

Simmons UNIVERSITY

School of Social Work

PRACTICUM EDUCATION

SPECIALIZED YEAR II

**PLACEMENT PROCESS
GUIDE**

2024–2025

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I. YEAR II PLACEMENT PROCESS TIMELINE

Timeframe	Student Tasks to be Completed
November 17, 2023	Review all Year II placement materials in this Guide
Mid-November, 2023	<p>Students receive an email from the Practicum Education Department with information on how to begin the placement process in Tevera, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upload Resume - Complete the Practicum Intake Form <p>Once these first two tasks are completed, you will be able to schedule a meeting with a Faculty Placement Advisor</p>
Monday, Nov 27, 2023 - Friday, Dec 15, 2023	Meet with Faculty Placement Advisor via Zoom
Dec 2023 & Jan 2024	For students following the Independent Application Agency Path: Submit application materials directly to sites and log your progress using the IAA Log
January - March 2024	For students following the Traditional Application Path: Centralized Application Process (CAP) Begins
By April 1, 2024	All incoming Year II students should secure a practicum placement

Note: Throughout the process you will be asked to complete tasks in Tevera in order to capture placement information and be completely “matched” for the start of practicum in the Fall. You will receive instructions on how to do this in Tevera prior to the start of this process.

II. PREPARING FOR PLACEMENT: PROCESS AND INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1: Update Your Resume

Your resume should be updated and ready to submit *before* you book your appointment with your Faculty Placement Advisor. On your resume, please make the following changes if you have not already:

- Update your contact information
- List your Simmons email address
- Add your Year I Practicum placement information
 - Make it robust! Have at least three (3) descriptive bullet points
- Make “Education” the first heading on your resume, listing your Simmons degree with yourself as an “MSW Candidate,” with expected graduation year
 - If you are in a certificate program, you should add this here as well

Utilize your Practicum Instructor (supervisor) and/or your Practicum Liaison by asking them to review your resume for content, editing, etc. Additionally, contact the [Career Education Center](#) (CEC) at Simmons for more resume-writing support. Also refer to the [Resume Checklist and the example of a Social Work Resume in this Guide](#).

STEP 2: Learn About Potential Agencies

The first way to learn about potential agencies is by browsing our partnership agencies in Tevera (you’ll receive instructions on how to do this in November). The second way to learn about potential agencies is via the Example Year II Placement List, which you’ll receive in mid-November as well. Use these two resources to explore the **types** of agencies you might want, but keep in mind that some agencies might not have internships in the coming year (they might have changed programs/mission/ability to host a student, etc.).

If you have an agency in mind that’s not in Tevera (and they have an LICSW on staff), inform your Faculty Placement Advisor at your individual meeting. ***Please do not initiate contact with agencies yourself.*** Some agencies (i.e. hospitals) require CORI checks, drug screens, vaccinations, fingerprinting, or other onboarding needs. You will be responsible for getting that done in a timely manner, and for all associated costs (we encourage you to ask about this during the interview). Most agencies follow the Traditional Placement Process, but some agencies will be Independent Application Agencies (IAAs) or Employment-Based Agencies (see Step 4 below for more details).

STEP 3: Complete the Practicum Intake Form in Tevera

Regardless of which placement process path you take (see Step 4 for more information), you will need to submit your Practicum Intake Form in Tevera. This form will ask you to share what types of settings/populations you're interested in, and will ask you to provide 3-4 examples of placement agencies that reflect the kinds of social work practice skills you might want to develop. You will also be able to indicate if you want to pursue the Employment-Based path.

When you submit this form in Tevera, you will also upload your completed resume at the same time. Afterwards, you can then schedule your individual meeting with a Faculty Placement Advisor.

STEP 4: Explore which Placement Process you want to pursue for Year II

*You don't have to decide which path you want to take before you meet with us, but you **do need** to explore the options below beforehand and come with questions/ready to discuss if you haven't decided.*

There are three (3) different placement process paths to choose from:

Traditional Placement Process Path

The Traditional Placement Process is the path that the majority of students choose. In this path, you will send multiple applications via the **Centralized Application Process (CAP)**, an online Google form in which you submit application materials to your Faculty Placement Advisor, who will then send your application materials to agencies in batches. You will submit one CAP form per application (1 CAP form = 1 Application), and you may submit **up to three (3) CAP forms/applications each batch**. Although this may seem repetitive, the CAP form is very short, and it allows you to tailor your resume and cover letters to each agency as needed.

You will have the opportunity to rank your top choices on the CAP forms in each batch round. These rankings will be specific to each batch of applications you submit. We strongly encourage you **not** to submit applications to agencies/placements that you are not particularly interested in (i.e. applying to "safeties" or "backups"). Please only apply to those agencies that are of strong interest to you.

During the application process (January-March), we will have "batch" deadlines when applications are due via CAP (see calendar below). In January, there will be a batch deadline weekly; In February and March, the batch deadlines will be every-other-week.

Application/CAP Form Batch #	“Batch Deadline”: Deadline to Submit Application(s)/CAP Form(s) for Review by Agency	Student Notified if Application Selected for Review by Agency
1	Sunday, January 7, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, January 12, 2024 5:00 PM
2	Sunday, January 14, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, January 19, 2024 5:00 PM
3	Sunday, January 21, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, January 26, 2024 5:00 PM
4	Sunday, January 28, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, February 2, 2024 5:00 PM
5	Sunday, February 4, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, February 9, 2024 5:00 PM
6	Sunday, February 18, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, February 23, 2024 5:00 PM
7	Sunday, March 3, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, March 8, 2024 5:00 PM
8	Sunday, March 17, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, March 22, 2024 5:00 PM
9 (Final Round)	Sunday, March 31, 2024 11:59 PM	Friday, April 5, 2024 5:00 PM

Once you submit your CAP form/application(s) by the batch deadline, your Faculty Placement Advisor will notify you by Friday of that same week if your application was selected for review by the agency or not. Please note that the CAP form is only accessible *after* you meet with your Faculty Placement Advisor in November/December (you will be sent an individualized invite link).

Also note that for certain agency-types, priority will be given to students in certificate programs. For example, students in the Healthcare Certificate program will be given first priority for hospital placements.

Employment-Based Path

This is an option for students currently employed by a human service agency. This is not the same as a paid internship. An employment-based placement requires clear delineation between practicum responsibilities/hours and employment

responsibilities/hours. Guidelines are outlined in the [Employment-Based Application](#) located on SSW Practicum website. If you choose this path, you are **still required to meet with a Faculty Placement Advisor** and complete the Year II practicum forms on Tevera.

The deadline for incoming Year II students to submit their Employment-Based Application is **April 1, 2024**.

Independent Application Agency Path

IAAs operate independently of Simmons and require direct application submission by you (rather than by a Faculty Placement Advisor). If you are interested in placements at College Counseling Centers or Community Mental Health Centers, this is likely a good option. We will send a list of up-to-date IAAs in mid-November.

Most IAAs require applications as early as mid-December or early January and are highly competitive. Because of this, we recommend that you meet with your Faculty Placement Advisor in November, rather than December. IAA applications often require letters of recommendation and cover letters, so start talking to potential references **now** if you think you will choose this path.

Although your Faculty Placement Advisor will not be involved in managing your applications/communicating with agencies on your behalf, you are **still required to meet with us** for an individual meeting in November/December, like all other students. Each time you apply to an IAA, you will need to log that into an online form (that we'll provide for you) so your Faculty Placement Advisor can follow your progress. You will also use this form to update the process if/when you hear from agencies.

Please note: If you choose the IAA path, you will not be eligible to participate in the CAP/Traditional Placement Process until February 1, 2024. By February, if you have chosen the IAA path, all of your applications for IAAs should be submitted and you will begin to hear back (if you haven't already).

Exploring the Three (3) Processes:

Regardless of which of the three placement process paths you choose, **you will need to meet with your Faculty Placement Advisor** for an individual meeting in November/December, and work with them throughout the process. There are pros and cons to each path: For example, you may apply to as many IAAs as you would like all at once, but there is a limited selection, and they are highly competitive. Whereas with the Traditional Placement Process, you can only submit up to three applications for review at a time in batch rounds, and your applications may not be selected for review by agencies in the first batch, but there are many more agency options to choose from compared to IAAs.

We encourage you to talk with your classroom instructors, your Practicum Instructor (supervisor), and your Practicum Liaison about your interests and experience as you reflect on which path you want to pursue.

STEP 5: Meet with Faculty Placement Advisor via Zoom

You will be able to meet with your Faculty Placement Advisor (via Zoom) after Thanksgiving, starting on Monday, November 27. All incoming Year II students will have three weeks available for appointments (our last day for meetings will be Friday, December 15).

You are not required to meet with the same Faculty Placement Advisor you met with during the Year I placement process. However, students in certain certificate programs *are* required to schedule meetings with a specific Faculty Placement Advisor, listed below:

- **Healthcare Certificate:** Erika Peter-Harp
- **School Adjustment Counselor Certificate:** Jeannine Chester or Celia Arias
- **Veterans Certificate:** Olivia Montgomery

If you are in the Trauma Certificate or the Public Policy Certificate Programs, or if you are not in a certificate program, you may sign up with any of our Faculty Placement Advisors.

Plan to be in a private, quiet space for your meeting. Come prepared to discuss:

- Your interests and agency-type preferences
- Preferred placement process path (Traditional vs IAA vs Employment-Based)
- Logistics (schedule, location, certificate requirements, etc.)

STEP 6: [For students choosing the Traditional Placement Process Path]: Centralized Application Process (CAP) (See [Step 4 above](#) for an overview of the Centralized Application Process, including the batch deadline calendar.)

As outlined in Step 4, you may submit up to three (3) CAP forms/applications every batch round, and Faculty Placement Advisors will send out applications in batches. Each batch deadline falls on a Sunday at 11:59 pm. By the following Friday at 5:00 pm, Faculty Placement Advisors will have updated their students with the status of their application and will notify them if their application was selected for review by an agency.

If the application(s) was not selected for review by the agency, the student will be required to continue the application batch process until a match is made. If a CAP form/application was incomplete (ex. you forgot to include a cover letter for an agency that requires it), your Faculty Placement Advisor will notify you, and you can re-submit for the following batch. **Pay attention to agency requirements** (car, language fluency, etc.); Your application will not be selected for review if you do not meet those requirements.

III. THE PLACEMENT PROCESS: COMMUNICATION AND INTERVIEWING

During the Centralized Application Process (CAP), if an agency selects your application for review, and then decides to move forward with an interview, your first action should be to inform your Faculty Placement Advisor of the interview date/time.

In preparation for the interview, be ready to talk about the following:

- Relevant experience
- Your resume and cover letter
- Leadership experience
- Passion for the work/setting/population
- Academic progress
- Organizational skills
- Relevant coursework

Prior to the interview, be sure to read all available information on the agency, including their website, as well as their Agency Profile (if available) in Tevera. Make note of whether you can accommodate special circumstances required by the agency. For example: a different start or end date than the Simmons calendar, strict vaccination requirements, background checks, etc. Ideally, you should have already gathered this information prior to applying, but it never hurts to double check.

In scheduling an interview with an agency, it is acceptable to try to negotiate a time to meet, but please be prepared that you will need to be flexible. Note that having an interview is **not** an excused absence from an academic class. If you need to miss time at your placement, you should discuss this with your Practicum Instructor on site.

During the interview, be sure to inquire about agency onboarding requirements, weekly scheduling, and orientation dates. Some agencies require orientation attendance that conflicts with the first week of classes for Year II students, and you will need to notify your Simmons class instructors as soon as possible if this occurs.

For weekly scheduling, Year II practicum days are typically Mondays, Thursdays, and a third mutually agreed upon day between you and the agency. We strongly recommend that this day **not** be Tuesdays, as most course offerings for Year II students are on that day of the week.

After your interview, immediately email your Faculty Placement Advisor to let them know how the interview went, your impressions, and level of interest in the setting. It is important to do this on the same day. Within 24 hours of your interview, send a thank-you email to the person who interviewed you.

If you are accepted by an agency, you have **at most** one week to respond to that agency, unless they require you to respond on a quicker timeline. If you have reservations about accepting the internship offer, please contact your Faculty Placement Advisor as soon as possible to discuss your decision **before** you respond to the agency.

Once you have decided to accept an offer, and if you have other applications under review at other agencies, you must do one of the following:

- If you have been in contact with those other agencies, email them directly to rescind your application (please be polite and appreciative)
- If you have not been in contact with those other agencies, notify your Faculty Placement Advisor, and they will contact the agency to rescind your application

In the event of three or more unsuccessful placement interviews, the Faculty Placement Advisor will reassess your applications and collaborate with you to discuss next steps. Planning for another placement may not begin until the application materials are approved by the Faculty Placement Advisor, or other steps are taken as determined by the Practicum Education Department. Depending on the circumstances, you may be required to meet with the Director and/or the Associate Director of Practicum Education to re-evaluate your program plan.

It is at the discretion of the Director of the Practicum Education Department, in consultation with the Dean, to recommend dismissal from the program if an appropriate graduate level clinical social work internship appears unobtainable.

IV. PRACTICUM EDUCATION INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

I. Getting Ready for the Interview:

- Confirm the names(s) of the person(s) you will be meeting with, for how long, the location, and whether this will be an individual or group interview
- Inform your Faculty Placement Advisor of the date/time of the interview
- If you are meeting in person, make sure to bring extra copies of your updated professional resume and cover letter, if applicable
- If you are meeting in person, leave extra time for transportation and/or parking. If you are unsure how to get to the location, do a test run. Being calm and on time is an essential step for interview success
- Dress professionally – even if the setting has a dress code that is more casual
- Learn about the agency ahead of time (review the Agency Profile in Tevera and look at their website to see their mission, values, and more about what they offer)
- Be prepared to ask questions that reflect your interest in their program and the research you have done
- If you think that a mock interview would help, contact the [Career Education Center](#) to arrange for one

II. During the Interview:

- Take in the culture of the agency; observe appropriate dress
- Find out about the breadth and depth of learning opportunities offered for interns, including typical case assignments
- Ask if there are required days for the internship so that you will be prepared to plan class schedules without conflict (despite our best efforts, there are occasions when internship days may conflict with class offerings - talk with your academic advisor if you have questions)
- Ask about expected time commitment (hours per day, required evenings, length of commitment—for example, a school setting may require a commitment to the end of the school year in June, beyond Simmons' end in May)
- Ask what experiences they have had with graduate MSW students and what qualities they are looking for in a student intern
- Ask about a daily schedule—what would a typical day look like?
- Be prepared to describe your experience, including anecdotes from your Year I placement, to emphasize your strengths, openness to learning, and learning goals
- Confirm the agency's onboarding requirements, such as background checks, immunization/health requirements, and other required documentation. Remember that any costs associated with completing these requirements are your responsibility

III. After the Interview:

- Immediately thank the interviewer(s) with an email sent within 24 hours of your meeting
- Follow up with your Faculty Placement Advisor as soon as possible
- Speak with your Faculty Placement Advisor about any concerns you might have **before** refusing a placement offer. **Do not** refuse an offer without first speaking with your Faculty Placement Advisor

V. PREPARING A SOCIAL WORK RESUME CHECKLIST

- Update your contact information, making sure your name, address, phone number, and your Simmons email address are up to date
- Make sure your voicemail is not full and that your greeting is professional
- Make “Education” the first heading on your resume, listing that you are at Simmons University School of Social Work
- Indicate that you are an MSW Candidate, and list your expected graduation date and certificate program if applicable
- Do not include your grade point average (GPA) or your high school education
- Under each heading (Education, Employment, Volunteer Experience, etc.), always put your experiences in reverse chronological order with your most recent experience first
- Add a robust description of your Year I MSW internship, including at least three (3) bullet points detailing the following:
 - Brief description of the agency or program (i.e. residential program for adults with severe persistent mental illness)
 - Your duties (e.g. case management, assessments, treatment planning, individual, group, or family work)
 - Types of clients served: Age range, diagnosis or presenting problem, cultural/racial diversity
 - Describe any special projects, special skills, or training

Please use the [Career Education Center](#), your Practicum Instructor, your Practicum Liaison, and the sample resume below for guidance and review of your resume.

Sam Simmons

300 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02215 • sam.simmons@simmons.edu • (617) 555-5555

Education:

Simmons University School of Social Work, Boston, MA Anticipated 05/2025
Master of Social Work (MSW) Candidate

The College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, NY Graduated 05/2014
Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Employment Experience:

Home for Little Wanderers, Waltham, MA 06/2019 - Present
Direct Care Counselor

- Provide a safe, supportive environment for children ages 12-18 living in a group home.
- Communicate with other counselors from previous shifts to ensure the continued flow of information.
- Assist with the implementation of treatment plans that support the attainment of educational and social goals for residents.
- Document daily living activities in residential log.

Community Healthlink, Inc., Worcester, MA 06/2014 - 05/2019
Therapeutic Mentor

- Provided structured, one-to-one, strength-based support services to youth for the purpose of addressing daily living, social, and communication needs.
- Developed and implemented Individual Intervention Plans (IIP).
- Collaborated with other professionals to ensure IIPs met client needs and supported the goals set by team members.
- Engaged in skill-building activities to improve communication, teach parenting techniques and strengthen family functioning.
- Maintained documentation of all sessions.

Internship Experience:

Pathways for Change, Inc., Worcester, MA 09/2023 - 05/2024
MSW Intern

- Provided individual and group counseling to survivors of sexual assault and/or significant others/family members of survivors.
- Served as a support and advocate for survivors at area hospitals, local police stations and court systems following an assault.
- Conducted outreach and education to adolescents to raise awareness of facts related to sexual assault and to teach about healthy relationships and warning signs of potential abusive romantic relationships.

- Documented meetings, referrals and services provided to clients.
- Completed 40 hour rape crisis counseling training.

Action for New York Community Development, Inc., New York, NY 09/2013-05/2014
Family Services Intern (Undergrad)

- Performed eligibility screening through client intake process.
- Met with clients one-on-one to provide case management through the following services: food pantry, holiday assistance, fuel assistance, access to SNAP, referrals to other ABCD programs/services, and referrals to external programs/services.
- Assembled client files and completed data entry for services rendered through online client tracking program.
- Participated in outreach events in an effort to share resources with the community.

Additional Experience:

Family Child Care Provider, Local family, 2012- Present

Receptionist, Admission Office at The College of New Rochelle, 2011 – 2014

Trainings:

- *Fostering Resilience in Trauma-Impacted Youth and Families: The Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency (ARC) Treatment Framework*, Trauma Center at JRI – 6/27/16 & 6/28/16
- *Motivational Interviewing: Making Real Change Possible*, The Bridge Training Institute – 10/16/15
- *Adult First Aid/CPR/AED*, Red Cross of Northeast MA-Lawrence – 6/25/16
- *Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) Training*, The Home for Little Wanderers – 9/2/19

Affiliations and Memberships:

- National Association of Social Workers, Massachusetts Chapter
09/2021 - present
- White Clinicians Against Racism (WCAR), Simmons School of Social Work
09/2021- present

VI. YEAR II PLACEMENT PROCESS FAQs

1. Why can't I apply directly to any agency that interests me?

We understand the wish to do so, but the majority of our community partners and agencies require that applications are submitted via university practicum departments, rather than by students themselves (aka, the traditional placement process). Some of these agencies will utilize the independent application process (i.e. accept applications from students directly), but many do not wish to do so. It is important that we respect the wishes and requirements of our community partners and agencies in this process.

2. Will my Year II Practicum placement have a huge impact on the course of my future career?

Your Year II placement is one of *many* steps you will take along your professional journey. Much more important than *where* your Year II placement will be is *how* you engage with the learning. Focus on developing advanced practice skills and deepening your professional identity as they will be crucial in (and can be translated to) any setting.

3. Can I apply to do an Employment-Based Placement in order to make my life more financially stable?

The Practicum Education Department encourages students to explore the feasibility of Employment-Based Internships. There are particular guidelines required and we are happy to review them with you. If we can help your worksite develop the right learning opportunities for you, it may be a mutually beneficial arrangement. Please see [Step 4](#) above for more information.

4. If I choose the Independent Application path for my Year II placement, will I be without the support of the Practicum Education Department?

No. There is a reason that we require you to meet with a Faculty Placement Advisor before determining which path (Independent Agency Application vs. Traditional Placement Process vs. Employment-Based) is right for you. If you apply through the Independent Agency Application path, you will send your application materials directly to agencies but also keep your Faculty Placement Advisor updated along the way about your progress (or lack thereof). Your Faculty Placement Advisor is also available to review cover letters and prepare questions and thoughts before your interview(s).

It is in consultation with your Faculty Placement Advisor that you might decide to stop the Independent Agency Application process and pivot to the traditional placement process. Please note that if you decide to switch, you will not be eligible for the

Centralized Application Process (CAP) as part of the Traditional Placement Process until February. Ongoing communication is essential for either path and if you are not successful with the IAA process, we will work with you to find a placement. You are not on your own!

5. If I don't have much exposure to direct client care in my Year I practicum placement, will I be able to secure a clinical Year II placement?

It is certainly possible to secure a clinical Year II placement without much clinical exposure in Year I. In the vast majority of cases, Year I students are engaged in generalist practice. All Year I MSW students' educational goals (at all schools of social work) include the socialization to the profession and introduction to generalist skills (including working with larger systems). We encourage you to think about how you will talk about the skills you are acquiring in your current placement when interviewing for your next placement. *Read [this article](#) for more perspective.* How you describe your Year I placement, your growth, and learning are critical during the interview process. Agencies are seeking students who have cultural humility, are self-reflective, critical thinkers, and open to feedback. If you need help thinking about how to message your Year I placement, please talk to your Practicum Instructor, Practicum Liaison, or Faculty Placement Advisor.

6. Given the location of Simmons in the Longwood Medical area, are hospital placements plentiful?

There are quite a few medical settings in the Boston area and yet there are a limited number of social work internships. Hospitals are limited by the number of LICSWs they have available to supervise, and since the pandemic, resources at these sites have been reduced. You can learn the skills needed for a hospital/medical setting in other agencies as well. Please refer to the FAQs regarding hospital placements (below) for more information.

VII. HOSPITAL SETTING CONSIDERATIONS

Hospital settings are fast-paced, acute care settings that have specific expectations of social work interns. With the goal of setting students up for success, we ask that you review the following before considering a hospital for your Year II placement:

- Hospital settings typically require students to arrive on time and the pace allows for minimal down time. Are you a consistently punctual person who is able to manage a demanding and consistent schedule?
- Hospitals require students to have considerable autonomy and the ability to independently seek out resources. How are you at taking initiative, problem solving, and prioritizing tasks?
- A hospitalization represents a crisis for patients and families which elicits intense emotion. Are you prepared to tolerate the strong affect that may accompany such situations - especially grief and anger?
- Effective and time-sensitive written and verbal communication is critical for all social workers. In a hospital setting, concise clinical notes are required with a quick turnaround via an electronic medical record system. In fact, most hospitals require that all notes are entered into their system before you leave each day. An entire team of professionals will be depending on the information you have to share in your notes. Do you feel comfortable with your writing skills? Do you envision the ability to complete progress notes and formulations immediately, even if it means that your day will be extended?
- Students in hospital settings often receive feedback from colleagues in different disciplines. Do you have the professional disposition to receive feedback from a range of professionals in addition to your Practicum Instructor?
- Are you prepared to work in a multi-disciplinary team within the medical model, where the social work voice may not be as valued or prominent?
- Reflect on your own loss history; are you prepared to work with patients and families who are entering the end of life, or actively dying? It is important to know that this will be a part of any hospital placement.
- Are you comfortable with the sight and the smell of bodily fluids, and the instruments and tools connected to patients for medical care? What coping skills will you draw from to stay grounded if this feels overwhelming?

- Interns in hospital settings are often considered essential workers and may be required to intern on holidays and during inclement weather. Can you commit to making every effort to safely get to your placement when it snows, even when classes at Simmons are canceled?
- Interning in a hospital requires flexibility; you must be prepared to be paged in the event of a crisis, often necessitating a sudden change in your schedule. Are you able to be flexible when planning your day?
- You will be entering patients' rooms when other members of the medical team or family members are present, and may be interrupted by a medical professional during a social work session. Do you have a temperament that will allow for a more "public" presence, tolerate interruptions, and unanticipated "derailments" of your plans?