides educational opportunities for task/ agency supervisors.
5. Provides social work supervision to sites that have task supervisors

### **Responsibilities of the Agency**

1. To provide a description of agency function, services provided, and clients served, learning opportunities available to students, and available supervisors.
2. To structure the workload of employees selected as agency supervisors, allowing from time to provide supervision and support to the practicum student.
3. Develop and create a conducive learning environment for social work students
4. Provide suitable space, desk, telephone, and any other pertinent materials for the student to effectively practice social work

5. To provide experiential learning opportunities for the student to develop their core competencies
6. To inform student of any specific requirements they must complete prior to beginning their practicum (e.g. CPR training, TB test, background checks).
7. To conduct any background checks that may be required prior to the students start date.
8. To follow agency policies, HIPPA, and FERPA requirements for protection and confidentiality of client and student-related information.

### **Responsibilities of the Agency Supervisor and Task Supervisor**

1. To complete the basic field supervisors training offered by the social work program and to participate in continuing education offered to field supervisors.
2. To provide the equivalent of 1 hour a week of formal or live supervision.
3. To work with the students within the time frame of 15 hours a week for both semesters.
4. To conduct interviews with perspective students and recommend appropriate placements within the agency to the Director of Field Education
5. Conduct an orientation to the agency once the student has been accepted
6. Approve and monitor student's time spent within the agency on a weekly basis
8. Will meet with the Director Field Education and Student to evaluate students' progress, a minimum of three times per an academic calendar, and then as needed.
9. Evaluate student progress and conduct a formal evaluation at the end of each semester
10. Contact Director of Field Education with any needs, questions, or concerns
11. To provide feedback to the Director of Field Education regarding the operation of the practicum, supervisor needs, student needs and any policy or service changes that might affect practicum.

### **Responsibilities of the Student**

1. Perform in an ethical, responsible, and professional manner by keeping commitments to Colorado Mesa University, your assigned agency, and clients.
2. Behave in a professional manner by notifying the Agency Supervisor and Director Field Education of any changes in schedule, absences, and tardiness at your practicum.
3. Conduct oneself as a member of the social work profession by following all NASW Code of Ethics, Colorado Mesa University BSW program expectations, agency policy and procedures, and laws.
4. Complete all field practicum and practicum seminar work on time.
5. Complete all fieldwork requirements: learning contracts, supervision forms, time sheets, and evaluations each semester.
6. Maintaining confidentiality of clients and agency.
7. Seek consultation from Agency Supervisor, BSW Faculty, or Director of Field Education as needed.

### **Responsibilities of the Social Work Field Advisory Board**

The Colorado Mesa University, Bachelor Social Work Advisory Board is composed of professionals who support Colorado Mesa University Social Work Program. The committee meets one time a semester, with the purpose of keeping the social work faculty in touch with the community needs and social work issues. The committee should:

1. Assist with the knowledge and skills needed for successful practicums
2. Assist in identifying local agency that would be appropriate practicum sites
3. Assist in understanding the local employment market for BSW students
4. Assist in preparing students for advanced degrees within the social work field
5. Provide feedback to the Social Work Program regarding field expectations and community needs

## **Supervision in the Field**

Supervision is a key element in the educational experience. The Director of Field Education / Field Liaison and the Agency Supervisor / Task Supervisors are required to provide professional social work supervision to ensure student success and professional development throughout their practicum experience.

Supervision by the Agency Supervisor / Task Supervisor will provide clear goals and structure, relevance, and actual experiences to assist in the development of core competencies and practice behaviors. Supervision should be approached in a positive manner with an ability to empathize with students. *At a minimum, supervision should be provided for one hour, once a week.* The following should be provided in the supervision meeting:

1. The supervisory relationship is built on trust, confidentiality, support, as well as, constructive feedback, safety, respect, and self-care.
2. Supervision should provide clear directions for students related to their work responsibilities to help them develop as competent social workers.
3. Supervision should help students understand the scope of their specific jobs and its relationship to multidisciplinary teams.
4. Supervision includes sharing of knowledge and skills, specific to the client population, to assure that students are learning the necessary abilities to deliver competent and ethical social work services.
5. Supervision encompasses educating students to better understand social work philosophy, gain self-awareness, and refine social work knowledge and skills.
6. Supervision will encourage self-efficacy and development of identifying as a social worker.
7. Supervision should help student combine theory and practice as it relates to the 9 core competencies and 31 practice behaviors.

### **How to benefit from Supervision (as a student)**

- Be open to learning new things
- Ask questions to ensure a full understanding of why something is happening
- Actively participate in your learning throughout your practicum
- Try new interventions and practice behaviors, as discussed and approved in supervision
- Focus on learning about client dynamics and new intervention strategies
- Supervisors are role models, adopt some of their methods but develop your own style
- Continuously evaluate and assess the experience, what can I learn from this?
- Effectively communicate your needs in a clear, specific, and persistent way
- Be assertive (not aggressive) and inquire about what you would like to learn

## FIELD PRACTICUM COURSE OVERVIEW

Students are expected to complete 450 hours of field education in the social work program during their senior year. This requirement is 12 credit hours across the fall and spring semesters. The Bachelor of Social Work field practicum is a binding contract through both semesters. It is anticipated that students will remain in the same agency for both fall and spring semesters. Students cannot start or complete their hours early.

The social work practicum courses, SOWK 397 and SOWK 497, are completed at the agency. Students must complete 225 hours each semester, or approximately 15 hours per week. Social work practicum seminar courses, SOWK 394 and 494 are in a classroom and focuses on combining practice, theory and core competencies in a lecture/discussion setting.

### **Practicum Courses:**

Fall Semester: SOWK 397, Social Work Practicum I (5 credits)

Fall Semester: SOWK 394, Social Work Practicum Seminar I (1 credit)

Spring Semester: SOWK 497, Social Work Practicum II (5 credits)

Spring Semester: SOWK 494, Social Work Practicum Seminar II (1 credit)

### **Social Work Practicum (5 credits)**

Students will complete a total of 450 hours at their assigned agency.

Fall Semester = 225 hours

Spring Semester = 225 hours

Approximately 15 hours a week for 15 weeks.

During your placement, you are expected to follow all employee expectations, and policies and procedures. Additionally, you are required to follow all CMU code of conduct expectations, BSW policies and procedures, NASW code of ethics, and all state and federal laws. The Agency Supervisor / Task Supervisor will provide an agency orientation at the beginning of the practicum placement. During the practicum experience, educational opportunities MAY include a combination of conferences, consultations, agency staff meetings, in-service training, and assigned readings as determined by each placement supervisor.

### **Practicum Seminar (1 credit)**

The Practicum experience is enhanced through professional seminars, which integrates the field practice experience to the academic program. The seminar facilitates the transition to the professional role as a generalist social work practitioner and promotes the application of social work practice with an emphasis on values, knowledge, skills, and competencies. Students are required to complete competency-based learning contracts and reflective assignments focused on their agency placement. The overall purpose of the integrative seminar is to provide students the opportunity to share experiences, work toward increased competency, prepare for professional employment, and receive additional knowledge that complements and supplements their academic and professional experience.

## FIELD PRACTICUM PLACEMENT PROCESS

Colorado Mesa University Social Work Students are actively involved in selecting the agency in which they will complete their field practicum. The Field Practicum Placement Process begins with students completing a practicum application and then having an individual interview with the Director Field Education to discuss interests, abilities, and expectations in field. The Director of Field Education and the student will identify and agree upon an appropriate field placement, students are then eligible to schedule a placement interview with the approved Agency Supervisor. Once the Agency Supervisor accepts the student, the Agency Supervisor, Student, and Director of Field Education will have a meeting to complete all Colorado Mesa University paperwork and set three practicum goals that identify the ecological perspective, core competency and practice behaviors.

Final placement decisions will be made by the Director Field Education throughout the spring semester. Practicum placements are not guaranteed; however, the Director of Field Education will do their best to place each student with the best fit for the agency and student.

### Field Practicum Placement Process

- Student completes a practicum application for the Director of Field Education.
- Student completes an interview with the Director Field Education to discuss interests, abilities, and expectations in the field. The Director of Field will discuss / address any student concerns at this time.
- Student schedules a placement interview with an approved Agency Supervisor, at an approved site.
- Once approved for a practicum site, the Director of Field Education/ Field Liaison, Agency Supervisor, and student will complete all required paperwork.
- Student must contact Agency Supervisor, approximately August 1<sup>st</sup> and arrange their start date to coincide with CMU academic calendar.
- Placement decisions, final arrangements, and contracts for placement will be made in the spring semester by the Director Field Education.
- Practicum placements are not guaranteed, the Director Field Education will do their best to place each student with the best fit for the agency and student.
- All decisions for field practicum placement are ultimately made by the Director Field Education.
- Register for the following courses during your practicum year:
  - Fall Semester:
    - SOWK 394 Social Work Practicum I
    - SOWK 397 Social Work Seminar I
    - SOWK 385 Social Work Interventions Methods III
    - Any additional electives
  - Spring Semester:
    - SOWK 494 Social Work Practicum II
    - SOWK 497 Social Work Seminar II
    - SOWK 460 Social Welfare Policy
    - Any additional electives



## FIELD PRACTICUM POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Field education requires finding, choosing, and preparing agencies to work with Colorado Mesa University Bachelor Social Work students to meet their educational requirements and provide effective field experiences to promote social work. As field education is the signature pedagogy of social work it is important to identify agencies that understand the core values of social work and promote the social work mission. This is developed and created through collaboration with the Social Work Program, the students, and community agencies.

The Field Education Program reserves the right to prohibit a student from starting /completing their practicum at an agency where issues of dual roles or other conflicts may be problematic.

### **Criteria: Selection of Field Practicum Agency**

Agency selection requires finding, choosing, and preparing agencies to work with Colorado Mesa University Bachelor Social Work students to meet their educational requirements and provide effective field experiences.

In order to be in compliance with the Council Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation standards, agencies must meet the following qualifications:

#### **Agency Mission**

Agency selection is based on the function of the agency, which must be congruent with the social work profession's purpose, mission, and values. The agency is expected to have a willingness to cooperate with the university program, understand the social work practicum expectations and have a commitment to the educational objectives of the program.

#### **Generalist Approach**

The program selects agencies that are based on a generalist conceptualization and problem-solving approach to practice. The social work education stresses problem solving at the interface of person and environment, which requires that students develop competencies and practice behaviors with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

#### **Agency Supervisor / Task Supervisor**

The agency should have trained social workers, or qualified supervisors, as members of the staff. Agencies must be committed to the education of social work students by affording staff resources and time for field instruction. One member of the staff, who meets the criteria for Agency Supervisor, will be designated to provide supervision for the student. Supervision should be provided at the work site by a competent, experienced, and motivated social worker or qualified supervisor. The agency must allow the agency supervisor / task supervisor time in their schedule to support the practicum student, attend meetings, and effectively work with Colorado Mesa University.

### **Criteria: Selection of Field Practicum Agency Supervisors / Task Supervisors**

The practicum supervisor is an integral part of the field experience and must meet specific criteria to fully engage the student with the social work core competencies, values, norms, and practices of the social work profession. Qualifications of agency supervisors are based upon professional education, commitment to the values of the social work profession, competence in practice, and interest in supporting student education. Supervisors must be allowed time from their agency to properly supervise all social work practicum students.

In order to meet the challenge of educating social work students and to comply with the Council on Social Work Education Accreditation Standards, the agency supervisor must have one of the following formal qualifications to supervise baccalaureate students:

- Master Social Work (MSW) from a CSWE accredited program and a minimum of two years, post-social work degree, practice experience in social work.
- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) from a CSWE accredited program and have a minimum of two years, post-social work degree, practice experience in social work.

Supervisors that do not hold a CSWE social work accredited degree, will be referred to as Task Supervisors. The Director of Field Education/ Field Liaison will provide ongoing supervision, education, and information to assist them in understanding the social work core competencies and practice behaviors. To be selected as a Task Supervisor without a social work degree, it is required that they will have an understanding of the social work perspective, willingness to learn, and have competency in their professional role. The Director of Field Education / Field Liaison will reinforce the social work perspective through yearly agency supervisor training, field manual policies and procedures, three face to face site meetings, emails, academic materials, peer reviewed journal articles related to their populations, theories, media, webinars, community trainings, and ongoing consultation. Furthermore, the Field Liaison will provide social work supervision to students who are in being supervised by a task supervisor to ensure proper social work supervision. The task supervisor will provide task supervision and ongoing support.

The Agency Supervisor / Task Supervisor should demonstrate:

- Commitment to Colorado Mesa University BSW program
- Commitment to the roles and responsibilities of field instruction
- A willingness to share practice and educational wisdom
- Commitment to learning / teaching
- Providing ongoing supervision and consultation with students
- Participate in the required Agency Supervisor Orientation and Educational Meeting
- Serve as a member of the Bachelor Social Work Advisory Board

### **Ethical Competence in the Field**

The NASW Code of Ethics is the cornerstone of determining and guiding ethical behavior for social workers and students, and is a requirement for the program.

The following are examples of student behaviors that *shall be* demonstrated at all times while in Social Work Courses and during Practicum:

- Emotional intelligence and professional responsibility;
- Professionalism that is consistent with social work values and ethics;
- Sobriety while attending Field Practicum (no drugs, alcohol, or mind altering medications);
- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics;
- Commitment to social work professional values, ethics, and beliefs;
- Consistent professional boundaries

The following behaviors are *some* examples (this is not an exhaustive list) of behaviors that constitute a violation of the *National Association of the Code of Ethics* which could result in *dismissal* from field placement and the Bachelor Social Work program:

- Engaging in sexual activities with clients;
- Participation in dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation of self, agency, or CMU;
- Exploitation of clients for personal advantage.
- A *conviction* for a felony offense while in the program.
- Intentional harm to a client or violation of professional boundaries

### **Areas of Concern: Professional boundary Violations**

Below are examples of professional boundary violations that may result in delay in Field Practicum/Field Placement process, termination, or disqualification from the Bachelor Social Work Program. This is not an exhaustive list and does not cover all violation possibilities. If you are ever concerned about a behavior or how to deal with a conflict, please contact the Agency Supervisor and/or Director Field Education immediately.

The following are unacceptable behaviors that are identified as boundary violations:

- Applying practice outside the scope of social work practice
- Violating professional boundaries by engaging in dual relationships with clients.
- Continuance of relationship with client after termination of service.
- Providing clients with personal telephone number.
- Using information obtained from clients for career gains.
- Engaging in sexual activities with clients or former clients.
- Exploiting professional relationships for personal gain.
- Noncompliance with agency policies and procedures.
- Violation of confidentiality or privileged information expectations.
- Misrepresenting self as other than a social work student in field practicum.
- Breaching ethical and professional standards of behavior.
- Providing counseling to friend or family member.
- Providing services and/or interventions in exchange for direct compensation
- Inability to respect human dignity and diversity.
- Being grossly negligent in the practice as a social worker.

Boundary violations may result in a delay and/or termination of the student's practicum placement, as determined by the field policies and procedures found on page 25 under Resolution of Practicum Problems. Additionally, the Director of Field Education and Program Director will review the student's behavior and determine if the situation will disqualify the student from the Social Work program. The policies outlined in the social work student handbook will be implemented and followed. If the violation impacts their ability to continue at Colorado Mesa University, the Vice President of Student Services will be notified and the General University Policies under the Student Code of Conduct will be implemented. Please see the General University Policies: <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/student-services/maverick-guide.html>

**Areas of concern: Mental health and Addiction**

On-going active major mental health and/or substance abuse problems will substantially interfere with learning and professional performances. Current problems and/or violations in these areas may result in a referral to additional services, delay of placement and/or recommendation for BSW program disqualification. The student is encouraged to consult with the Director Field Education, Field Liaison, Agency Supervisor, and/or Task Supervisor if this is an area of concern.

**Field Practicum Monitoring of Student**

To effectively monitor student performance in the practicum, the following processes and procedures will be implemented:

- Director Field Education/ Field Liaison will conduct in-person site visits, three times per year, presumably in the beginning / end of the semester. The Agency and/or Task Supervisor, student, and Director of Field Education and/or Field Liaison will be present to review practice behaviors, core competencies, application of theory into practice, and continued development.
- Director Field Education / Field Liaison will contact Agency Supervisor/Task supervisor mid semester to check on the students' progress and identify if there are any needs.
- Ongoing consultation is available to the Agency / Task Supervisor to assist with student needs.
- Ongoing supervision will be provided to the student throughout practicum seminar courses.
- Ongoing supervision will be provided to the student through weekly supervision.
- Monitoring of student's time sheets will ensure the student is up to date with practicum hours
- End of the semester performance evaluations of the Student Self Efficacy Assessment (SSEA) and the Field Agency Supervisor Assessment (FASA) at the end of each semester. This will review the 9 core competencies and 31 practice behaviors.

**Assessment of Student**

Assessment is an ongoing process throughout practicum that begins with the student's first encounter with the Director of Field Education, during the placement interview, signing of University paperwork, and throughout their practicum experience.

There will be three onsite visits per year for assessment purposes. These onsite meetings review student activities/experiences, challenges, progress on student learning goals, ability to apply core competencies and practice behaviors to those goals, ability to apply theories to practice, concerns, and plan for the remainder of the semester. Students are expected to evaluate themselves in preparation for these meetings and to contribute actively in the discussion. Agency Supervisors / Task Supervisors are encouraged to be candid and direct in their assessment.

Students also engage in a weekly practicum seminar where they will be overtly discussing and applying the core competencies, practice behaviors, and theories to practice. Additionally, students will be completing a weekly reflection on their practicum experiences.

At the end of the semester, performance assessments will be completed by both the student and agency supervisor. The Student Self Efficacy Assessment (SSEA) and the Field Agency Supervisor Assessment (FASA) will review the 9 core competencies and 31 practice behaviors as applied in practice. Student will also reflect on their areas of success and areas of improvement.

## **Assessment of Agency / Practicum Experience**

Students will assess and evaluate the agency, Director of Field Education, and overall field program at the end of each semester to provide constructive feedback regarding their practicum experience.

### **Placement: Employment-based**

It is not recommended that Bachelor Social Work students engage in full-time employment during their field practicum. This is to ensure that students have sufficient time to meet the demands and expectations of the field practicum and seminar requirements; in addition to, any other academic requirements. Field experience provides the opportunity for students to learn about another aspect of social work, experience new opportunities, and get outside of their comfort zone by engaging with new organization, new policies and procedures, and new supervisors. Therefore, only in extraordinary circumstances, will students be approved to complete their field practicum within the organization in which they are already employed.

The following circumstances must be present to consider an employment-based option:

- Both student and agency are responsible for meeting the following criteria to gain approval of an employment-based practicum:
  - Documentation that appropriate, new learning opportunities and experiences are available within the current employment setting and will meet the practicum requirements.
  - Field placement credit is only provided for work outside of the student's usual employment work assignments, and
  - The student must receive instruction from a qualified agency supervisor or task supervisor who is NOT their usual supervisor.

A student who desires an employment-related field experience option should approach the Director Field Education for initial approval/permission to pursue the employment-related option. Upon approval, the student must complete an employment plan with appropriate agency signatures to ensure the above criteria are met. All regular field practicum education policies and requirements still apply.

### **Background Checks / Other Requirements**

Background checks are required by most agencies. All students need to complete the expected forms in the agency before beginning their practicum. During the student interview process, it is important to find out all requirements for paperwork including medical testing, background checks, required immunizations, and any other potential requirements you may need to start the practicum. Conducting background checks is the responsibility of the agency and the student. If an agency is not able to pay for these additional requirements, then payment is the responsibility of the student.

### **Driving Expectations**

Practicum students should not drive clients unless this a requirement by the agency as part of the essential duties of the practicum. It is the responsibility of the agency to specify to students these expectations. Agencies must manage all driving requirements with the practicum students. Students are advised that practicums requiring driving may require submission to a DMV Records check, notification of your insurance carrier, and compliance with driving policies of the agency. Colorado Mesa University shall not be responsible for any issues associated with the student driving as part of their practicum requirements, as this will fall directly on the agreement between student and the agency. Any accidents involving a CMU student while participating in a practicum should be reported to the Director of Field Education and Agency Supervisor immediately.

## **Student Safety**

The following safety policies and procedures regarding field practicum exist to protect Colorado Mesa University students from foreseeable harm at each agency.

- During the agency orientation, students must be provided the safety policies and procedures and any expectations the student must follow to ensure safety.
- Agency safety and security procedures should be reviewed in detail.
- Agency safety and security orientation should include, but not be limited to, safety issues in the community, safety during home visits, safety within the agency building, and safety when dealing with clients prone to violent behavior, and the safety and security of personal items.
- Supervision and safety: Students and Agency / Task Supervisors should discuss safety concerns, as soon as possible and/or during supervision meetings.
- Students should not be forced to engage in field experiences that they feel put them at physical, emotional, or psychological harm /risk. This should be discussed in supervision.
- Student safety must be in compliance with staff safety policy and procedures.
- If student safety concerns interfere with the learning process, the Director Field Education / Field Liaison will explore the issues through communication with the Agency Supervisor and student. Please contact Field Director immediately to assist as needed.
- The Director of Field Education will assist in resolving any student safety issues.

## **Holiday's and University Breaks**

Students are not expected to be at their practicum during University recognized holidays or breaks; however, agencies may request students to volunteer over holidays and breaks for consistency purposes. This must be discussed and approved by the student, without coercion.

- Students may not be forced to participate in practicum on any day the University is closed; therefore, student may decline to attend practicum over Spring Break and Thanksgiving break. Students must clearly plan this with their agency supervisor.
- However, students may decide to attend practicum over Spring Break and Thanksgiving break to make up lost or missed practicum hours. Students must clearly plan this with their agency supervisor.
- Students whose agency is closed on holidays that are not recognized by the University, are required to make up those missed hours before the end of the semester.
- Student must complete all practicum hours before the semester is over to successfully complete the course, if students are unable to complete their 225 hours in the normal semester time frame, please contact the Director of Field Education and your agency supervisor immediately as this can prevent you from graduating.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Agencies working in cooperation with the Social Work Program should recognize and utilize University policy, in addition to the agency policy, to deal with sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of any employee, student, or recipient of the services of Colorado Mesa University is strictly forbidden. Please see Colorado Mesa University policy under Anti-Discrimination Policy, section II, 4a Sexual Harassment and the Social Work Handbook for additional information and procedures.

Please see Anti-Discrimination Policy:

<http://www.coloradomesa.edu/academics/documents/SectionII-Antidiscrimination.pdf>

## **Anti-discrimination Policy**

The social work program, and all associated practicums, must be conducted without discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Colorado Mesa University policy, section E, states that it intends to comply with federal and state antidiscrimination laws including, but not limited to, Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and E.O. 11246 to the extent such laws apply to the University and the circumstances.

This policy is not intended to and shall not be construed to in any way expand the applicable statute of limitations under these civil rights laws for pursuing claims of unlawful discrimination or harassment with the appropriate federal or state agencies or courts. Please review the Colorado Mesa University Anti-discrimination policy and the Social Work Handbook for additional information and procedures.

Please see Anti-Discrimination Policy:

<http://www.coloradomesa.edu/academics/documents/SectionII-Antidiscrimination.pdf>

## **Students with Disabilities**

A student with a disability is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 and may request accommodations through Educational Access Services at Colorado Mesa University. The student should work closely with the Director of Field Education, Agency Supervisor, and the Coordinator of Educational Access Services to discuss how accommodations will be implemented and managed.

## **Field Practicum and Media**

In the age of technology and information, social media (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs, SMS/texting, etc.) can be particularly helpful in building connections with colleagues and maintaining relationships with friends and family; however, as a result, the boundaries between personal and professional relationships have increasingly blurred. Due to social work's professional standards and the obligation to follow the *National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics*, social workers need to continually assess the ethical implications/complications of social media use.

Students are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether using a personal site or an agency site. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) EPAS competencies provide guidance on the use of social media related to: dual relationships, privacy and confidentiality, professional boundaries, conflict of interest, professional image, informed consent, appropriate self-disclosure etc. Please review and be aware of these guidelines as a basic standard.

As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities, such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations, and promoting your professional identity, versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. Recognize that even “private” social media sites may be compromised, e.g. someone within group screen shots confidential information and makes it public. Information that has “gone viral” is not retrievable.

Your professional image, that is, the professional self you develop that is guided by social work values and ethical standards, extends beyond the field agency and physical setting of an office. As social workers, we must be cognizant that the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals and that those obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication tools.

The social work program requires that you follow all practicum site policies associated with the use of social media, use privacy settings to avoid potential conflicts of interest, and to maintain confidentiality related to your practicum site at all times. If the fieldwork site/agency has a policy, formal or informal, on social media use, this policy should be shared with social work students as part of their orientation to the practicum.

In lieu of an overarching social media policy, these guidelines have been developed to aid fieldwork agencies in determining appropriate online conduct within the context of their field work sites.

Here are a few important issues to explore and discuss:

- “Google” yourself to see what information is available on you
- Review and delete inappropriate posts, tweets, blogs, pictures (or un-tag), videos etc.
- Be cautious in using online dating services
- Be very select about whom you friend, follow etc.
- Be very select about what you “like,” as this may be viewed as a reflection of you
- Use the highest privacy settings available for all social media sites
- Do not “look up” present or past clients on social media
- Do not friend, follow etc. current or past clients
- Be cautious in revealing personal information such as DOB, phone number, address, family members, place of employment etc.
- Consider developing a **professional** social media site like LinkedIn
- Do not share client information via email or via text
- Be very cautious about what you share (any format) about faculty, field agencies/instructors, peers, co-workers, employers etc.





## COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

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### **Internships, Department of Labor Regulations, and Social Work Field Education: Setting the Record Straight February 25, 2014**

In 2010 the U.S. Department of Labor established regulations regarding internship programs in relation to the Fair Labor Standards Act (<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf>)

Over the last several months, interns at several for-profit companies (Fox Searchlight Pictures, *Harper's Bazaar*, Warner Music Group, and Atlantic Records, to name a few) have filed suit for unfair labor practices. A few courts have decided that the companies were out of compliance with Department of Labor regulations and needed to pay interns for their work.

CSWE is aware that this has raised concern among some social work programs. A number of programs have heard from field site supervisors (or agency human relations personnel) that, based on these cases, they cannot afford to allow social work interns because they would be required by law to pay them.

Field education, as articulated in the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, is clearly within the guidelines of the Department of Labor regulations for an educational internship and does not require payment.

Social work field education meets the following stipulations:

- Field education is associated with an academic program at an accredited institution of higher learning.
- Field education is structured around a classroom or academic experience, with articulated learning objectives/competencies.
- The college or university exercises oversight over the internship program and provides educational credit.
- The field education experience is supervised by social work program personnel; there is an agreement between the program and the field site as well as a learning contract between the student and the site.
- The Social Work Field Education program is meant to be solely educational and provide training to prepare the professional social worker. It is not meant to supplant or replace existing employees of social work within the field education program site.
- The field placement is meant to provide an educational and training opportunity to the social worker and is not meant to provide any immediate advantage to the employer or the field site.

Please note that the six criteria included in the DOL regulations must be well documented and defensible for unpaid internship positions. CSWE encourages all field coordinators and program directors to fully understand the Department of Labor fact sheet and share this information liberally with students and field site personnel.





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1100 North Avenue • Grand Junction, CO 81501-3122

  
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