



# **BSW PROGRAM FIELD MANUAL**

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK**  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Bachelor of Social Work Program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock is unique: we are the only undergraduate social work program in the state that is located in a metropolitan university as well as in the state's capital. We are committed to the values of diversity, human rights, and social justice. With this value base, we educate our students in the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for generalist practice within our diverse population.

## BSW Program Goals

The UA Little Rock BSW program prepares students to:

1. Engage in generalist practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
2. Engage in culturally affirming practice with diverse populations.
3. Engage in practice that is consistent with the Code of Ethics.
4. Evaluate individual, group, and community practice.
5. Identify client strengths and challenges.
6. Utilize the knowledge of human development in a social environment to guide assessment, intervention, and evaluation.
7. Advocate and promote social justice.
8. Advocate on behalf of policy change.
9. Contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.
10. Engage in lifelong learning, including the pursuit of graduate study.

## CSWE Program Competencies & Practice Behaviors

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredits all BSW and MSW programs. As part of the accreditation process, programs are required to assess 9 social work competencies as operationalized by 31 behaviors. These competencies, the definition of each, and their corresponding behaviors are as follows:

1. Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.
  - 1.1. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context.
  - 1.2. Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.
  - 1.3. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.
  - 1.4. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.
  - 1.5. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
2. Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
  - 2.1. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

- 2.2. Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.
- 2.3. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.
- 3. Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
  - 3.1. Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels.
  - 3.2. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.
- 4. Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
  - 4.1. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research.
  - 4.2. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings.
  - 4.3. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.
- 5. Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
  - 5.1. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.
  - 5.2. Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services.
  - 5.3. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
- 6. Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
  - 6.1. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies.
  - 6.2. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.
- 7. Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
  - 7.1. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.
  - 7.2. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies.
  - 7.3. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies.
  - 7.4. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

8. Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
  - 8.1. Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies.
  - 8.2. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies.
  - 8.3. Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes.
  - 8.4. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies.
  - 8.5. Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.
9. Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
  - 9.1. Understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.
  - 9.2. Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes.
  - 9.3. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes.
  - 9.4. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes.
  - 9.5. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

As part of the BSW Program's ongoing evaluation process, students will be assessed on their mastery of these competencies at least once each semester. More information about the assessment is found later in this manual.

## Introduction to Field Education

Field education is the "signature pedagogy" of the BSW curriculum in which the student integrates classroom theory to the application of knowledge, skills, and values utilized in practice. The agency setting provides the opportunity to gain the competencies necessary to practice as a professional social worker through the demonstration of designated practice behaviors with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.

Field education activities take place in a variety of agencies. The degree of emphasis placed on the differing levels of practice of field education varies with agencies according to their function and philosophy. Students learn to incorporate development of micro and macro skills within agency and community settings in conjunction with the mission and objectives of the field placement.

## Field Placement Basics

Students are assigned to a Field Experience placement after careful review of the student's application information, past experiences, future career goals, agency location, and the availability of transportation. The School uses all available and relevant information as the basis for which the placements are made. In the event that a student presents a valid reason for requesting a change in the field placement, the request will be considered but cannot be guaranteed. Placements are dependent upon availability of field instructors and agency requirements. Therefore, any changes requested after the semester begins will be considered but may be a difficult endeavor. A student who refuses to accept a second placement or is asked to leave a second placement may have to wait until the next semester of Field Experience I or II to be reassigned and/or may not be offered another field placement.

Students will not be placed in an agency that provides services to the student, the student's family, or the student's friends as this could lead to a conflict of interest. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Field Coordinator if they are told that they may be placed in such an agency. More information is available regarding placement difficulties under the section, "Placement Difficulties and Appeals."

### Agency Requirements

The BSW Program establishes field relationships with agencies that provide quality services in Arkansas. Agencies that participate in the field experience program are chosen for their commitment to quality social work service and their willingness to provide field instruction with a social work staff that meets the criteria and standards of the BSW Program.

Agencies who agree to work with students must:

- Provide social services to individuals, families and/or communities and willingly include assistance to disadvantaged populations.
- Have standards and philosophy that are consistent with the goals of social work education and the values and ethics of the social work profession.
- Be willing to provide opportunities to practice social work principles and to allow student exposure to concerns faced by specific target groups in areas of health, mental health, family issues and/or criminal justice, at a level appropriate for bachelor level students.
- Be willing to allow practice evaluation as it occurs in an agency environment.
- Provide a field instructor who meets prescribed qualifications as a social worker, preferably with supervisory experience, and will commit to:
  - Meeting with the student one hour per week for supervision.
  - Attending one orientation training session for field instructors at the beginning of the fall semester and others throughout the year, if at all possible.
  - Meeting with the student's faculty liaison twice per semester regarding the student's responsibilities and learning goals.
  - Working with the student to facilitate a rewarding field experience and to provide positive, constructive feedback to students on an ongoing basis.

- If the agency does not have a social worker on staff who is able to serve as a Field Instructor, the student can be assigned an off site Field Instructor. The agency will still provide the student with a supervisor. That supervisor is required to review and approve the student's time, and participate in the two site meetings per semester to provide feedback on the work the student is doing at the agency and the student's level of performance.
- Provide necessary physical space and resources, such as a chair, desk, and other items to support student learning.

## Student Requirements for Admission to Field Experience

The placement process for Field Experience begins during the semester prior to the placement. Students meet with their faculty advisor to assure that all coursework has been completed in preparation for Field Experience and that the standard for grades has been maintained in the social work program courses.

The prerequisites for enrollment in the field practicum are as follows:

- For Field Experience I (SOWK 4541):
  - Admission into the BSW Program
  - Completion of field application packet requirements
  - GPA of 2.5 or better in the BSW program
  - Approval by the Program Coordinator
  - Completion of the following prerequisites with a final grade of C or better:
    - SOWK 1301 - Introduction to Social Work
    - SOWK 3302 - Diversity
    - SOWK 3303 - HBSE I
    - SOWK 3304 - HBSE II
    - SOWK 3318 - Social Welfare Policy
    - SOWK 3331 - Social Work Practice I
  - Student must enroll in the following corequisites
    - SOWK 4212 - Field Seminar I
    - SOWK 4332 - Practice II (pre or corequisite)
- For Field Experience II (SOWK 4542):
  - Admission into the BSW Program
  - Completion of field application packet requirements
  - GPA of 2.5 or better in the BSW program
  - Approval by the Program Coordinator
  - Completion of the following prerequisites with a final grade of C or better:
    - SOWK 1301 - Introduction to Social Work
    - SOWK 3302 - Diversity
    - SOWK 3303 - HBSE I
    - SOWK 3304 - HBSE II
    - SOWK 3318 - Social Welfare Policy
    - SOWK 3331 - Social Work Practice I



- Completion of the following prerequisites with a final grade of B or better:
  - SOWK 4541 - Field Experience I
  - SOWK 4212 - Field Seminar I
- Student must enroll in the following corequisites
  - SOWK 4213 - Field Seminar II
  - SOWK 4333 - Practice III (pre or corequisite)

An online application must be completed by the deadline to be considered for Field Experience I. The student is to complete the application and agrees to attend an interview with the Field Coordinator and/or with the field agency if requested to do so.

The student is asked to reveal any physical or mental disability that may interfere with travel on the job or with their ability to carry out social work duties for the assigned agency. Students may be asked to submit to drug testing, background checks, traffic violation checks, and other screenings before being approved by an agency. Any issues in the student's history that may prevent the student from being approved by an agency should be brought to the attention of the field coordinator at the time of submitting the field application.

## Scholastic Standards

Formally admitted social work majors are expected to maintain a high standard of academic performance. Students who do not meet the following program requirements will not be allowed to register for additional social work courses until they have successfully completed previous ones. The process for appealing a grade can be found in the UA Little Rock Student Handbook. Students are encouraged to consult their advisor, another faculty member, or the Director of the Program if they are having trouble locating the policy or are confused about the process.

- Students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.5 in social work courses. Every student's GPA will be reviewed at the end of each semester
- Students must receive a grade of B or better in the following social work courses in order to proceed to the next semester.
  - SOWK 4212 - Field Seminar I
  - SOWK 4541 - Field Experience I
- Students must receive a grade of B or better in the following social work courses in order to graduate.
  - SOWK 4213 – Field Seminar II
  - SOWK 4542 – Field Experience II

Learning in a professional social work program is based, in large part, on the interaction that occurs between the instructor and the students as well as among students through collaboration and team building. Therefore, regular attendance in class is an expected professional responsibility of the student. Absences of greater than 20% of total class time can constitute grounds for grade reduction or course failure. Excessive tardiness may be considered to constitute absences.

Students may be dismissed from the program if they violate the NASW Code of Ethics, the University's Rules and regulations on academic integrity and discipline, state or federal

laws, the Standards of Conduct explained in this handbook, or fail to maintain the required grade point average. Students violating the Social Work Code of Ethics in their role as intern will be subject to a performance review and possible dismissal from the program. Students also may be immediately suspended from the program and/or their field placement, pending the appeals process, for violations of the above.

## Student Screening by Agencies

Background checks, drug testing, child abuse registry checks, traffic violations, and other screening methods are often required by agencies in which interns are placed, particularly those where the client population includes children. UA Little Rock does not require a background check of students. Questions should be directed to each agency regarding their specific policy regarding method of checking and to whom the information is reported.

Confidentiality of these reports is managed by the requesting agency. Information on the law can be obtained from the Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board at [www.arkansas.gov/swlb/](http://www.arkansas.gov/swlb/). If you have concerns or questions, please contact the BSW Field Coordinator.

## Stipends/Paid Internships

There are very few paid internships. Paid internships are offered at the discretion of the agency and may change for a number of reasons. The Field Coordinator cannot and does not take into account whether or not the internship is paid when assigning field assignments. Students should not expect nor rely on obtaining a paid internship.

Stipends are dependent upon market conditions and agency budgets that fluctuate from year to year. Therefore, this program must be renewed annually. Additional information about this program will be presented to students during their junior year in the BSW Program.

## Work Site Practicum

Students who wish to explore the possibility of using their place of employment may submit a written request to the BSW Field Coordinator accompanied by a written request from the administrator of the employing agency. Information should include the field agency application plus a description of the worker's past employment responsibilities, a schedule of work hours, and the name of the current or most recent work supervisor. The student should address any new learning opportunities they may have as an intern. Requests are decided on a case-by-case basis by the BSW Field Coordinator in consultation with the BSW Program Coordinator.

Approvals of requests are contingent upon the following:

- The student must be off probation, and considered a full time employee.
- The agency must provide a field instructor (as defined below).
- The learning objectives of the field experience should be different from those routinely done in the student's job assignment.
- The volume of responsibilities should be reduced to reflect the field experience as a learning experience rather than meeting the required work objectives.

- The schedule of hours designed for the field experience must be clearly delineated and separated from the work expectations.

The agreement between the Program and the student's place of employment shall be outlined in writing. Final approval of the employment setting will depend on all the criteria met and approved in writing by the student's work supervisor, proposed field instructor, other appropriate agency personnel, and the Program's faculty representative. It is the responsibility of the faculty liaison to monitor the agreed upon terms. Failure to comply with the agreement may result in termination of the field experience placement.

## Placement Difficulties and Appeals

A student who is dissatisfied with their assigned field placement must first question the nature of their discontent by asking these questions: Is the source of my discontent based on certain attributes of the agency? Is it based on a dislike for the field instructor? Or, is the assignment not measuring up to a preconceived idea of what the placement should be? Am I having difficulty developing empathy with a particular client group? Do I feel scared about what I predict will be expected of me? These are questions that will be asked by the Field Coordinator and/or the Program Coordinator in hearing your complaint.

Students may request a review of their field experience at any time, either in regard to a performance evaluation or other concerns regarding the capacity of the placement to meet their learning needs. Students must address this placement problem by first discussing with the field liaison or the field coordinator. If dissatisfaction continues, a student may seek assistance from the program coordinator through the Formal Review process order.

The Field Coordinator is available for consultation regarding field experience issues and the appeals process, and students are encouraged to make use of this avenue. Students who have reason to question their particular assignment should contact the Field Coordinator for an explanation of the placement rationale.

Since "use of self" is a major part of learning in the social work experience, negative feelings are used as a tool to discover and broaden a person's understanding of self. A placement is analogous to a learning assignment in a course. Problems with agency personnel or other student workers are opportunities for growth. Is a student able to appeal to the textbook assigned by the methods teacher? Rather than leaving a field experience in order to "fit" better elsewhere or to feel more comfortable, the social work field experience will expand the student's ability to adapt to diverse and challenging opportunities. Comfort is not a goal of the program; learning is.

If, after thorough discussion, one feels compelled to request a transfer to a secondary placement, and that request is denied, a student may file an appeal through the Field Coordinator to the Program Coordinator for re-consideration of a placement assignment. The appeal must be in writing. Consideration for reassignment will be given to any student who provides significant information to indicate that an agency is not adhering to the School/Agency Agreement or is in violation of social work values.

## BSW Program Structure and Responsibilities

The BSW field experience consists of one placement each year with each semester requiring 240 hours of practice exposure over a 15-week semester. No more than 10% of the student's internship hours each semester can be satisfied with agency orientation. Students are expected to equalize time at the agency over the full 15-16 weeks unless special circumstances warrant an exception. Students are not permitted to end their internship more than two weeks. Students should not expect to have an internship on the weekends and/or after hours.

Although students with hardships may request special consideration in agency assignments, there are no guarantees that students will be placed within a given geographical area. Convenience to the student will be considered a secondary issue although it will be an appropriate consideration. Students will initially be responsible to contact and meet their field instructor once they are provided this information.

Once assigned, the student and the field instructor work together to create a consistent, weekly schedule that is mutually beneficial and approved by the field liaison. The field schedule should plan for no less than four hours or more than ten hours at the agency at any one time. Time is to be recorded by the student, signed by the field instructor, and turned into the seminar instructor (field liaison) every other week. This schedule can be found on the course syllabus.

Students may not begin the placement assignment prior to the school semester, nor can they extend the placement period beyond the semester's end, unless authorized by the field liaison. Students are assigned to an agency with the expectation that the placement will run the full academic year.

### Field Coordinator

The field experience courses fall under the administrative purview of the Field Coordinator. The policies, procedures, and processes implemented in the practicum program emanate from the stated curriculum goals that are reviewed and approved by the faculty.

The Field Coordinator works with the faculty to ensure that field experiences are firmly anchored in the BSW Program's curriculum. The Field Coordinator provides leadership in the establishment and maintenance of linkages between the Program and agencies.

The basic functions and decisions made by the Field Coordinator are as follows:

- Selection of agencies and instructors for the practicum program with the assistance of faculty
- Assignment of students to agencies completed in concert with the practice committee and based on the interests and learning needs of the student, educational resources, and the needs of the agency
- Monitoring to ensure that students are appropriately applying the necessary attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills to work with people of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds
- Monitoring of the faculty liaison's activities and the progress of the student's learning in the practicum site

- Providing information to agencies about policies, curriculum, and general program and administrative changes
- Providing student orientations and continuous educational program for field instructors and faculty liaisons
- Arrangement for each student to have appropriate malpractice insurance
- Investigation of complaints and grievances related to field experience and reporting to the BSW Program Coordinator.

## Faculty Liaison and Seminar Instructor

The faculty liaison and the seminar instructor is usually the same person. Faculty liaisons work with specific field agencies to ensure ongoing supervision and evaluation of students, as well as providing consultation to field instructors. All faculty liaisons are responsible to the Field Coordinator. Their role is to provide for the coordination and management of the required field education experience culminating with the evaluation of the student's practicum performance. Their basic responsibilities are as follows:

- Conduct meetings (site visits) virtually or in-person two times per semester. During each site visit, the student and field liaison will meet conjointly with the agency field instructor to discuss the learning experiences, supervision, and student performance. Site visits are timed at approximately mid-semester and the end of the semester.
- Facilitate a weekly 2-hour seminar for their assigned students, following the syllabus for Seminar I and II.
- Monitor the learning experiences of the student throughout the field experience assignment;
- Intervene in situations where problems occur in field learning;
- Establish and maintain relationships as appropriate on behalf of the BSW Program with the agency administrative personnel in the field setting;
- Provide consultation and learning resources as indicated to the student and field instructor;
- Take an active role, under the leadership of the Field Coordinator, in the ongoing education of the field instructors;
- Facilitate student learning by assisting field instructors in enhancing their field teaching skills;
- Assume responsibility for assigning the final grade each semester after consultation with the field instructor and a review of all student learning and course materials;
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the field experience setting and field instructor on an annual basis.
- Turn in fall and spring semester field evaluations to the field coordinator at the end of each term.

## Field Seminar Class

The Field Seminar, offered in conjunction with the Field Experience, meets two hours each week at UA Little Rock. All students enrolled in Field Experience I are required to enroll in Seminar I as a co-requisite. In the spring, students enrolled in Field Experience II will enroll in Seminar II. The seminar should be treated both as a class but also as a small, confidential group where students can safely share personal feelings and difficulties in the field. Each group is led by the faculty liaison. The time in Field Seminar class cannot be included in the work time allowed for the agency Field Experience. Attendance at both is mandatory.

“The Program” refers to anyone in a position of authority within the School of Social Work, whether individual or committee, who determines policy and procedures. The program constituents may consist of a student representative, field instructor, field liaison (seminar instructor), academic advisor, field coordinator, program coordinator, and/or the Director of the School of Social Work. The roles and responsibilities of primary participants in the Program are defined in order to accomplish the overall objectives of the field educational process.

## Field Instructor

The following criteria guide the selection of a field instructor:

- A social work degree from an accredited social work program (either BSW or MSW), who has been licensed or has two years of experience in the field of social work.
- Agreement to act as a field instructor on a continuing basis during the full placement period;
- Commitment to attend orientations, program-sponsored in-service training, and seminars at least once during the school year.
- Knowledge of the agency, its policies and procedures, and its relation to the community.

The Field Instructor is expected to guide the student to meet their educational goals while serving the agency as an intern. The field instructor will provide leadership in the following roles:

- Educator: Assisting the student in applying theoretical knowledge in the field agency by sharing knowledge and demonstrating evidence-based practice. Educators will share agency history, mission, goals, and theoretical bases for practice with the student.
- Mentor: Acting as a role model who demonstrates social work values with clients and with colleagues. Mentors will work with the awareness that students are constant observers of their professional relationship and respect for clients.
- Consultant: Providing consultation with other workers in the presence of the student to exhibit social work skills and respect for colleagues. Consultants will invite the student to investigate and to participate in policy decisions that impact clients.
- Leader: Guiding the student in leadership skills within the agency structure and in client system group activity. Leaders will allow the student to participate to the

level of their ability in co-facilitating groups, agency staff meetings, and networking opportunities.

- Evaluator: Providing feedback to the student regarding the quality of their performance within the agency structure and with clients. Evaluators will complete the evaluation forms twice each semester, meet with the student weekly for one hour, and be available for questions and guidance.
- Learner: Demonstrating to the student that learning is a life-long endeavor, with opportunities to meet new and changing challenges with clients. The learner will be open to improved practice models, policy analysis, and organizational changes.
- Advocate: Working to provide support and encouragement to the student and to identify them as a professional. Advocates will help the student build on strengths and reach their fullest potential.

## Agency and Field Instructor Responsibilities

The agency and field instructor will agree to:

- Hold philosophy compatible with the values and ethics of the social work profession and social work education.
- View students primarily as learners and not adjunct staff, with caseloads based on student learning needs and school requirements.
- Be willing to include students in appropriate meetings and in-service activities.
- Provide the proper physical environment and adequate equipment (desk, phone, adequate space, etc.) for use by the student, located, if possible, in the same building as the field instructor's office.
- Model professional social work skills, judgment, and values in action, allowing students to see and analyze professional work.
- Provide for the student's personal safety in the field experience setting.
- Reimburse, if indicated, the student for out of pocket expenses (e.g., travel) involved in rendering agency service.
- Provide a sufficient number and variety of assignments to ensure a carefully planned progression of student learning, so that students become involved in practice activities at the beginning (first two weeks) of the placement.
- Create a learning contract with the student for each semester.
- Assign a range of clients to ensure that the student will acquire the necessary attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills to work with individuals of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
- Provide a minimum of one hour of supervisory time weekly with the student to give ongoing feedback about strengths and areas for improvement, plus help students to identify a range of strategies to accomplish goals.
- Provide opportunities to develop professional written and oral skills.
- Be available to consult with the faculty liaison.

- Provide ongoing feedback on the student's progress and a written performance evaluation on the student each semester.
- Be knowledgeable about the Program's curriculum as outlined in the field manual.
- Allowance of the desirous nature of student assessment and implementation of agency policy and opportunity to evaluate agency policy within ethical guidelines.
- Abide by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's policies against sexual harassment and non-discrimination in any form.

## Student Rights

Students placed at agencies for their field experience have the right to:

- Always be treated with dignity and respect and in a professional manner.
- Have their internship truly be a learning environment, where questions are answered, information is shared, and time is allotted for achievement of learning contract objectives.
- Have individual supervision provided in a manner that promotes insight and growth in the area of the intern's strengths and weaknesses.
- Voice concerns and to have support provided in resolving any issues.
- Engage in work experiences that relate to your educational requirements.

## Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to adhere to agency practices, policies, and procedures. They are expected to adhere to a workday schedule as agreed at the beginning of each semester and to notify the field instructor when absences or tardiness are necessary. The agency is requested to allow the student to be absent during regularly scheduled school holidays unless otherwise noted on the Placement Profile or as discussed with the field coordinator. All requests for absences from the agency for any reason (e.g., NASW conference) or illness must be made up with additional work hours scheduled prior to receiving a grade and with the approval of the field instructor. If a student has not completed their agency obligation by the end of the semester and needs additional weeks to complete the field experience, permission must be granted by the field instructor and the field liaison. An "incomplete" may be submitted in place of a final grade, if authorized by the field liaison.

Student responsibilities include initiating their own learning. Students are provided workspaces, an agency setting, a field supervisor, a faculty liaison, and clients. They must take the responsibility to combine these parts into a cohesive and organized whole using the tool referred to as a "Learning Contract." The learning contract is a written document that provides the method by which personal and educational objectives are addressed and achieved. The Learning Contract directs all work performed by the student at the agency and must be approved by the Field Instructor at the beginning of each semester. It is signed by the student and field instructor and turned into the faculty liaison.



The BSW Program has a history of working with disabled students to optimize their success in the field placement and as a beginning social work professional. The Program works closely with Disability Support Services to ensure every available accommodation is made available. However, it is important to acknowledge that all students are responsible for meeting social work requirements for graduation and must have or be able to have an assistant available to perform routine tasks in a field placement setting and accomplish the goals of the program. The BSW faculty and staff are available for consultation on any matters regarding a student's disability.

In collaboration with the field instructor, the student should anticipate their final day of placement with an agency each semester and notify the field liaison. At the end of the fall term, the student and field instructor will agree on a return date, which should be immediately following the first scheduled spring semester seminar meeting

## Personal responsibilities

Students must prepare themselves to meet personal responsibilities, such as:

- Being familiar with the Field Manual.
- Arranging their academic and personal schedules so that the field experience hours can be completed as planned.
- Maintaining their commitments to clients.
- Notifying field instructors of absences and/or tardiness in advance.
- Initiating consultation and seeking advice from field instructor, field liaison, or other professionals as appropriate.
- Living up to social work values, applying social work skills, and adhering to agency policies and procedures.
- Seeking to apply social work principles and ethics to the problems encountered on the job, all while looking to improve skills.

## Ethical and professional responsibilities

Students will maintain a professional demeanor and uphold the Social Work Code of Ethics by:

- Treating the internship like a real job, with timely notifications to appropriate staff when absences or tardiness are necessary.
- Presenting in a professional manner by:
  - Being on time and dependable (notifying supervisor of absences in advance).
  - Dressing in a professional manner that aligns with the agency's dress code
  - Exercising professional and courteous communication when interacting with staff and clients.
  - Avoiding dual relationships within and beyond the agency setting.
  - Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
  - Providing updated phone and/or e-mail information to the field instructor and to the seminar instructor.

## Professional Conduct

The Social Work Code of Ethics is a reminder that professional conduct not only refers to relationships with clients but also with co-workers and fellow students. Because membership in a profession implies an encompassing set of values, professional conduct is expected at all times whether on campus or off campus. Students are expected to maintain a professional role at the agency. Any act that would constitute unethical practice or a violation of law – whether it is or is not committed in college-related or field experience activities – is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a special concern in areas in which a student may know the client, their family, or have mutual friends. It is of utmost importance that professionals respect and safeguard the right to privacy of those they serve, both in conversation and in maintaining written records. Students are expected to adhere to agency policies when working with agency records.

Agencies are requested to permit student access to files to accomplish the terms of the learning contract. If agency policy prohibits a student intern access to files, which are necessary to complete assignments planned in the learning contract, it is the field instructor's responsibility to inform the student of such policy and to assist in a substitute plan to complete the learning contract assignment.

In the field, students are representatives of the agency and are expected to be accountable to the agency, the community, and the client(s). If questions arise about a student's ability to maintain such representation in a professional manner, the Field Coordinator should be notified immediately.

Situations in the field may end up being discussed in the classroom. Although identifying clients by name is strictly prohibited, some descriptions of a client may make them identifiable to another person. Therefore, all topical discussions in the seminar class are expected to be considered confidential information and must not be shared with anyone outside the class. It is appropriate to discuss client behavior, ethical dilemmas, or personal feelings in class. It is not appropriate to name names or to identify personalities or, in some cases, agencies, in these discussions. Drawing appropriate boundaries with what we share among classmates is an important consideration in maintaining confidentiality and privacy. Any knowledge of confidential information that is shared among students should be reported to the field liaison or the field coordinator as soon as it becomes known.

Students are professionals and may be called upon to make decisions regarding client interaction and following agency policy. However, students are also interns and are not to act on their own without first consulting their field instructor. If a supervisor is not available, the student should contact the most available professional at the agency or someone designated by their field instructor. At no time should a student discuss agency issues with an outside person, visiting professionals, or persons not within the designated sphere of authority. If a student witnesses what appears to be child abuse at an agency and feels they cannot discuss

the issue with the field instructor; the student should contact the field liaison immediately to discuss what procedures to take.

## Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in compliance with their internship agency's dress code. Professional dress varies from agency to agency and the field instructor can be consulted if a question exists. Clothing that is not considered professional includes jeans with holes, any blouse or tank top that reveals cleavage, tight-fitting jeans or pants, exposed underwear, or skirts/shorts that are mid thigh or higher. Professional clothing in business settings may require more formal attire. However, in the social work setting, a more casual dress is often acceptable and often preferred.

## Absences From the Agency

Students are required to notify the field instructor in advance if they are to be absent from their placement. Also, when carrying a caseload, students should provide their Field Instructor a telephone number where they can be reached outside of regularly scheduled hours. Students can follow the UA Little Rock calendar for vacations and holidays if the agency agrees but must keep the agency informed with appropriate time allowed for the agency to plan for the expected absence. When the agency is closed on a religious or legal holiday or because of inclement weather, the student is not expected to report. However, this time must be made up in order to complete all hours for the field experience. The Program respects religious diversity and the observation of traditional holidays.

Students must make up all time lost due to illness, transportation difficulties, child care problems, or other personal issues. The make-up schedule is negotiated between the student and field instructor but must comply with University policies and Program policies regarding time constraints. Exceptions may be made under extraordinary circumstances, but must have the approval of the faculty liaison.

Students may be given time away from the agency to attend conferences or other educational or agency activities. This is done only with the advance approval of the field instructor and the faculty liaison and only if the activity is relevant to the student's learning experiences. This time may be included in the 180-hour requirement for the semester but cannot exceed 10% of total hours worked. The Program encourages the field instructor to ask the student to report to the staff or make presentations to other appropriate groups to reinforce the learning experience.

## Outside Employment

The program acknowledges that some students need to work while enrolled in a practicum. This employment may not impinge on the time students are required to spend at their practicum. Any exceptions to the agency schedule must be with the prior approval of the field instructor and faculty liaison.

## Travel

Travel reimbursement from the Program for students traveling to a field placement is not available. Travel reimbursement for expenses incurred by the student on agency business may be provided by the agency; however, this is a matter that should be discussed prior to the travel within or for the agency. If the agency does not have a reimbursement policy, the student is ultimately responsible for expenses incurred. If the student objects to agency policy regarding travel reimbursement, they should address concerns first to the field instructor, then the faculty liaison, the Field Coordinator, and finally the Program Coordinator. If further redress is necessary, normal grievance procedures must be initiated with the assistance of the faculty advisor.

Regarding transporting clients, the student should be aware that liability follows the vehicle. Therefore, the School neither condones nor recommends that students transport clients in their personal vehicles. If the agency requests the student to transport a client, the School expects that the normal standard of care practices be exercised by the agency. This includes providing the student with the use of an insured agency vehicle and adequate driver safety education given prior to transportation of a client. The student also needs to be aware that even though they are driving an agency vehicle, they may still be held personally responsible in the event of legal action. Students are asked to sign an informed consent to transport a client if they opt to transport a client in their own vehicle. This form will be maintained on file at the School.

## Professional Liability Insurance

Students in field practice can be sued. Therefore, all students enrolled in field practice courses are required by the University to participate in a group plan for professional liability insurance. The cost of this insurance varies according to the charges made by the University's insurance carrier. An effort is made to obtain the most economical coverage possible; it is reasonable to expect to pay \$14.50 for the year for liability insurance coverage. This fee will be automatically added to the enrolled field practice student's UA Little Rock account prior to beginning their internship.

## Field Experience Safety Policy and Procedures

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Social Work is adopting the following policy and procedures to ensure the safety of students while completing their field practicum. Unfortunately, potential dangers sometimes face social workers while working in the field. Social Workers interact with clients who may have issues ranging from mental illness, substance abuse, and/or intellectual disabilities that may prevent them from being able to appropriately assess situations and may contribute to acting out or aggressive behaviors. We believe that it is important for School of Social Work students to be aware of these concerns and urge them to become familiar with this policy regardless of the location of their internship placements.

- Policy
  - It is the policy of the UA Little Rock School of Social Work to encourage attention to safety in field education.
  - The School of Social Work is responsible for providing information to students about safety in the field.
  - Field agencies should have policies and procedures regarding safety and security issues for all employees. This should be communicated to the students when they begin in their internship to orient them to their safety procedures.
  - School of Social Work students should not be given assignments in which they feel physically at risk. Agencies should ensure students' safety as they do their own employees.
- Procedures
  - The field coordinators will present safety information at orientation sessions for students.
  - While in the field, students have the right to question potentially unsafe work assignments without repercussions from their field instructor, liaison, or coordinator.
  - Students given what they consider to be an unsafe work assignment are responsible for notifying their field instructor and contacting the liaison or field coordinator before proceeding.
  - If an incident occurs in which a student is threatened or hurt, it is the student's responsibility to notify their field instructor immediately. The field instructor should then contact the field coordinator to discuss how to ensure the student's safety, or to intervene to facilitate the student's emotional and physical well being after an incident.
  - The field coordinator will document the incident and meet with the student to assess the student's readiness to continue in or return to the field. It is the responsibility of the field coordinator to notify the Director of the School of Social Work.

## Field Experience Assignments

Students will follow a syllabus for Field Experience and Field Seminar that provides detailed instructions, expectations, and methods for evaluation. This includes:

- Completing 240 hours each semester at the assigned internship site. The hours will include agency orientation, interaction with clients, and other assigned tasks.
- SONIA online Portfolio
- Learning Contract
- Attendance, punctuality and cooperation at field agency, including additional expectations of field instructors (such as process recordings, written assignments, treatment plans, etc.).
- Other assignments listed in the syllabi.

## Portfolio

All student field & seminar documentation will be maintained in SONIA, an online portfolio. Sonia is an online field management system that will be used to record students' time in their internships, complete the learning contract, write their process recordings, and submit other documentation. It can be found at <http://sonia.ualr.edu>.

## Process Recordings

Students are to complete four process recordings per semester. These process recordings are due at times established by the Faculty Liaison. The Process Recording Form is available in Sonia, and should include feedback from the Field Instructor.

Select a client system with which you work and record, verbatim, a 20 to 30-minute conversation or interview. Try to demonstrate use of "self" and cognitive processes in the context of the discussion and use of social work skills and verbal responses to the client. Record your feelings and thoughts as you interact with the client system.

### Purpose of recordings

- Allows the field instructor and faculty liaison to provide corrective feedback mechanism for evaluating intern's practice behavior/skill level
- Serves as the mechanism for evaluating intern's professional development
- Allows intern to assess the client situation and their own performance
- Allows student to become aware of their emotional and cognitive responses during client interactions
- Used in combination with other learning approaches such as audio and video recordings of client transactions
- Method for integrating theory with practice

### Policies concerning confidentiality and ownership of recordings

All intern educational recordings are to be treated confidentially. Client names and identifying information should be disguised, preferably by assigning pseudonyms. The intern, field instructor, faculty liaison, and School of Social Work Assessment Panel are persons privy to intern recordings.

### Outline for process recording

- Goal/Purpose of Contact: The purposes of the client(s) contacts will be concise, clear, specific to the client and the interview, and, preferably, measurable. The purpose of the contact shows the relatedness between this interview and previous interviews, when applicable. The purpose can also be personal.
  - Professional: What are you interviewing for? Remember, an interview is a conversation with a purpose. Are you assessing, evaluation, updating, linking, negotiating, confronting, responding, etc. and for what?
  - Personal: Why did you choose this particular interview for a process recording? Was this something you did well? Something you got stuck on? Something you

wanted to practice? What do you want feedback on from your supervisor? For example, “This was a routine visit for...and I want to assess how well I did on...”

- **Content Dialogue:** Write out verbatim the content of the interview/transaction. At a minimum, the content section should include a description of how the interview began (introductions, clarification of purposes of interaction, planning task implementation, etc.)
- **Observations/Skills Used:** Record observations of the client’s appearance, demeanor, nonverbal communications, thought process, discrepancies between verbal statements, affect, etc. Record general impressions of the physical and emotional climate of the transaction. **AS EVIDENCED BY!!!** Use your five senses and get behavioral about the client and the environment. Identify any specific Social Work Skills used during this interaction (e.g. “I used the strengths perspective;” “I used the skill of partializing.”)
- **Summary of Impressions:** Thoughts about what has happened during the interview/transaction (e.g., Why is he acting this way?) and/or identification of skills or theoretical/frameworks used
- **Future Plans:** Summarize plans and goals for the next interaction, if another will occur. This should tie in with the assessment. What will you and the client do next—what, when, where, why? If you do not plan to see this client again, what would you plan if you were to see them again?
- **Identification of Supervision Questions:** Reflect on the interaction that you had with your client, and note any questions that you want to ask during supervision. Following supervision, discuss what you have learned about your practice.
- **Practice Learning and Competencies:** Practice behaviors under each competency are listed in your learning contract, with more in depth descriptions of the knowledge, values and skills that make up each competency being located in the final evaluation measure. As you list practice behaviors demonstrated, you may also specify the skill components of the competency.
  - For example, if, in a sample process recording, you listed practice behavior 10.1, “use of empathy and other interpersonal skills,” you could also list “use of self” as a skill for this particular practice behavior.

## Supervision/Activity Logs

Students are responsible for submitting activity and supervision logs on a monthly basis. These forms should be completed in a Word document and uploaded to Sonia. These objectives help ensure that you are actively integrating your learning with practical experiences, reflecting on your professional development, and continuously improving your skills and knowledge in the field of social work. The activity/supervision logs are designed with the following objectives in mind:

- **Competency:** Students should demonstrate and reflect on their application and execution of specific competency behaviors from their Learning Contract
- **Knowledge Integration:** Students should connect theoretical knowledge from their classwork, lectures, and readings to practical experiences with clients in the agency.

- Values Reflection: Students should reflect on and analyze any conflicts between personal values, social work ethics, and agency policies.
- Skills Application: Students should provide evidence of the application of social work skills in real-world interactions with clients.
- Use of Supervision: Students should summarize key topics and feedback from supervision sessions with your field instructor/mentor.

## Learning Contract

The development of a learning contract or agreement involves listing specific “field tasks” that the student will perform or demonstrate in their field placement and how these tasks connect with the core competencies outlined by CSWE. The learning contract also allows the student to document evidence in their portfolio how that behavior was enacted. The variety of assignments within Field Seminar I/II, and the Practice courses provide ample opportunity to demonstrate these competencies over the course of the academic year.

The Learning Contract should be considered a “working document” in that it can be revised in conjunction with the student’s field instructor and liaison when the need arises. The Learning Contract is uploaded in SONIA in each student’s portfolio.

## Field Evaluations

Evaluation of student performance is very important in the social work field experience. Feedback of student performance and progress will come informally during Field Seminar, weekly supervision and during day in-day out activities at the agency. Formal evaluation of the student will occur during the midpoint and the end of each semester, with the Field Instructor and Field Liaison. Students will be evaluated and rated on their ability to perform and document each of the CSWE core competencies as well as their overall ability to function professionally in the workplace. Students will be held to the same standards of professional and ethical behavior as agency social workers.

Evaluation of students’ field performance is an ongoing process that should be a part of the weekly supervisory conference and occurs in both verbal and written formats. The Learning Contract between the student and the field instructor and the appropriate field evaluation instrument serve as the foundation and reference point for the evaluation of a student’s performance. The faculty liaison will assist in this process. Two evaluations will be conducted during each semester, one mid-semester and one final near the end of the semester.

The written report informs students of their progress and ideally is an educational tool in field supervision. All field evaluations become part of the student’s academic file in the School of Social Work for up to three years and are available for release to potential employers with the written consent of the student. These evaluations also are used to monitor the degree to which the BSW program is meeting its goals and objectives. All forms are uploaded to each student’s SONIA portfolio.



## Evaluation Format

Evaluation is designed for students to self-assess based on how they met their learning criteria and demonstrated achievement of the objectives of the program. At the end of each semester, the student will provide the field instructor with their learning contract in an evaluation format that includes rating scales for each task, per the sample in the appendix, at the end of each semester. Field instructors and students are encouraged to review the evaluation format at the beginning of each semester in order to know the criteria by which their achievement will be based.

All Field Instructors are required to participate in a mid-semester meeting with the student and faculty liaison. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss how the student is performing at the internship, and address any concerns that have come up.

The Field Instructor is required to rate the student on each learning contract competency at the end of each semester. A meeting is held with the Field Instructor, student, and Faculty Liaison to discuss the student's ratings. All parties are required to enter comments on their designated area of the form in SONIA and "finalize and complete" the document.

Students who do not perform successfully in the field deserve notification throughout the course with specific information on how to improve. A professional development form is provided to further clarify the student's need for additional attention to a task or activity or for improved practice behaviors. The professional development conference can be conducted with a field liaison present to address specific behaviors that are hindrances to the student professional role.

## Student Evaluation of Agency

Field sites are evaluated by students and faculty to ensure the agency assigns the widest range of clients possible (within the limits of agency mission) to meet the goal of providing diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural client systems under the careful supervision of a social worker in a public or private human service agency. Agencies are also evaluated on how well they exhibit congruence in practice with official policy claims, such as nondiscrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious preference or creed, age, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

At the end of the semester each student will be asked to rate the practicum experience by writing a brief narrative about the placement experience and/or completion of a standard form. Personal comments are welcome in this review. The comments will be used as a guide for future planning. Students may share their agency evaluation with the field instructor after the final grade has been submitted to the Program.

## Grading Policies

The final grade for each field experience will be determined by the Field Liaison using the feedback and evaluations completed by the Field Instructor. A specific list of grade factors and weights given to those factors can be found in the course syllabus.

If the agency field instructor or faculty field liaison identifies a deficiency in performance, the Field Coordinator, in coordination with the Program Coordinator, will notify the student in

writing as soon as the deficiency is noted. The student will be offered the opportunity to withdraw from the course if the timeline falls within the constraints of UA Little Rock's policy. Re-enrollment will be subject to approval by the Faculty Practice Committee and must be done by written request to the committee. Any student who wants to challenge a grade must follow the procedures outlined by university policy.

## Drop Policy

Students are expected to discuss dropping the field experience course to obtain consent of their assigned faculty liaison and the Field Coordinator. When a student drops a practicum course with official consent, a decision will be made about whether the student can continue in the related practice course and seminar and if, and under, what conditions the student will be placed in a different practicum setting at a future date. These decisions are made by the BSW Field Coordinator in consultation with the faculty liaison and the Practice Committee. Students who drop a practicum course without prior discussion with the faculty liaison and the Field Coordinator may be subject to dismissal from the Program.

## Incomplete Grade

A grade of incomplete must be requested by the student. The field instructor may be asked to provide a written evaluation of the student's work to date. A grade of "I" can only be assigned to a student in good standing (i.e., has been satisfactorily performing assigned practicum tasks) with the approval of the faculty liaison and field instructor. An "I" is given only when the student is unable to complete the practicum for events beyond the student's control such as health, accident or family emergencies.

A field experience or field seminar course that results in a grade of "I" must be completed before the beginning of the next semester or the student will receive an F for the course. If the student can make up the time within the agency, a written plan will be developed for the approval of the faculty liaison which specifies the number of days to be made up and tasks to be performed in order to satisfy the incomplete grade and the date by which the work must be finished. It is important to note that Field Experience I and Seminar I must both be completed fully prior to being admitted to Field Experience II and Seminar II. If the same agency cannot be used, the Field Coordinator will meet with the student and the field instructor to develop a similar written plan, specifying the kinds of practicum experiences needed to make up the learning deficits.

## Formal Reviews and Grade Appeals

The School has established two formal review processes to encourage assessment and problem-solving to help students having problems with the academic or professional expectations of the School. In addition to this common purpose, the two processes share these characteristics:

- When a problem arises for a student in connection with academic or professional expectations or a course grade, the student must first attempt to resolve the matter with the professor or professors involved, such as a classroom teacher, internship instructor,

or faculty liaison. Likewise, a faculty member who has concerns about a student's performance must first share those concerns with the student and seek solutions there before calling for a performance review.

- In regard to professional standards, if the problem is not resolved a formal performance review may be initiated.
  - If the matter in dispute involves a grade, UA Little Rock's grade appeal policy ([ualr.edu/policy/home/student/grade-appeals/](http://ualr.edu/policy/home/student/grade-appeals/)), must be adhered to by all parties involved.
  - If the matter involves an academic offense, the UA Little Rock's policies and procedures regarding academic offenses should be followed by all parties involved ([ualr.edu/deanofstudents/academic-offenses/](http://ualr.edu/deanofstudents/academic-offenses/)).
- The student's academic advisor can be an important supportive resource, helping the student think through options and prepare for their attempt to resolve the problem. If the problem is with an internship, the field coordinator may also be a helpful resource.
- If a student petitions, the Director will render in writing a decision in response to the student's petition within two weeks of its receipt. The Director shall also have the student and the faculty member complete and sign the University's grade-appeal complaint form, and give a copy to the student. The Director maintains the original.
- If the student is not satisfied with the Director's decision, or if the student is satisfied and the professor is unwilling to comply with the Director's decision, the student may appeal at the University level, following the policy set out in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Behavior in the UA Little Rock Student Handbook, beginning at step 3 under "Grade Appeals: Steps toward Redress for Grade Appeals."

## Student Performance Deficiency

When the agency field instructor identifies a deficiency in a student's performance, the student should be made aware as quickly into the field experience as possible. The student can better understand how to overcome the problem by receiving specific information regarding when/how it is observed, with whom, how the issue can be corrected, and an expected time frame for doing so.

Modeling the desired behavior will be most helpful in helping students overcome difficulties in the field. If, after several weeks, the student is unresponsive or unsuccessful in making the desired change in performance, or if the problem is serious enough to indicate potential failure of the practicum, the professional development form may be used to specify how to correct the deficiency. This can be utilized by the field instructor, the field liaison, and/or the field coordinator. Copies of the PDF should be distributed to the student's seminar instructor (as the student's field liaison) in order to coordinate support for the student.

If the problem persists, a formal review process may be necessary. The process should begin by notifying the student in writing that the deficiency has gone beyond expected time limits and failure of the course is imminent. A copy of the notification is sent to the field liaison. The field instructor, the Seminar instructor, field liaison, and/or the field coordinator can identify

a deficiency in performance and initiate communication with the student. The student will then be referred to the Performance Review Committee.

## Termination

A student can be dismissed from a field site by the hosting agency and/or by faculty for a serious violation of ethical standards or gross negligence in performance. If the student is dismissed by the faculty member (field instructor, field liaison, or field coordinator), the student will receive a failing grade unless exceptional circumstances are present to warrant reconsideration. A student seeking to appeal their grade should follow the procedure outlined above.

If the student is dismissed from the agency by agency personnel who are not cooperative with the Formal Review process outlined in this handbook, the field coordinator may reassign or otherwise make alternate arrangements for the student to complete the field experience for full credit, provided all other criteria are met.

## Performance Review Policy

At the School of Social Work (SSW), we have a professional obligation and responsibility to assure that our graduates (BSW/MSW) are fully competent to enter the social work profession. In addition to abiding by University and departmental policies regarding academic expectations and standards for conduct, all social work students are expected to abide by the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics.

Academic performance includes meeting grade expectations, being knowledgeable of and adhering to the UA Little Rock's Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Behavior, and adhering to professional and ethical behavior in both the classroom and field settings.

The SSW encourages students, faculty, field instructors/adjuncts, faculty liaisons, and staff to work together to resolve problems that may arise. As a result, the Performance Review Committee (PRC) referral should only be made after efforts have failed to produce a favorable outcome except in egregious cases. In many instances, as a first step toward solving a problem, a performance improvement plan will be developed. This plan will: (1) define the problem area; (2) develop clear goals and objectives; and (3) set a timeline for follow up. If a student responds well to this process, no referral is warranted. The SSW's Professional Development Form or another comparable plan may be used if it addresses the aforementioned components. However, if for any reason the student does not successfully resolve the problem, then a referral to the PRC is warranted. The goal is for early problem identification, followed by efforts to remediate the problem between those closest involved to the situation.

The process described below is designed to resolve academic and/or professional behavior-related issues that are brought to the SSW's attention. The purpose of the review process is to:

- Identify the academic and/or professional performance issues that prompted the review
- Identify strategies to remediate the issues
- Create plans of action to facilitate student success

- Determine other outcomes necessary, which may include dismissal from the SSW.

Referrals may be made to the Performance Review Committee for any of the following reasons:

- Conduct that is inconsistent with the NASW Code of Ethics or state law.
- Behavior that threatens the welfare of clients, agency personnel, faculty, other students, and/or, the larger community.
- Conduct that raises concerns regarding the student's suitability to practice social work.
- Conduct that raises concerns regarding the student's intellectual and/or emotional capacity to perform the essential skills of social work practice.
- Failure to demonstrate a minimal level of competence in one or more of the program's practice behaviors.
- Conduct that raises concerns regarding how the student's behavior may be negatively impacting the learning environment for others.
- Breaching HIPAA and/or related standards for handling client information.
- Failure to follow internship site policies/procedures, including reporting.
- Unprofessional behavior of any kind.
- Failure to meet professional standards outlined in the UA Little Rock Student Handbook, the BSW or MSW Student Handbook (whichever one applies to the student's program), and/or the student's program's internship manual.
- Refusing to engage in attempts to resolve problems.
- Failing to attend internship as expected.
- Plagiarism or cheating.

Referrals may be made for other reasons not stated above following consultation with the appropriate Field or Program Coordinator and the Chair(s) of the PRC.

## Composition of the Performance Review Committee

The committee will consist of six (6) School of Social Work faculty members. The Chair(s) of the PRC will be appointed by the Director(s) of the SSW to serve a one year term. The Chair(s) may be reappointed by the Director(s) for an unlimited number of terms. Three (3) of the committee members will be elected by the Faculty Assembly as standing members of the PRC to serve one-year terms and include regular tenured or instructor level faculty members in the SSW. The fifth and sixth members of PRC will be the field coordinators. One of the field coordinators will recuse themselves from voting, depending on the student's program (e.g. if the student is BSW, the BSW field coordinator will not vote). Other faculty members may attend a performance review meeting as non voting members when circumstances require (e.g. the program coordinator may provide testimony as a non voting member).

The responsibilities of the Chair(s) of the PRC are to:

- Consult with faculty to determine if the referral to the PRC is appropriate.
- Consult with the Director(s) as needed to clarify process and policy questions.
- Receive the referral and supporting information from the referring faculty member.
- Convene the committee to meet with the student.

- Communicate with the student about referral to the committee.
- Communicate with members of the committee and other parties who are invited to attend the PRC meeting with each student.
- Facilitate the PRC meetings with each student.
- Write the final report following the meeting, submit it for review by the committee members, and share it with the student and other relevant parties.
- Be well versed in the PRC policies and take appropriate steps to ensure that they are followed.
- Disqualify themselves if any of the below reasons for disqualification apply.

Standing members on the committee may be disqualified from serving as voting members on the committee for a particular student by the Chair(s) of the Committee in consultation with the Director(s) of the School of Social Work if they:

- Are the student's academic adviser;
- Are the person making a referral;
- Have a relationship with the student that may present a conflict of interest, dual relationship, and/or challenges in making objective decisions about the student.

In the event that a member is disqualified or recuses themselves from serving, an alternate member will be selected by the Chair(s) of the PRC in consultation with the Director of the SSW. During the summer period, the Director(s) of the SSW will appoint the Chair(s) of the PRC and two (2) faculty members to serve on the committee until the regular fall semester begins. Students are excluded from membership on the committee to ensure privacy regarding the referred student.

## Committee Referrals

A student may be referred to the committee by any SSW faculty/staff member, faculty liaison, field instructor, fellow student, or by the student themselves. Referrals must be first made to the appropriate field coordinator if the situation is field related, or the appropriate program coordinator if the situation is non-field related. The coordinators will be responsible for assuring that all necessary steps have been taken to remediate the problem before it is officially referred to the Performance Review Committee Chair(s). The referring faculty member should contact the Chair(s) of the PRC to discuss the referral before submitting the referral form to the Chair(s) of the PRC.

## Student Privacy and Confidentiality

All procedures and communications relating to the academic and performance review process will be kept confidential; however, depending on the nature of the performance issue and outcome, it may be necessary for the Chair(s) of the PRC to share information with others directly involved in the situation. Members of the committee and all persons involved in the committee proceedings are expected to observe the confidential nature of the information shared and made available to them.

## Procedures

The following are general procedures when a student is referred to the Performance Review Committee:

1. The referring faculty member should contact the Chair(s) of the PRC to discuss the referral. The Chair(s), in consultation with the referring person, must determine whether the referral is appropriate for the committee and the nature of its function.
2. If it is determined that a referral to the PRC is warranted, the Chair(s) provides a referral form to the person making the referral. The form is then completed and submitted to the PRC Chair(s), who, within five (5) class-days, notifies the student by email through their UA Little Rock email account and other committee members that a referral has been made, and provides a copy of the referral form and supporting documentation to the student and each committee member. The PRC Chair(s) will then schedule a committee meeting, which the student is expected to attend, within fifteen (15) class-days of initial written notification to the student. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Chair(s) of the PRC to confirm their intent to attend the meeting. If the student refuses to attend, the PRC will meet without the student.
  - a. \*A "class-day" is a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday in the Fall, Spring, and Summer 1 semesters when classes meet, from the first day of classes to the last day of class, according to the UA Little Rock academic calendar. Other days such as holidays, days between semesters, exam periods, fall and spring break, and any day in which the university is closed for all or part of the day for any reason are not considered "class-days" for purposes of this policy.
3. The student may elect to invite at least one supportive person to attend the meeting, providing this has been communicated to the committee chair(s) at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. If a student fails to provide adequate notice to the committee chair(s) that they intend to have others attend the meeting with them, the supportive parties may be asked to leave the meeting. The supportive parties have no speaking role and may not participate in the process.
4. Prior to the meeting with the student, the PRC Chair(s) will gather all necessary information pertaining to the reason for the referral and will be responsible for assuring that committee members are provided the materials regarding the student. Before the student and any possible guests enter the meeting, the committee members will first meet to orient themselves to the factors specific to the student's situation.
5. During the meeting with the student and any invited guests, the PRC Chair(s) is responsible for facilitating the process. The Chair(s) will present the concerns as provided by the person who made the referral, in addition to other relevant information obtained in regard to the student's situation. The Chair(s) will then provide the student with the opportunity to respond to the evidence presented.
6. Once all the evidence regarding the situation has been presented and discussed, any invited guests will be dismissed, and the committee will discuss the information presented in the referral and the student's response to the concerns.

The committee has three possible responses to the referral:

- A finding that the referral is not supported by the evidence in which event the committee recommends that the student may remain in the program and no further action required.
- A finding that the referral is supported by the evidence and recommends remediation to address the problems identified. The committee may consult with others in developing the remediation plan including but not limited to other faculty members, the student's mentor, and the student's faculty liaison.
- A finding that the referral is supported by the evidence in which event the committee decides that the student is to be dismissed from the School of Social Work.

Following the meeting, the committee chair(s) will provide the student with a copy of the written recommendations no later than fifteen (15) class-days following the performance review meeting. A copy will also be provided to the student's advisor, the appropriate program and field coordinators, and Director(s) of the School of Social Work.

The committee may also meet periodically during the semester (fall/spring) to review the progress of any students who have an active remediation plan in place that is being monitored by the academic advisor. In the event that a student is not making satisfactory progress in relation to the remediation plan, the committee chair(s) will reconvene the committee and meet with the student to make further recommendations.

## Appeal Process

Any student who appears before the PRC may appeal the committee's decision according to the following process:

1. The first step in the appeal process is for the student to contact the Director(s) of the School of Social Work and outline the reasons for the appeal. The student must submit the appeal in writing within fifteen (15) class-days of having received the committee recommendations. The School of Social Work Director will then review the appeal and respond in writing to the student within fifteen(15) class-days of having received the student's appeal request.
2. If the student wishes to appeal the decision by the Director of the SSW, the student may proceed to appeal to the Dean of the College of Business, Health, and Human Services. The appeal must be made in writing within fifteen (15) class-days. The decision of the Dean of the College of Business, Health and Human Services is final.

This policy was revised and approved by the faculty of the UA Little Rock School of Social Work on 10/06/2020 and amended on 5/10/2024.



## Appendices: Assignment and Evaluation Rubrics

### Process Recording Grading Rubric

Content Area	Points Possible	Points Earned
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal/Purpose of Contact</b></p> <p>Statement of purpose for the interaction is clearly explained, and goals are appropriate for the practice setting.</p>	2	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Content Dialogue</b></p> <p>A verbatim description of what happened, as close to actual dialogue as the student can recall</p>	5	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reflection &amp; Feelings</b></p> <p>The student's feelings and reactions to the client/group members and to the interview/group process.</p>	3	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Observation/Skills Used</b></p> <p>Thoughts about what has happened during the interview/group (e.g., Why is he acting this way?) and/or identification of skills or theoretical/frameworks used (e.g. "I used the strengths perspective;" "I used the skill of partializing.")</p>	3	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summary of Impressions</b></p>	2	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Future Plans</b></p> <p>Identify any unfinished business and/or any short/long term goals. Given all of the above, what are you planning to do next time with the client? Are there things that need to be researched, learned, or considered, prior to the next interview? Is your overall purpose still appropriate?</p>	2	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Identification of Supervision Questions</b></p> <p>Reflect on the interaction that you had with your client, and note any questions that you want to ask during supervision.</p>	2	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Practice Learning</b></p> <p>Following supervision, discuss what you have learned about your practice.</p>	3	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Competencies</b></p> <p>Following supervision, discuss the competencies and/or practice behaviors relevant to your learning.</p>	3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	

## Monthly Activity and Supervision Log Rubric

SECTION	Points Possible	Points Earned
<p align="center"><b>Identification and use of Competency Behaviors</b></p> <p>Identify Competency Behaviors from your Learning Contract that you demonstrated during the past month for this log, and explain the actions you engaged in that show evidence of your competency level.</p>	5	
<p align="center"><b>Connecting Theory to Practice</b></p> <p>Explain in detail how information learned during classwork, something said during a lecture, and/or garnered from assigned readings assisted you in fulfilling your role at the agency</p>	5	
<p align="center"><b>Identifying and Resolving Ethical Dilemmas</b></p> <p>Share an experience from your agency setting where there was a conflict between social work <u>values</u> and your personal values and/or agency policies. How was this conflict resolved? Explain what occurred if not resolved.</p> <p>OR If you did not experience a values conflict, describe <u>two</u> (2) situations in which you demonstrated social work values per the NASW Code of Ethics.</p>	5	
<p align="center"><b>Social Work Skill Identification</b></p> <p>Show evidence of how you demonstrated social work skills during an interaction with a client system at your Agency. These would include any number of Micro/Mezzo/Macro social work skills learned in Practice I, II, &amp; III.</p>	5	
<p align="center"><b>Supervision</b></p> <p>Write a summary of topics discussed during supervision with your Field Instructor, including newly assigned tasks and/or corrective action.</p>	5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	25	

## Portfolio Evaluation – Mid-Semester

Section	Points Possible	Points Earned
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learning Contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student has identified and listed activities for at least 15 of the Learning Activities. This information is documented on the Learning Contract in SONIA.</li> </ul>	20	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Time Sheets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student has completed at least 112 hours at their internship. The hours are documented on their time sheets in SONIA and approved.</li> </ul>	15	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The following assignments have been completed and uploaded to SONIA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agency Assessment</li> <li>● Process Recording #1</li> <li>● Activity &amp; Supervision Log #1</li> <li>● Activity &amp; Supervision Log #2</li> </ul>	15	
<b>TOTAL</b>	50	

## Portfolio Evaluation – Final

Section	Points Possible	Points Earned
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learning Contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student has identified and listed activities for at least 15 of the Learning Activities. This information is documented on the Learning Contract in SONIA.</li> <li>● Student has completed and finalized their portion of the Learning Contract for Fall semester; including entering required comments</li> </ul>	<b>40</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Time Sheets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student has completed at least 240 hours at their internship. The hours are documented on their time sheets in SONIA and approved.</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The following assignments have been completed and uploaded to SONIA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agency Assessment</li> <li>● Process Recording #1</li> <li>● Process Recording #2</li> <li>● Process Recording #3</li> <li>● Process Recording #4</li> <li>● Activity &amp; Supervision Log #1</li> <li>● Activity &amp; Supervision Log #2</li> <li>● Activity &amp; Supervision Log #3</li> <li>● Activity &amp; Supervision Log #4</li> <li>● Individual Assessment Parts 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	

## Field Liaison Evaluation of Student Field Performance

Student:	Date:
Agency:	
Field Instructor:	
Semester:	Total Internship Hours:

Performance Areas	Points Possible	Points Earned
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Documentation of Practice Behaviors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Practice behavior field tasks are defined (10)</li> <li>● Student demonstrated understanding of each competency (5)</li> <li>● Student demonstrated critical thinking skills in selecting methods of documentation for field tasks (5)</li> </ul>	20	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Paperwork</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● was consistently received in a timely manner throughout the semester (5)</li> <li>● All paperwork for the final field visit was presented on time (5)</li> </ul>	10	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● student consistently demonstrated professional verbal and written communication and ability to actively listen to feedback (10 )</li> </ul>	10	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Use of Supervision and Consultation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student demonstrated the appropriate use of supervision and consultation including when problems arose (10)</li> </ul>	10	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	50	

# Professional Development Plan

*This form is to identify problems early and develop an action plan. Please complete and submit to the Field Coordinator. When completed, this form becomes part of the student's permanent file.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Initiator of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Student/T#: \_\_\_\_\_

## I. Areas of Concern

Rating scale:

- 1 = No evidence of being problematic
- 2 = Somewhat problematic; further growth needed
- 3 = A significant concern

If all behaviors in a category are not of concern, highlight or circle those that **do** apply.

Areas of Concern	Rating		
	1	2	3
Demonstrates “rescuing behaviors.” Inability to form healthy and/or productive relationships with others; critical of others; discourteous; poor social skills; little or no self-awareness of impact of behavior on others	1	2	3
Personal problems and issues interfere with learning and performance	1	2	3
Frequently absent from assignment, or tardy or leaves early	1	2	3
Work performance does not meet minimum requirements or expectations; work turned in incomplete or late; unprepared for class/internship	1	2	3
Not receptive to constructive criticism or negative feedback; doesn't take ownership	1	2	3
Personal and/or religious beliefs interfere with acceptance of core social work values; unable to internalize core social work values; overly biased with viewpoints to the extent that there is no openness to professional growth; danger of imposing these beliefs in practice; ethnocentric in viewpoints.	1	2	3
Inability to work in groups; does not carry fair load in the group; lack of collaborative skills in working with others	1	2	3

Focuses on grades rather than learning; argumentative about grades received	1	2	3
Inappropriate comments in class/field; too much inappropriate personal sharing; often acts out in self-interest; egocentric; sleeps in class	1	2	3
Mental health problems interfere with acceptable performance	1	2	3
Evidence of substance abuse	1	2	3
Immaturity in behaviors; general lack of self-awareness	1	2	3
Lacks independence in completing work; overly dependent on instructions from instructor and/or other students; little responsibility for own learning.	1	2	3
In trouble with the law; particularly violence issues; evidence of volatility.	1	2	3
Boundary issues	1	2	3
Poor oral or written communications skills; poor grammar; inability to articulate; poor oral or written communications skills; poor grammar; inability to articulate assignments	1	2	3
Inappropriate attire	1	2	3

Brief explanation/description of performance in relation area(s) of concern (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

Student Response (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

**II. Intervention Strategy and Progress Assessment:**

Measurable Objective #1:

Suggested Strategy:

Date Objective #1 will be reassessed:

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Measurable Objective #2:

Suggested Strategy:

Date Objective #2 will be reassessed:

By signing below, I acknowledge that the information contained in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I agree to abide by the suggested strategies and objectives to the best of my ability in order to rectify these concerns. I acknowledge that any new concerns, or continued presence of current concerns, could lead to my dismissal from the UA Little Rock Bachelor of Social Work program.

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Student Signature

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Initiator Signature



### III. Outcome

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Initiator of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Student/T#: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use this section to document the outcome in regard to how successful student was in remediating area(s) of concern:

1. \_\_\_ All objectives outlined in the "Performance Review Plan" worksheet were met and there is no need to continue monitoring at this juncture (provide a brief account of outcome).
  
2. \_\_\_ Objectives are being met, however, it is recommended that the monitoring process be continued (Please complete a separate Performance Review Plan worksheet form for continuation of objective(s) and briefly state why the process of monitoring should continue).
  
3. \_\_\_ Objectives are not being met and it is recommended that the Performance Review Committee evaluate student performance and make further recommendations.

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Student Signature

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Initiator Signature