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BSW
PRACTICUM
MANUAL

WELCOME

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As you prepare to start your practicum journey I hope that, throughout your experience in practicum courses and in agency work, you are able to connect the mission and values of social work with the work you are completing in your agency. This is a time for earnest career exploration, knowledge integration, and personal development as you prepare to begin your social work career after degree completion.

Our mission is clear: to provide you with a quality generalist educational experience. Our program emphasizes what the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) outlines as its signature pedagogy of social work. Our curriculum teaches future social workers to integrate our competencies; act ethically, as well as with integrity; and prepares students for generalist and specialized practice knowledge acquisition.

Table of Contents

WELCOME	2
Mission and Values	5
Our History	5
The Values	5
Meet the Team	5
Competency Based Course Objectives.....	5
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)	6
Practicum Program Expectations	6
Tevera: Online Management System	6
Practicum Course Information	7
SWK 390 – Experience in a Social Agency	7
SWK 490 – Social Work Practicum	7
SWK 490 Course Prerequisites:	7
Practicum Roles and Responsibilities	8
Student Rights & Responsibility	8
Orientation to the Agency.....	8
Agency Policy	8
Student Status Acknowledgement.....	8
Professional Representation	8
Use of Technology in Practice	8
Students Use & Expectations of Supervision	8
Agency Supervisors	8

Task Supervisor	9
Process Supervision	9
Dual Relationships in Practicum	9
Faculty Course Instructor	10
Practicum Director	10
Facilitation of:.....	10
Oversight of:.....	10
Practicum Application Process	10
How to start the application process:	11
Online Independent Search Criteria.....	11
Agency Partners	11
Agency Partnership Approval.....	11
Community Partner.....	12
Student Integration	12
Practicum Agency Partnership Process	12
Criteria For Approval	12
Agency Partner Expectations	12
Relationship Between the Agency and EKU	12
Definition of Responsibilities	12
MOU/Legal Agreement	13
Confidentiality and Clients Right to Privacy	13
Background Checks, Personal Expenses, Transportation	14
Holiday Observances.....	14
Distribution of Medication to Clients.....	14
Carry of Weapons.....	14
Counseling of Clients.....	14
Professional Behavior & Appearance.....	14
Student Orientation to the Agency	14
Notification of Change in Agency Supervisor.....	14
Release from Placement (Termination of Placement)	15
Development of Performance Plans	15
Employer Based Practicum Opportunities	15
Criteria for Employer Based Practicum	15

Employer Based Practicum Request	16
Termination of Employment	16
Development of Performance Plans	16
Paid Practicums	16
International Practicums	17
State Authorization (Out of State Placements)	17
Virtual Placements	17
Evaluation and Monitoring of Students Outcomes & Performance	17
Measuring Student Outcomes	17
Supportive Corrective Action	18
Evaluations	18
The Learning Plan.....	18
Process Supervision	18
Timesheets	18
Evaluations	18
Practicum Policies & Guidelines.....	19
Background Checks	19
Personal Liability Insurance.....	19
Transportation of Clients.....	19
Safety.....	20
Corrective Action.....	20
Removal from Practicum.....	20
Non-Student Issues Resulting in Removal of Student.....	20
Removal from Practicum.....	21
Request for Practicum Change	22
Withdrawal from Practicum Course.....	22
Eligibility for Practicum During Appeal Process	22
Student Grievance Policy	23
Discrimination & Harassment	23
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms	24

Mission and Values

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.

Our History

A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environment forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation.

The Values

These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence. For more information about The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, visit <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>.

Meet the Team

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Competency Based Course Objectives

Student outcomes are based on the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) set forth by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE). 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. EKU's social work program is an accredited program as certified by CSWE.

The nine CSWE competencies include:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights & Social, Racial, Economic, & Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

Accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions, and professional programs affiliated with those institutions, as having a level of performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve. The Board of Accreditation (BOA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is recognized by the Council for Postsecondary Education to accredit baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work education in the United States and its territories.

The BOA is responsible for formulating, promulgating, and implementing the accreditation standards for baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work, for ensuring the standards define competent preparation, and for confirming that accredited social work programs meet the standards. To this end, CSWE's BOA administers a multistep accreditation process that involves program self-studies and benchmarks, site visits, and BOA reviews.

Practicum Program Expectations

1. **Practicum Placement Preparation:** Students will purchase and complete registration in our online practicum management system, Tevera.
2. **Application & Orientation:** Students complete the application process the semester before they plan to complete a practicum course. Students MUST complete the application process, attend an orientation session, and complete an agency interview*. The practicum director will approve the applications and the final choice in placement. *Online students will complete the application process, attend an orientation, complete an agency interview, and secure their own practicum agency.
3. **Agency Approval:** Students will complete the Tevera connection process facilitated in our online field management system.

Tevera: Online Management System

EKU Social Work uses Tevera, which is an online practicum management system, to facilitate the complex relationship between agencies, students, and the university. Students are able to use Tevera to onboard new agency partners, as well as establish connections to facilitate course work.

Tevera provides lifetime access and has opportunities to help manage licensure information, Continuing Education Unit (CEU) tracking, and job searches when you transition to postgraduate practice.

Students use Tevera* to complete the following items:

- Practicum application process
- Site placement process
- Track practicum time and submit hour reports to agency supervisor for approval
- Development of the learning plan
- Evaluation cycles, both midterm & final
- Agency evaluations

*Students will purchase Tevera as part of course requirements. More information will be provided during orientation.

Practicum Course Information

SWK 390 – Experience in a Social Agency

Generalist Practicum Experience; completing 100 hours in the agency during the semester. In addition to in-agency time, students participate in a concurrent seminar course. Your practicum will allow you to integrate the “knowing” and “doing” of professional practice. Students should expect to spend 8-12 hours* weekly in the agency.

*Online students may have different timeframes due to semester lengths.

SWK 390 course prerequisites:

- Cumulative GPA 2.5 or above
- Have completed the following SWK courses with a C minimum: SOC 131, PSY 200, 232, SWK 210, 225, 310, 335, 350, and 354
- Personal liability insurance (obtained through EKU)

SWK 490 – Social Work Practicum

Generalist Practicum Experience; completing 300 hours in the agency during the semester. In addition to in-agency time, students participate in a concurrent seminar as well as completing the program-required capstone paper. Students should expect to spend 18-22 hours weekly in the agency.

SWK 490 Course Prerequisites:

- Cumulative GPA 2.5 or above
- Have completed ALL major requirements with a C minimum
- Personal liability insurance (obtained through EKU)

Seminars provide settings for students to discuss ideas and professional concerns, see information from peers and program faculty, provide a forum for class-practicum learning integration, and offer the opportunity to process frustrations, questions, and challenges of daily practice. Seminars emphasize ethical decision-making processes, continuing education, and growth brought by discussion.

Practicum Roles and Responsibilities

Student Rights & Responsibility

Students are expected to have a commitment to the learning and coordination of their practicum experience. As practicums are the beginning of a career in the social work profession, students are expected to actively participate in the coordination of the nine CSWE competencies throughout their time within the practicum agency.

Orientation to the Agency

Students are expected to participate in some form of orientation with the agency to address onboarding expectations, supervision schedule, safety planning, and other important information specific to their experience.

Agency Policy

Abide by all agency policies regarding practice activities, dress code, working hours, inclement weather policy, social media policy, etc.

Student Status Acknowledgement

Students should understand the expectations and state regulations to disclose student status and recognize that clients have the autonomy to choose if you participate in their care.

Professional Representation

Maintain and abide by all University and ECU Social Work department policies as you are in a representative role as a practicum student.

Use of Technology in Practice

Follow and abide by all laws, rules, and regulations in regard to technology use in practice, especially how the NASW Code of Ethics policy outlines its use.

Students Use & Expectations of Supervision

Participate in weekly process supervision with your agency supervisor. Come prepared with things to discuss and advocate for your learning experience.

Agency Supervisors

The supervisor is primarily responsible for the student's education while in the practicum. The agency supervisor is an educator and a role model who demonstrates professional skills and behaviors and guides the student in the learning and integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills. This individual has a BSW and/or MSW with two years of postgraduate practice experience.

- Works with the student to determine appropriate activities, integrating CSWE core competencies into experience and learning plan
- Provides process supervision; meets at least one hour each week with the student for educational supervision
- Verification and approval completion of student's time sheets
- Assesses the student's progress on a regular basis and completes all evaluations during semester
- Provides the real-world connection of theory and practice knowledge in agency

- Provides updates to the faculty course instructor and/or practicum director on any concerns they experience during the practicum

Task Supervisor

This individual is an employee of the agency, may or may not have a degree in social work, and is responsible for supervising the student's day-to-day activities. The task supervisor may also provide direct daily supervision of the student's learning activities. The task supervisor does not replace the agency supervisor but is expected to be well informed of the student's educational plan and understand his/her role in the student's learning. The agency supervisor helps the student integrate the task supervisor's contribution into the overall education experience. Not all agencies will use a task supervisor.

Process Supervision

Some agencies won't have an individual employed to provide supervision, but the services provided by the agency are just as valuable for a student's experience. Students participating at an agency without an agency supervisor will participate in weekly process supervision. Process supervision can be provided by a qualified individual in another area of the agency, community partner, or the student can reach out to the ECU Social Work department to coordinate supervision.

Exceptions to the process supervision requirement are rare but do occur, especially in rural areas. The decision to accept someone as an agency supervisor who does not hold a social work degree is based on training, experience, and demonstrated commitment to the values and knowledge of the profession. Exceptions are at the practicum director's discretion and are determined on a case-by-case basis.

It is important to acknowledge the potential for dual relationships as part of this agreement and they must be evaluated and appropriately acknowledged.

Dual Relationships in Practicum

To avoid a conflict of interest, agency supervisors should not enter into dual-role relationships with practicum students that are likely to detract from student development or lead to actual or perceived favoritism.

Although there are definite pedagogical benefits to establishing good rapport with students and interacting with students both inside and outside the agency, there are also serious risks of exploitation, compromise of academic standards, and harm to student development. It is the responsibility of agency supervisor to prevent these risks as much as possible. Faculty course instructors are available to consult with agency supervisors to assist in keeping relationships focused on practicum goals and requirements. (Adapted from College of St. Catherine School of Social Work Policy on Dual Relationships in Practicum.)

Related to issues of dual relationships, ECU Social Work policy dictates avoiding the practicum involvement of the following:

- Supervision by a family member or friend, whether primary agency supervisor, secondary task, other
- Supervision by another student in the ECU social work program, including task supervision
- Supervision by current supervisor at place of employment (refer to Employer Based Experience policies for detailed information)

- Agencies where the student has been previously employed
- Placement in an agency where the student or a family member is, or has been, a client
- Other placements where existing relationships may impair meeting educational goals

Faculty Course Instructor

The faculty course instructor instructs the practicum seminar courses and maintains contact with agency supervisors in the professional development of students in practice.

Practicum Director

The practicum director is the ECU faculty member that provides administrative coordination of practicum preparation efforts as well as course coordination. The practicum director (PD) maintains positive relationships with both department leaders as well as agency partners to ensure positive experiences for our students. Continued duties include, but are not limited to:

Facilitation of:

- Student orientation prep sessions
- Agency supervisor semester updates
- New agency onboarding meetings
- Interviews for students to coordinate practicum experiences
- Behavior concerns
- Agency placement approvals

Oversight of:

- Course content
- Faculty teaching practicum courses
- Data acquisition from evaluations
- CSWE knowledge, accreditation process, updates policies that impact our practicum students experience
- Fluid communication between all practicum constituents to ensure as smooth of an experience possible
- MOU/learning agreement processes and approvals MOU/learning agreement processes
- Data management, reporting metrics, quality review processes of current agency partners

The PD will also work with the BSW program director to provide updates on student performance, data management, and competency outcomes to support students, agency supervisors, and faculty course instructors in maintaining the best experiences in practicum.

Practicum Application Process

Practicum is the opportunity for a deep connection between coursework and practice within a social work agency, and is an opportunity for professionally supervised social work practice experience. Sometimes students are nervous about practicum, but the streamlined application process will help ease student anxiety and help students and agencies alike prepare for what should be a wonderful learning experience.

How to start the application process:

- Attend the required practicum orientation session
- Purchase and register for Tevera, the online practicum management system
- Complete the application tasks in the site placement process in Tevera
- Complete a placement interview with prospective agency and supervisor by the required deadline
 - Assigned agency locations for campus students
 - Student-driven process for online students
- Approval of placement by practicum director
- Confirm the agency by completing site placement process in Tevera

Online Independent Search Criteria

After completing the orientation application process, students will conduct an independent search of the type of agency and population they are interested in for their first placement. Students will contact an agency and set up an initial face-to-face interview with a prospective agency supervisor.

- When discussing the MOU/legal agreement section with the prospective agency field instructor, students should ask whether the agency accepts the ECU Social Work Department Practicum Agreement or if they have their own agency agreement (MOU/MOA). Students will explain to the agency that the MOU/legal agreement must be completed in order for students to participate with the agency.
- When the agency confirms students are approved to intern under the supervision of a qualified agency supervisor, students will be ready to complete the agency and supervisor processes in Tevera. The practicum director will complete a review of placement with the prospective field instructor to evaluate the placement site and practicum supervisor for approval (based on criteria).
- All placement requests must be reviewed and approved by the BSW practicum director (a meeting between the practicum director and the agency supervisor). The agency and agency supervisor must meet ECU BSW policy criteria in order to be approved. If the agency or supervisor does not meet criteria and if time allows, students will be instructed to secure an alternative placement.
- In the event the student does not complete any one of the tasks outlined as the student's responsibility by the deadline, the student may not be able to enter the practicum for that particular semester.

Agency Partners

The practicum agency in which the student is placed and ECU become partners in preparing students for professional generalist social work practice. The practicum agency provides the student with the opportunity to apply the knowledge, test the theories, and practice the skills learned in the classroom.

Agency Partnership Approval

Agency partnerships are reviewed and evaluated by the practicum director using specific criteria outlined below to determine if the agency can provide the experience needed for ECU Social Work students.

Community Partner

The agency is considered an integral part of the community, providing social services including effective partnership with other social service agencies. Agencies provide services to our communities via direct services, advocating, and policy creation. Agencies also support students with the opportunities to complete practicum gaining the crucial skills required for practice after the completion of their BSW program.

Student Integration

The agency should include students in the multi-faceted areas of the agency setting, including staff meetings, trainings, orientation, and client interaction.

Practicum Agency Partnership Process

Criteria For Approval

The importance of effective practicum education settings cannot be over-emphasized. Agencies provide settings in which students seek to achieve confirmation of his/her learning expectations. The social work program, through the practicum director and/or faculty members, approve all practicum agency settings.

Agency partnerships are crucial to the education of future social workers; therefore, the agency approval begins with gathering information about who, what, and how the agency collaborates with clients.

The practicum director and faculty will provide the approval process and initial the MOU/legal agreement in order to complete the university-required agreement process. ALL agencies are required to have a completed MOU/legal agreement on file in order for students to begin practicum.

Agency Partner Expectations

- Collaborative working relationship with ECU faculty and student.
- Completion of the MOU/legal agreement process with ECU.
- Recognition that the student is a learner and appropriate opportunities must be provided by the agency for competency development and quality learning experiences.
- Provide qualified employees to support the competency development and a minimum of weekly process supervision.
- Provide opportunities for student integration into multiple areas within the agency's operation, such as staff meetings, observation of the decision-making process, and policy implications, and demonstrate a commitment to values held by those in the social work profession.
- Have an individual qualified to provide educational process supervision.

Relationship Between the Agency and ECU

The relationship between the agency and the university is a key factor in the student's placement experience. Clear communication and cooperation are critical to the success of the practicum component for the student, agency, and university.

Definition of Responsibilities

When students are in placement agencies, the faculty course instructor carries primary responsibility to the practicum learning experience. This responsibility is fulfilled in several ways, such as developing a relationship with the selected agency supervisor; negotiating understanding of the educational process for a particular student with the agency instructor; assisting the student in seminar to integrate

classroom content with the placement experience; and many other tasks that are necessary to close, effective communication with the student and the agency supervisor. Assignment of the student's course grade is the responsibility of the faculty course instructor.

Various teaching methods are used to accomplish the goals of the practicum education. These methods include evaluation and feedback on competency logs/papers, organization and facilitation of the seminars, student conferences, case presentations, and support for the student's thoughts and even concerns that may arise throughout the practicum experience.

The faculty course instructor meets at least twice a semester for the midterm and final evaluation with the agency supervisor and the student. Additional visits may be scheduled as deemed appropriate by the faculty and/or agency supervisor.

MOU/Legal Agreement

Prior to the placement period it is expected that the agency and the practicum team negotiate an agreement. This agreement explicates the general responsibilities of the agency and the university. The purpose of the agreement is to ensure clear communication and understanding of the cooperative nature of practicum placement between the Department of Social Work, the university, and the agencies which participate in the placement component.

The agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of the university/program and the agency. The term is outlined on page one of the agreement. The agreement is signed by representatives of both parties and copies will be retained by the agency and the Bachelor of Social Work Program at ECU.

It is understood that some agencies may require the completion of additional affiliation addendums, memoranda of agreement, or other standard documentation initiated by the agency which are necessary to approve the partnership agreement and for completion of the arrangements for the student's placement.

These will be addressed on an individual needs' basis. The ECU practicum director will review before submitting to university counsel for review and approval. Approved agency agreements are signed by representative of both parties and copies are retained by the agency, the social work department, and a copy sent to the Office of University Counsel.

Students in a practicum placement MUST NOT transport any agency clients without a clearly defined agency policy addressing transportation by practicum students and insurance coverage by the agency. In such placement settings, students must have a valid driver's license and be in agreement with the policy. The student in placement observes all official university holidays and is required to make up practicum hours if their day of placement falls on a university or agency holiday.

Confidentiality and Clients Right to Privacy

Confidentiality and privacy have been stressed in the social work curriculum and the student is expected to demonstrate genuine concern with regard to this ethic as it applies to clients and to self in the practice setting. It is expected that the student will observe the same concern for confidentiality in the placement as well as in seminar discussions, logs, and all assignments. The agency supervisor should provide students with information regarding the agency's confidentiality guidelines at the placement interview or beginning of placement.

Background Checks, Personal Expenses, Transportation

The student agrees to comply with the agency practicum requirements for student intern/practicums (background checks, immunization records, TB skin tests, certifications, application/resume). The student accepts responsibility for all personal expenses (including transportation) incurred while in placement.

The student is also responsible for their own transportation arrangements to the site of practicum. The student should also allow for some flexibility in case of emergency situations; these situations often are optional experiences to enhance the student's practice knowledge and skills.

Holiday Observances

The student in placement observes all official university holidays and is required to make up practicum hours if their day of placement falls on a university or agency holiday.

Distribution of Medication to Clients

Students in placements SHALL NOT administer client medication of any kind and in any method.

Carry of Weapons

Students are NOT PERMITTED to carry weapons while in placement, regardless of whether or not they have a permit.

Counseling of Clients

Students are NOT permitted to do therapy. Students may conduct assessments, facilitate psycho-education groups, and conduct general case management counseling with proper supervision.

Professional Behavior & Appearance

Students will conform to standards of professional behavior, appearance, and attire. If the agency has a formal dress code policy, students will adhere to the standard set by the agency. Deviation from the expected professional standards in the agency, social work program and profession could result in the student being denied access to the agency placement.

Student Orientation to the Agency

The agency instructor or representative will provide students with a formal or informal orientation experience that will aid the student in becoming familiar with the agency and their role within it. Depending on the agency, the orientation will be conducted during the placement onboarding process or first week in placement.

Notification of Change in Agency Supervisor

It is possible that during a practicum a change in the person designated as agency supervisor can occur. If a change in the agency supervisor occurs while the student is in placement, the faculty course instructor should be notified immediately.

Approval of the new supervisor will be facilitated by the practicum director. A plan to orient the "new" supervisor to the program and to the student's learning expectations for placement should be established as soon as feasible within the circumstances. The practicum director has final approval on all agency instructors.

Release from Placement (Termination of Placement)

Students will be required to withdraw (drop) from SWK 390 or SWK 490 if the agency releases them from placement due to unprofessional or unethical behavior. If the reason for dismissal is due to funding or no fault of the student, an alternative placement will be reviewed for approval.

The practicum director will meet with the student to discuss the behavior(s) and situation(s) that warranted the dismissal and make a determination on whether the student can reapply the next semester. If the decision is to allow the student to reapply, a Student Performance and Review Plan will be developed, and specific corrective actions must be completed before reapplying.

Development of Performance Plans

All Performance Review Plans will be forwarded to the Department Chair. In the event a student has received two prior plans, regardless of outcome, the Department Chair will make a referral to the Program Review and Termination Committee (see Student Performance Review and Termination Policy and Procedure for process). In egregious behavior instances, the student may be referred directly to the Performance Review and Termination Committee by the Department Chair. Egregious behavior as outlined by the Student Performance Review and Termination Policy and Procedure policy, is behavior that could result in suspension or termination from the program.

Employer Based Practicum Opportunities

Some students may be working in social service agencies and request a practicum in their place of employment. The student must notify the Practicum director of intent to request an employment setting placement and schedule a meeting to discuss the policy and request process.

The BSW program may grant approval for students to complete practicum in their place of employment only under special circumstances and after careful review. Students are advised to carefully consider any risks to their employment and/or education if they elect to complete a practicum within their employment setting. The agency and the agency supervisor must meet the criteria for agencies and agency supervisors. The practicum assignment must be clearly educational rather than work related. The general principle is that the student's practicum assignments cannot replicate current or past work assignments. **If approved, a student may complete only SWK 490 practicum in their place of employment.** The Practicum director will conduct an evaluation for appropriateness in meeting the learning objectives of the course and criteria for selection of the placement and agency supervisor.

Criteria for Employer Based Practicum

- Agency has adequate opportunities to provide separate roles/tasks for the student to be involved with as a learner that are distinctly separate from their employee role
- Must be able to provide learning experiences that facilitate the CSWE 9 required competencies
- Student has two years of work experience with the agency
- Student is not in a probationary status for any reason
- The agency supervisor must not be involved in any supervision of the student's employment and hold an MSW
- Student is to be involved in the day-to-day operation of agency and practicum time of day should be considered to facilitate that
- Student cannot count employment work time as practicum time

- Agencies must meet all ECU agency expectations. Ex. MOU

Employer Based Practicum Request

The agency and student will develop a written proposal request and submit an “Proposal for Employer Based Practicum.” The proposal should outline how practicum hours, activities, and supervision will be different from the student’s employment.

The proposal will address the following:

- Student’s current job title, program, duties, employment schedule and duration of employment with the agency
- Student’s current supervisor name, title, and contact information
- Name, job title, and social work credentials of the proposed agency supervisor who will be “Agency Supervisor” during practicum experience
- Proposed program/department, duties, responsibilities, activities, and tasks for the practicum experience that will align with CSWE Core Competencies
- How the proposed practicum will differ from any current employment role with agency
- Proposed practicum schedule, including hours and days
- Copy of current job duties and students resume
- Signatures of approval from the appropriate agency personnel. Ex. Employment supervisor, proposed agency supervisor, and student
- Submission and approval to the practicum director and department chair.

Termination of Employment

If the employment agency dismisses or terminates the student from employment for any reason, the agency and student are required to immediately inform the course instructor and practicum director. If the reason for dismissal is due to funding or no fault of the student, an alternative placement will be reviewed for approval.

Development of Performance Plans

All Performance Review Plans will be forwarded to the department chair. In the event a student has received two prior plans, regardless of outcome, the department chair will make a referral to the Program Review and Termination Committee (see Student Performance Review and Termination Policy and Procedure for process). In egregious behavior instances, the student may be referred directly to the Performance Review and Termination Committee by the Department Chair. Egregious behavior as outlined by the Student Performance Review and Termination Policy and Procedure policy, is behavior that could result in suspension or termination from the program.

Paid Practicums

The mission of the practicum program is to provide a supportive and positive learning environment that increases the student’s knowledge, values, skills, and professionalism as they are prepared for generalist practice in a social service setting. The student’s educational experience is the primary focus. However, ECU’s Social Work Program does not allow paid practicums and stipends. Students may also be reimbursed for mileage.

International Practicums

EKU does not allow practicum placements outside the United States.

State Authorization (Out of State Placements)

Eastern Kentucky University is a State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) member. This means EKU is authorized to offer postsecondary distance education in all other member states, also known as host states, under the terms of SARA. The statewide guideline requires universities' social work programs placing out-of-state students to be CSWE-accredited with programs in candidacy included provided the program gains accreditation.

EKU has a State Authorization Specialist (SAS) who determines statewide authorization for student placements. Students admitted into EKU's BSW Program must be approved for practicum placements in their state of residency. EKU does not accept students for admission in certain states due to the cost to apply for state authorization or an extensive application process.

It is the student's responsibility along with the BSW program academic advisor to review the SARA link when applying for admission. It is also important to further verify specific state requirements if the student wants to go through their state board to obtain a social work certificate or license. This information is located on the EKU Online website at <https://ekuonline.eku.edu/state-authorization>.

Virtual Placements

Students must be prepared to attend their practicum placement on-site. Social work practice is highly person centered and interactive. Practicums offer opportunities for students to practice working with and on behalf of others to develop their social work identity and skillsets. It is also an opportunity for students to learn the agency culture and routine of a professional workday.

Most agency staff work on site and through the agency setting, students can receive hands-on practice opportunities from their agency supervisor, as well as other employees in the agency.

BSW students are expected to go into the agency in person to complete their practicum hours. One hundred percent virtual placements, telehealth and teleservices are not approved for BSW placements per department policy.

Evaluation and Monitoring of Students Outcomes & Performance

Evaluation is a cooperative process between the agency supervisor, faculty course instructor, and student throughout the practicum course. Student performance is monitored in multiple ways and with various levels of support depending on what is warranted. It is important for agencies and faculty to support each other to maintain an impactful learning experience for the student. The policies outlined in this section are ways we support stakeholders involved in practicums.

Measuring Student Outcomes

The learning plan, timesheets, midterm, & final evaluations are all ways that we measure student outcomes and ensure they are meeting both course and professional learning requirements.

Supportive Corrective Action

As students are in a learning environment, sometimes that comes with its own sets of challenges. While we encourage exploration of the problems and opportunities to improve sometimes that is not always an option.

Evaluations

Student competency acquisition is evaluated through seminars, discussion boards, logs, competency papers, and agency supervisor evaluations.

The Learning Plan

The purpose of the learning plan is to develop measurable learning activities that will demonstrate the student has met all nine competencies prior to the completion of practicum. The CSWE EPAS 2022 (Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards) establishes guidelines for profession competence as graduating seniors from the program and is an important part of your social work education, your practicum, and your work after graduation.

Agency supervisors will support the development of the learning plan based on the agency and work that will be completed during the semester. You will co-develop this document that will act as a "road map" for your practicum experience.

Key elements of the learning plan are:

- Goals of the social work program
- Goals for agency and agency supervisor
- Goals for yourself
- Learning opportunities possible and available at the practicum

Process Supervision

Students and agency supervisors are expected to learn from each other, and participate in weekly supervision to process and explore topics learned during the practicum experience.

Timesheets

Students are to meet specific hour requirements in each of their practicum courses. Students will record time in Tevera and will run time reports to submit time for agency supervisor and ECU faculty instructor approval. Frequency of time reports will be course specific and provided in the syllabi.

Evaluations

The student will complete a self-evaluation at both midterm and the final evaluation. This is designed to provide a self-assessment opportunity on professional development, learning plan accomplishment, and to provide the agency supervisors a better understanding of how the student feels he/she is doing.

The agency supervisor will complete the generalist evaluation at midterm and at the completion of the placement. The evaluation will be reviewed with the student prior to the midterm and final evaluation meeting between the student, agency supervisor, and faculty course instructor. Agency supervisors rate student performance based on the social work competencies and related practice behavior using a five-point scale. The rating is based on the evidence the student has entered on the learning plan and also on the agency and task instructors' observations of the student's performance in practicum.

The faculty course instructor teaching the practicum course is responsible for assigning the final grade. Faculty assigns the final grade after careful consultation with the agency supervisor and conferences with the student, review of the learning plan, final evaluation, and successful completion of all seminar course assignments.

Practicum Policies & Guidelines

Background Checks

Students should understand that agency partners may require background checks at both the state and national level. If there have been previous experiences that may negatively populate on a background check it may preclude them from certain practicum agencies.

Students should work with the practicum director if this is a concern to ensure that the placement application and agency selection process will provide them with eligible opportunities.

Students with a criminal background should understand that some agencies will be unable to accept them as students due to laws and regulations in their respective states.

Students will be responsible for the facilitation and cost implications should an agency require this as part of onboarding requirements.

Personal Liability Insurance

All students enrolled in social work practicum courses are required to carry Personal Liability Insurance (PLI). The insurance policy is underwritten by Eastern Kentucky University. It protects students if there is a claim of real or alleged damage that resulted from an error in practice during the practicum placement in the agency.

Students are required to register for the PLI when also registering for SWK 390 and SWK 490 courses. A CRN number will be provided during advising. Registering for the PLI is done just like registering for a class and will show on the student's class schedule.

The registration fee covers the cost of the liability insurance for an academic year. An academic year begins in August and ends after the following summer term. Occasionally, an agency may require students to obtain personal malpractice insurance in addition to what the university provides. In such cases, the student is responsible for the cost of the additional policy. (The cost of this coverage through NASW is approximately \$35 per year.)

Notify the field director immediately if you have a complaint lodged against you by a client, or if you receive any legal documents including but not limited to a subpoena.

Transportation of Clients

Students are NOT to transport clients in their personal vehicle. The agency CANNOT require students to transport clients in their own vehicle. It is the AGENCY'S responsibility to provide insurance coverage for students to transport clients, in an agency owned vehicle.

Safety

Students will complete the agency safety checklist during the first appointments with the agency to ensure that we are adequately covering any safety concerns and or agency requirements during their practicum course.

There are a number of placement settings where safety and infection control could be an issue. Some placements may expose students to dangerous or violent populations, while others may expose students to various infectious diseases such as Hepatitis, TB, HIV/AIDS and/or other infectious diseases or medical illnesses. Students are given a general overview of basic safety issues during practicum orientation. Students are expected to discuss any concerns about safety and/or infection control with their agency supervisor and utilized all resources available to them for safety training.

Corrective Action

In attempting to troubleshoot or resolve any student grievances, it is the obligation of the student first to make a considerable effort to resolve the matter with the individual with whom the grievance originated. If the concerns include any issue that may jeopardize the student's safety, the student should contact the faculty instructor and practicum director immediately.

Should a problem arise in the placement agency, the student should follow the procedures outlined below:

- Meet with the agency field instructor to resolve difficulty. Document discussion, any concerns, means alleviate problem(s), and length of time by which problem is expected be resolved. If needed, contact faculty for support feedback.
- If the problem is not resolved, student should notify supervisor, along with faculty instructor. Student completes documentation of discussion, concerns, and as it relates to field experiences learning competencies. All should be submitted in writing to faculty.
- Faculty will:
 - Attempt to resolve the issue with student and agency field instructor, notify practicum director of problem progress toward a resolution.
 - If resolution efforts are not successful the student, faculty, and practicum director will meet to discuss practicum placement options and make formal recommendation to remedy the concerns.

Removal from Practicum

The practicum experience is a critical component of the student's development as a professional social worker, particularly as it reflects the student's ability to internalize academic course content and to combine professional knowledge and skill with professional demeanor appropriate for practice.

Non-Student Issues Resulting in Removal of Student

If through no fault of the student the practicum placement must be discontinued, every effort will be made to allow the student to secure another placement setting as expeditiously as possible.

However, this will depend on availability of an appropriate placement site and may impact the desired graduation date. Every attempt will be made to minimize the loss of accumulated placement hours. The practicum director will consult the faculty and agency supervisor to evaluate the situation and determine

what conditions must be in place before the agency setting can host another practicum student. This situation does not count as an unsuccessful placement.

Examples could be:

- Agency closure, change in regulations governing agencies activity
- Agency failure to adhere the value and ethics of social work practice
- Agency Failure to adhere Eastern Kentucky University BSW Social Work mission or policy

Removal from Practicum

The student must maintain a professional demeanor that separates personal life/issues from practice in order to engage successfully in one's professional responsibilities to clients, the agency, and the community. Should a student's personal life, psychological and physical well-being, lack of maturity or lack of learning readiness in the student intern role impair the student's practicum performance and responsibilities to clients, the agency, and/or the community, the agency field supervisor, faculty and practicum director have the responsibility to intervene.

The practicum director has the responsibility to remove any student from practicum when the student's professional or ethical behavior jeopardizes the services provided by the agency or the client's served by the agency. The practicum director will consult with the agency supervisor, faculty, and the BSW Director when appropriate to assist in making the decision to remove a student from placement.

Examples of reasons to remove a student include, but are not limited to:

- Student's failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, assigned agency policies or procedures, and or field policies or procedures
- Student's violation of any of the principles outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice
- Student's attempt to harm oneself, others, or clients
- Student's repeated tardiness and unexcused absences without notification to agency field instructor
- Student's lack of progress in correcting identified deficiencies and concerns, as outlined in a corrective plan
- Any student that is arrested or otherwise charged with a crime shall immediately notify the faculty instructor and practicum director. This will prompt a review of placement to determine in whether the student will be allowed to continue in an internship setting and, if so, under what conditions and or review of continuation in the social work program.
- To the extent that the BSW practicum program has a concern that a student is unfit to perform any of the required duties associated with a practicum placement, the student may be immediately removed from the placement, and the program may require the student to provide adequate assurances from an appropriate health care professional acceptable to the social work program, that the student is fit to perform all duties associated with the field placement.

Students asked to leave an agency or removed by the social work practicum program due to any of the above-mentioned reasons or other unprofessional or troubling behavior, may forfeit completed hours in that internship, and may be assigned a grade of "Unsatisfactory." In such situations the student may be denied another practicum placement and/or dismissed from the social work program.

A failing grade or removal from practicum may result in expulsion from the program. Students will receive written documentation of reasons for removal, and outline of procedures that will occur after removal.

Request for Practicum Change

Any change in placement within or between semesters must be supported by educational reasons and must be recommended by the faculty and approved by the practicum director. Changes in placement during the placement semester are considered only in extreme cases. Factors such as outside employment, potential for a better job, or changing interests in practicum are not considered sound educational reasons for making a change during the semester of placement.

Withdrawal from Practicum Course

Students may withdraw with a “W” grade if done within the university deadlines (refer to the eku.edu for specific dates). In all cases, a student who decides to withdraw with a “W” grade will forfeit credit for ALL practicum clock hours completed in the agency prior to the drop date.

Practicum policies to be followed by student before withdrawing from the practicum course:

- Discuss decision and options with practicum director and BSW program director
- Speak with agency supervisor and ECU faculty instructor
- Notify agency in the written form of a resignation letter and send a copy to practicum director
- Complete any necessary termination activities required by the NASW Code of Ethics
- Follow university procedures for withdrawing from the course

Failure to notify all parties of this decision may result in an incomplete or failing grade. A failing grade may result in expulsion from the BSW program.

Students withdrawing from their assigned placement after receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation or with documented problems in meeting the course competencies will count as an unsuccessful placement and may result in expulsion from the program. The practicum director will meet with the student, faculty, and agency supervisor to review all information regarding student performance. This information will be used to determine if the student will be allowed to re-register for the practicum course. Students will be notified in writing of all concerns and decision regarding their status in practicum.

Eligibility for Practicum During Appeal Process

A student who receives a failing course grade in a pre-requisite or unsatisfactory “U” in a practicum will be required to repeat the course. If the student is dismissed from the program and elects to appeal the grade and the dismissal, the student will not be permitted to commence or return to field while pursuing the appeal. If the student wins the appeal and the dismissal is rescinded, the student may commence or return to practicum. If the student has missed the application deadline or beginning of the pre-placement process semester, the student must wait until the next application process to apply.

Students who are placed in practicum agencies take on responsibility or direct services to vulnerable clients and/or projects that may have critical timelines. When the practicum program places a student in an agency setting, there is a good faith understanding that the student is expected to complete the placement and not expose clients to abrupt disruption of services or the agency to the consequences of

unfinished projects. Many agency affiliation agreements for student placement stipulate that the student must have satisfactorily completed the required didactic portion of the school's curriculum.

A student who has failed a required course would not meet this requirement. Consequently, it is neither ethical nor congruent with binding affiliation agreements for the university to allow a student to return to field while appealing dismissal from the BSW program due to not meeting the academic standards or professional code of conduct.

The following sections of the NASW Code of Ethics are referenced in support of this policy:

- Section 1.01 - Commitment to Clients
 - Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised.
- Section 1.17b - Termination
 - Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration all factors the situation and taking care minimize possible adverse effects. assist making appropriate arrangements for continuation when necessary.

Student Grievance Policy

As with any academic decision, the student has the right to appeal a practicum decision. Students who believe that they have been treated unfairly, or who believe that policies have not been fairly adhered to have the right to use the appeal procedures without fear or coercion, harassment, intimidation, or reprisal for making the appeal, a right that the university and social work program will safeguard.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision reached by the practicum director or faculty, the student can follow the student grievance procedures outlined in the University Student Handbook. Student grievances related to the practicum will be managed within the BSW Social Work program policies and University Student Handbook (Student Appeals Procedures).

Discrimination & Harassment

It is the policy of Eastern Kentucky University to maintain an environment for students, faculty, administrators, staff, and visitors that is free of all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual misconduct. The university has published and enacted this "Policy on Discrimination and Harassment" to reflect and maintain its adherence to all federal and state civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in public educational institutions and to reflect and maintain its values as an institution and the expectations of its community.

The university does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious belief, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, ethnicity, disability, medical condition, veteran status, genetic information, age, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law in its programs and activities. The full policy statement is located on the ECU website. Students also receive a copy of the student handbook at admissions which outline the discrimination and harassment policy.

Reports of Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Retaliation should be promptly made to the Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX at (859) 622- 8020.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Agency Supervisor: The agency supervisor is a social worker who holds a master or bachelor of social work degree from a CSWE-accredited program as well as two years of post-grad practice and will provide weekly supervision for a minimum of one hour a week during the students practicum semester.

Director of Practicum Education: The director of practicum education provides overall management of the practicum education component of the program. The director of practicum education approves all practicum placements, The director of practicum education serves as the nexus between the student, the practicum agency, the agency supervisor, and course instructor.

Faculty Course Instructor: Faculty course instructors are Eastern Kentucky University faculty assigned to teach the seminar component of practicum education. Faculty ensure that the student's practicum experiences are educational and meet established learning objectives by integrating curriculum content and student activities within the agency. Faculty oversee the student's progress in connecting CSWE competencies and skill development through discussion, assignments, and evaluation of the student's progress. Faculty are responsible for assigning the final grade for the course.

Learning Plan: Similar to a treatment plan or service plan commonly used at social service agencies, the learning plan is just that: a plan for what experiences the student will engage in to achieve student learning outcomes.

MOA/Legal Agreement: Legal partnership agreement outlining legal responsibility of the party providing practicum and the educational institution. Must be reviewed by ECU Legal Counsel Prior to approval.

Placement/Practicum/Internship: The practicum placement or Internship is an integral part of the social work student's formal education requirements, consisting of an ongoing work assignment at an agency or organization providing services, and which allows the student to apply social work theory, values, ethics, and competencies to practice. The practicum placement is directly supervised by the agency supervisor.

Process Supervision: Experience that is facilitated by a third party to meet the weekly educational supervision that is required for students during practicum. Supervision is facilitated by someone with a BSW and or MSW with two years of post-graduation experience.

Seminar: Seminar is the academic component of the social work student's practicum education. In addition to the placement/practicum, students are required to attend the course seminar, which is designed to integrate curriculum content with direct practice knowledge and experiences.

Task Supervisor: In rare and pre-approved instances, a task supervisor may be used in the event a practicum agency does not have a social worker on staff who meets CSWE education and/or practice experience requirements for agency supervisors. The task supervisor must have a social work degree. Task supervisors maintain regular contact with the agency supervisor in arranging activities and monitoring a student's progress in the practicum placement.