Simmons UNIVERSITY

School of Social Work

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PRACTICUM EDUCATION MANUAL
2024-2025
On Ground Edition

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FORWARD

Dear Students, Practicum Instructors, and Training Directors,

This manual has been prepared for you as a guide to practicum curriculum, policies, and procedures. It is intended to give comprehensive information about the various roles and expectations of all parties in the school and agency partnership. We encourage you to examine the contents of the manual. A member of the Practicum Education Department Faculty or your Practicum Liaison will be happy to answer any questions about its content.

The administration and faculty appreciate the ongoing commitment and investment of our affiliated training partners. We are grateful to all who participate in the practicum component of the curriculum, enabling and enhancing the integration of theory, social work practice, and professional development.

Wishing you a fulfilling year of teaching and learning,

Warmly,
Eugenia Correia Knight, MSW, LICSW, CHHP
Director of Practicum Education
Associate Professor of Practice

MSW PROGRAM

The Simmons School of Social Work Master of Social Work (MSW) Degree program prepares its students for practice in the profession of social work with particular competence in clinical social work practice. The curriculum emphasizes the profession's dual focus on the individual and the environment. Students are expected to learn theory and practice skills to serve clients at all levels of social work practice (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) in the context of the political, economic, and social systems.

MISSION OF THE MSW PROGRAM

The mission of the MSW program is to prepare masters level professional practitioners with skills for clinical social work practice in a complex, multicultural world using knowledge based on evidence-informed and practicum-informed practice, in which clinical practice is defined, in part, as a disciplined process for collaboration, in service of social, emotional, and behavioral change for individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities. This educational experience, consistent with the history and philosophy of the social work profession, is grounded in a values perspective that emphasizes client strengths, actively opposes all forms of oppression and supports social, economic and environmental justice. The curriculum is designed to help students develop competence, critical thinking and the ability to attend to clients' presenting concerns and build on their strengths, as well as cultural responsiveness and self-awareness.

MSW PROGRAM GOALS

Graduates will be able to work with a variety of populations and social issues using a broad and flexible array of interventions at an advanced level. They will have the ability to work with individuals, families,

groups, and communities to facilitate development and change in the service of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Graduates will be prepared to practice with an appreciation for the dignity and worth of the person and the importance of human relationships established with integrity and a commitment to human rights. The MSW program goals are directly linked to our mission statement, and read as follows:

1. Provide high quality education for generalist practice and a concentration in clinical social work.
2. Create and sustain a learning environment that encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, promotes cultural responsiveness and self-awareness, and values the contributions of all stakeholders to the educational experience.
3. Enact a program culture that creates and sustains a learning environment in which we critically self-reflect on issues of human rights, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, class, national origin, immigration status, religion, the intersection among these factors and the roles they play in education and the practice of social work.
4. Infuse all activities of the MSW program including the implicit and explicit curricula, with the values and ethics of the social work profession.
5. Prepare students for competent ethical practice in a complex, multicultural world and a rapidly changing global environment.
6. Promote the development of professional knowledge and skills and accountability through the use of evidence-informed practice and a commitment to life-long learning

DEFINITION OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

A disciplined process for collaboration in service of social, emotional, and behavioral change for individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities, clinical social work draws on knowledge of human development, relational and group process, cultural learning, and social policies and practices. It employs evidence-informed methods that facilitate change through dialogue and collective action. It is grounded in a history of commitment to social justice and guided by a professional code of ethics.

SIMMONS UNIVERSITY POLICY ON VALUING DIVERSITY

Simmons University is first and foremost an academic community that prepares students to be well-informed, open-minded, and sensitive to values. We strive to foster an atmosphere within which students may develop the resources to become actively engaged members of society and to lead rich personal lives. We hope to achieve these goals through an active and continual exchange of ideas among students and faculty and the general University community. To ensure that these goals are attained, Simmons has committed itself to the following principles:

Simmons University supports the principle and spirit of equal employment opportunity for all persons, based on each individual's qualifications and fitness. It is the University's policy to administer its employment and personnel policies without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, legally recognized handicap, or veteran status.

All students are given equal access to the University's programs and resources. In accordance with applicable law, admission to the University's undergraduate baccalaureate program is reserved to people who self-identify as women. The University is committed to admitting students of any race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all programs and activities made generally available to students at the University, including scholarship and loan

programs, athletic programs, and other University-administered social, educational, recreational programs, and student services.

Simmons University subscribes to the policies set forth in Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which mandates equal opportunity for qualified handicapped persons in educational programs and activities. Simmons University strives to ensure that all decisions concerning hiring and promotion of faculty and staff, or the educational progress of its students, are based on considerations appropriate to an academic institution and not on factors such as race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, handicap, or veteran status.

Furthermore, Simmons University is committed to creating an atmosphere within which the diversity of its members' individual roles meets with understanding, respect, and encouragement, and where discrimination and harassment by any member of the faculty, staff, or student body against any other will be condemned and redressed. The University does not tolerate sexual harassment of employees or students.

Complaints of discrimination or harassment should be addressed to the applicable Director for appropriate action (see University Policy on Nondiscrimination)

STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY FOR RACIAL JUSTICE FROM GWEN IFILL COLLEGE (FORMERLY CSSPP)

Read the State of Solidarity for Racial Justice from the Gwen Ifill College here:
https://www.simmons.edu/academics/colleges-schools-departments/csspp/statement-solidarity-racial-justice

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PRACTICUM EDUCATION

CODE OF ETHICS

The School supports the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics and expects students, faculty, and Practicum Instructors to abide by its provisions. A copy of the Code is on reserve in the Simmons Social Work Library and can be accessed on the N.A.S.W. web site:
https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

Dual Relationships and Conflict of Interest

As noted in the revised NASW Code of Ethics, Practicum Instructors should not serve as a supervisor of any student with whom they have a dual relationship. Dual relationships occur when the student and Practicum Instructor have or initiate an additional relationship. For example, a close social or intimate relationship, therapist-client relationship, or business involvement would constitute such a conflict. Likewise, social work students should not work with clients with whom they have a dual relationship.

If, in any aspect of Practicum Education, the potential of a dual relationship exists, the student or Practicum Instructor should notify the Practicum Liaison or the Director of Practicum Education. All involved parties will participate in efforts to resolve the issue or make other arrangements.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EDUCATION

Introduction

These standards are presented in a social work framework that values diversity of perspective and experience, understands there is diversity between and within cultures, and respects difference. Achieving professionalism in social work requires a commitment to and demonstration of the values of the social work profession.

The Simmons School of Social Work (SSW) is committed to preparing its graduates to be highly competent and ethical social work practitioners. Faculty make a commitment to provide students with a curriculum that supports their educational and professional development and that assists them in adherence to these standards. Additionally, the SSW is mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to promote and evaluate professional development for students in Social Work programs (BSW, MSW). Likewise, the SSW is responsible to the community at large for graduating knowledgeable, ethical, and skilled social work professionals whose practice reflects the competencies, skills, and values of the social work profession.

This document outlines eight professional performance standards:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Communication
3. Electronic Communication and Use of Social Media
4. Openness and Willingness to Learn
5. Physical and Cognitive Ability
6. Presentation of Self
7. Emotional Stability and Stress Management
8. Professional Values and Ethics

Each professional standard is accompanied by descriptions of behavioral expectations. Students must satisfy the professional standards to enroll in, progress through, and graduate from the SSW.

Specifically, students are expected to act in a manner that is consistent with the values, ethics, and conduct required for professional social work practice in the classroom, in practicum, and in the broader school community. Becoming a professional is a gradual process; as a result, the SSW faculty, Practicum Instructors, and administrators will continually assess students in accordance with these standards, which constitute the criteria for professional performance.

In addition to the standards outlined in this document, SSW students are expected to abide by the _NASW Code of Ethics_ _(NASW, 2021)_, the Simmons University Honor Code, and the policies outlined in the SSW Student Handbook and in the Simmons University Handbook. Procedures for addressing a violation of the Standards for Professional Practice or any of the ethics, codes, or policies identified above are outlined in the SSW Student Handbook. The ultimate goal of the SSW Standards for Professional Practice is to help students have a successful experience at the SSW and to be prepared for post-graduate practice. This document does not include the complete NASW Code of Ethics or the CSWE Educational Policies, however it highlights particular ethics and competencies to serve as a framework for professional and ethical behaviors to abide by while a student is at the SSW. As an SSW student, you will be informed of the Standards for Professional Practice at the time of application to the SSW and at new student orientation. The standards are on the SSW web site and also in the SSW student handbook.

To participate in a degree program, you are expected to satisfy program requirements, including these professional standards, with or without accommodations. If you seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities, you must contact the Simmons Office of Accessibility Services. This office will determine your

eligibility for accommodations and recommend accommodations and/or services.

Professional Standards

1. Self-Awareness

Expectations to meet the standard:
   a. Accurately assess your own strengths and limitations and display a willingness to examine and change behaviors that interfere with your work in practicum, in the classroom, on campus, and in the larger community
   b. Actively examine your own biases
   c. Seek supervision and use constructive feedback to inform practice
   d. Take responsibility for your own actions and consider the impact of these actions on others
   e. Demonstrate a willingness to examine and assess the relationship between your own personal values/socialization and their alignment with expected professional ethics
   f. Reconcile conflicts between your personal values and those of the profession, as required by the *NASW Code of Ethics*

2. Communication

Expectations to meet the standard:
   a. Express ideas, thoughts, and feelings clearly in the classroom and in practicum
   b. In written work, communicate clearly and at a level that reflects the academic standards of SSW programs
   c. Demonstrate a willingness and ability to actively listen to others with objectivity and openness
   d. Communicate responsibly and respectfully, with speech that is free of bias, discriminatory language, or stereotyping in all interactions with colleagues, faculty, Practicum Instructors, staff, and clients
   e. Advocate for yourself in an ethical, direct, respectful, and responsible manner using SSW and agency-specific channels for conflict management

3. Electronic Communication and Use of Social Media

Expectations to meet the standard:
   a. Demonstrate respect for the privacy of your clients; refrain from gathering information about clients from online sources without the client's consent (i.e., googling client history, accessing client social media); photographing clients; or publishing client information on social media
   b. Communicate about and with colleagues and peers with respect and accuracy, avoiding cyberbullying, harassment, or making derogatory or defamatory comments, or disclosing personal information without consent
   c. Follow relevant laws, Practicum Education agency policy, NASW Code of Ethics (1.07) pertaining to social media and in use of technology in all aspects of service delivery
   d. Maintain awareness of how personal communications using social media could affect professional relationships with clients, colleagues, and agencies

4. Openness and Willingness to Learn

Expectations to meet the standard:
   a. Demonstrate openness to learning new ideas and perspectives

b. As required by the demands of professional practice, be flexible and adaptable in new situations and as circumstances change
c. Assume the stance of a learner with humility; avoid solely relying on current or past professional experiences to inform your judgment or decision-making in the practicum and in the classroom
d. Demonstrate a willingness to effectively communicate your learning needs and request clarification to understand requirements

5. Physical and Cognitive Ability

Expectations to meet the standard:
a. Attend and participate in classes and practicum placement as scheduled, demonstrating punctuality, dependability, accountability, and the ability to prioritize responsibilities
b. Navigate transportation needed to attend practicum and classroom requirements
c. Use the technology required to engage in scholarship and effective practice including, but not limited to, use of computers, telephones, and agency electronic records and databases
d. Demonstrate the ability to acquire knowledge and reflect on experiences to inform practice
e. Demonstrate the capacity to think critically and to apply effective problem-solving skills that are well reasoned, examine multiple perspectives and worldviews, integrate evidence and knowledge, and lead to well-supported decisions and conclusions

6. Emotional Stability and Stress Management

Expectations to meet the standard:
a. In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics (4.05), demonstrate the ability to honor the best interests of people for whom you have professional responsibility by keeping personal life circumstances or problems from interfering with judgment or performance
b. Recognize current life stressors that may interfere with scholastic or professional performance; seek and effectively use help for medical or emotional problems such as those problems stemming from psychosocial distress, substance misuse, and mental health difficulties
c. Demonstrate professional boundaries, including ethical use of self-disclosure
d. Maintain respectful relationships with all colleagues, faculty, Practicum Instructors, staff, and clients consistent with NASW Code of Ethics (2.01)

7. Professional Values and Ethics:

Expectations to meet the standards:
a. Exhibit judgment and conduct that is consistent with the values and ethics of the profession as stated in the NASW Code of Ethics, as well as with established laws, policies and professional standards
b. In accordance with NASW Code of Ethics section on: Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception (4.04), students should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception
c. Demonstrate professional and academic integrity, including exhibiting truthfulness in fulfilling program requirements. Students should remain aware of, and abide by, the Simmons Honor Code
d. Follow Federal and State laws and agency policies regarding confidentiality and mandatory reporting

8. Respect for Diversity and Social Justice

a. Exhibit a willingness to relate and work nonjudgmentally across difference with others

b. Demonstrate knowledge of, and sensitivity to: diversity, oppression, and privilege, including a willingness to examine personal beliefs, values and assumptions that perpetuate oppression

Meeting the academic degree requirements is not sufficient to successfully complete the program. If you meet the academic requirements but fail to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and/or the Standards for Professional Practice, you are at risk for dismissal or other disciplinary action.

*Acknowledgements to UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work Technical Standards Document
Approved by SSW faculty 5/10/18

PRACTICUM ADVISORY BOARD

The Practicum Education Department convenes a Practicum Advisory Board that meets twice each year with practicum partners from a diverse group of community partnership agencies for the purpose of seeking consultation from, and collaborating with our colleagues to: communicate current trends in social work education; elicit feedback about our department and our students; seek input from partners about ways in which the School can better support our agencies and our students; exchange ideas about ways in which our training relationships can be strengthened for the benefit of all parties; seek creative solutions to common dilemmas; and gather information about current clinical practices that the School needs to support in the curriculum.

PRACTICUM EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Practicum Education is an integral part of the School of Social Work curriculum. Two years of practicum internships must be successfully completed to satisfy the requirements of the degree. Admission to the MSW program does not guarantee acceptance to a practicum internship. Please see *Practicum Selection Process* for further information.

In the practicum, students integrate and apply the theories they learn in class with actual practice with individuals, families, groups, and larger systems. Practicum Education provides practice learning in a wide range of training agencies representing both traditional and evolving professional practice settings The goal is to prepare professional social workers with the knowledge and skills to work with a range of clients and problem areas, to analyze and apply theory critically, and to utilize a variety of interventions according to client need. The practicum curriculum supports the mission and goals of the MSW program and the values of the social work profession, including social and economic justice and respect for diversity. It provides the opportunity to support and apply the School's definition of clinical social work which emphasizes training students to work with individuals, families, and groups, in order to help clients, improve their psychological and social functioning and gain access to social and economic resources.

- Practicum Education at Simmons is designed as a concurrent course of study with classroom curriculum throughout the academic year.
- The Practicum Education curriculum provides a generalist social work practice experience in the first year, and a specialized second year with a concentration in *clinical social work*.
- Students are in the practicum placement three days a week (twenty-four hours), in a different placement each of the two years. With prior approval, some students will be in placement for sixteen hours per week over an extended period of time (eleven months).
- First year placements begin in mid-September, following orientation activities. Second year students

begin practicum work in early September.
- The Practicum Education program carries a total of 17 credits.

Under social work supervision, students are to demonstrate skill in a range of roles including direct clinical practice; accessing and, at times, developing services; formulating assessments and treatment plans; collaborating with interprofessional teams and community providers; case management; and advocacy to name a few.

Agencies are asked to teach students about the policies and organizational issues affecting service to clients, and to provide opportunities for students to learn about organizational dynamics and change. Students develop the ability to practice in a self-directed manner, and to use supervision to gain self-awareness. Finally, students are expected to critically evaluate their own practice learning and understanding of the change process.

In both placements, the Practicum Education curriculum underscores social work values and ethics, including a commitment to social, economic, and environmental justice, multicultural practice, promotion of diversity in organizations, the emancipation of oppressed people, and social action. Students learn skills in identifying and addressing oppression and injustice affecting client systems.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSIONS TO PRACTICUM EDUCATION

Students are admitted to the MSW program based on a minimum grade point average, personal statement, employment and/or volunteer history and recommendations. Only students who are matriculated in the MSW program are eligible for practicum. Once granted admission to the MSW program, in order to secure a generalist year placement, each student must follow procedures and meet guidelines outlined by the Practicum Education Department. The first requirement for the specialized year placement is the successful completion of a generalist year placement.

The two practicum experiences are differentiated as follows:

GENERALIST PRACTICUM

This first year practicum experience provides a foundation in generalist social work practice over the course of two consecutive terms. Full-time and accelerated students will complete two semesters of their generalist placement at community agencies (this time is extended into a summer term for those completing a practicum 16 hours per week). The generalist year in practicum will prepare students with:

- An introduction to social work identity and the ethical standards and values that define the profession
- Exposure to the roles of social workers, such as clinicians, advocates, and case managers
- The ability to engage and assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Training, support, and feedback from experienced social work clinicians
- Skills in building therapeutic relationships with clients and integrating clinical practices into their work

SPECIALIZED PRACTICUM

The second year specialized practicum experience will enable students to build on their generalist knowledge

and hone assessment and intervention skills. This clinically-focused practicum takes place over the course of two semesters (this time is extended into a summer term for those completing a practicum 16 hours per week) and provides students with:

- Increased clinical opportunities to practice engaging, assessing, intervening, and evaluating diverse client groups (individuals, families, and organizations)
- Regular practice applying theoretical concepts learned in the classroom to client interactions
- Increased exposure to evidence-informed practices
- Further practice applying their clinical skills while benefiting from the support and feedback of a skilled Practicum Instructor
- The knowledge and confidence to grow increasingly autonomous as professional social workers

PRACTICUM EDUCATION SCHEDULES

Please refer to the academic year calendar for specific dates. Generalist year students are in practicum on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Specialized (and Advanced Standing) students are in practicum on Mondays and Thursdays, and a third day that is mutually beneficial to the student and agency. It is strongly recommended that students in their final year avoid Tuesdays as a practicum day as many specialized year courses are offered on this day. **Any variations in practicum schedules must be approved by the Practicum Education Department.**

Generalist Year Full-Time, September – May

Fall: Mid-September to mid-December (approximately 12 weeks).
Spring: First weekday after the New Year to early May (approximately 16 weeks).

Specialized Full-Time September – May

Fall: Early September to mid-December (approximately 14 weeks).
Spring: First weekday after the New Year to early in May (approximately 16 weeks).

Generalist Year and Specialized Year Sixteen Hour-Per-Week Placements – September – August (16 hours per week)

Fall: Early September to mid-December (approximately 14 weeks).
Spring: First weekday after the New Year to early August (approximately 31 weeks).

Students in 2-day or 16 hour-per-week placements will observe the same start dates and holidays. Final week of placement is mid-August. Students are allowed to schedule one week of vacation between May and August. Time off must be approved by the agency.

Advanced Standing Placements

Fall: Early September to mid-December (approximately 14 weeks).
Spring: First weekday after the New Year to early May (approximately 16 weeks).

Accelerated 16-Month Program

Spring: First weekday after the New Year to early May (approximately 16 weeks)
Summer: Mid-May to late August (approximately 14 weeks)
Fall: Early September to mid-December (approximately 16 weeks)
Spring: First weekday after the New Year to early May (approximately 16 weeks)

HOURS IN PRACTICUM

The MSW degree requirements cannot be met without the successful completion of two internships, with the exception of Advanced Standing. **During the first year, Generalist practicum students complete 672 hours** for the academic year. **Specialized year students and Advanced Standing students complete 720 hours** for the academic year**.** Regular attendance of three days a week (or 24 hours per week) in practicum is required of both first and second year students. Some students, with prior approval from the Practicum Education Department and placement site, will be in practicum for 16 hours per week over an extended period of time to complete the equivalent number of total practicum hours.

There is some flexibility in planning the structure of practicum placements (starting and ending dates, hours per day) based on student and/or agency needs as long as the time requirement is met. Students are expected to adhere to the same workday hours as professional staff unless individual arrangements have been made and approved by the agency and SSW. **The School does not consider overtime work as deductible from overall practicum hours, nor can overtime be accrued or taken as vacation days. Therefore, students are asked not to request alterations in their placement end dates due to the accumulation of additional hours.** If the agency is requiring regular overtime work, the student should address this first with the Practicum Instructor, and then with the Practicum Liaison to assure protection of the student's time. If an agency has evening appointments or regular early morning hours that the student attends, the 24-hour schedule should be adjusted accordingly. When students work extra days, holidays, or school vacation days, it is expected that they be granted compensatory time. Arrangements for compensatory time should be made with the Practicum Instructor.

Students Placed in Schools and Child Focused Settings

Placement schedules in schools and child-focused settings often differ from the standard placement calendar. **Typically, students in these settings follow the public school or agency calendar for vacation and end dates (*instead of the SSW calendar*). For instance, students who take time off for the February and/or April public school vacation would not take time off for the SSW March vacation. Students placed in schools should plan to modify their schedules to accommodate agency hours and vacations. Generally, school placements extend into June and may begin before Labor Day.**

Request for Change in Schedule

The expectation is that students will follow the schedule outlined in the Practicum Manual and Practicum Calendar. As previously stated, students working with children may be following a public school calendar rather than the SSW placement calendar. The placement schedule is a professional commitment to the agency. In special circumstances changes may be granted upon approval of the Director of Practicum Education.

Absences

If an emergency arises necessitating absence from the practicum, the student is responsible for immediately notifying the Practicum Instructor and taking **responsibility for postponing appointments or scheduled meetings**. *In case of illness*, the student is expected to make up the time lost if it exceeds three (3) days over the course of the academic year. In the case of a death in a student's immediate family, a student may take up to three (3) days off for bereavement. In case of prolonged absence, the student and Practicum Instructor should notify the Practicum Liaison so that a plan can be made to meet the needs of the agency, student's situation, and the School's educational requirements.

Conferences

Students are permitted to attend national and regional conferences *only* if the faculty and agency agree that this will not unduly interfere with learning or client service. Such requests should be limited to 3 days per year.

Legislative Clearing House

Generalist year students should be released to attend the one-day Legislative Clearing House (usually held in March) unless serious consequences would result due to their absence.

School Recesses

It is expected that the student will not be at practicum during the Simmons SSW recesses (Thanksgiving recess, Winter break, Spring break). **Legal holidays that occur on placement days will follow the agency schedule.**

Religious Holidays

Simmons abides by the Massachusetts Law on Religious Observances. Students who are unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in an examination, class, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from the class, study, or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the examination, study, or work they may have missed consistent with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 151c, Section 2b. That law states:

"Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or a denominational education or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such make-up examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his/her availing himself of the provisions of the sections."

Students who need to be excused from practicum attendance due to religious observance should make arrangements with their Practicum Instructor prior to the anticipated absence. Students will be provided the opportunity to make up missed time at a later date that has been mutually agreed upon by both student and agency, and is mutually beneficial for both parties.

Questions about absences for religious observances should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs.

SAFETY POLICIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

The Simmons School of Social Work Practicum Education Department has adopted the following policy and procedures regarding the safety of SSW student interns in the practicum. This policy has been created to recognize that violence in the lives of clients can create potential dangers to professional social workers and students engaged in the study of the profession. We believe issues of safety are relevant in all communities and settings. We urge SSW students to become familiar with this policy regardless of the location of your internship placement.

I. **Policy**

- The School of Social Work is responsible for providing all students and faculty Practicum Liaisons with general written information about safety in practicum.

- The SSW expects each agency to be responsible for orienting student interns to the safety policies and procedures of that agency and setting. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency building(s), with particular clients prone to violent behavior, and about clients who may be sharing living quarters with persons prone to violent behavior, to the extent that such information is known. Security of personal belongings of the SSW intern while at the agency should be also covered. Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed at the beginning of the placement with ample opportunity for questions and discussion as needed.

- SSW Students should not be required to engage or to remain in assignments or at placements in which they feel physically at risk. SSW urges all agencies to make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for their own agency staff, and in some situations the agency may need to make even greater accommodations for a student. If a student's concerns about safety interfere in whole or in part with the learning process, the Practicum Liaison should be contacted by the Practicum Instructor to facilitate prompt exploration of the concerns, and to seek a mutually satisfying resolution.

II. **Procedures**

a) If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Practicum Instructor immediately. The Practicum Instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should then contact the Director of Practicum Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and Simmons SSW should take to assure the student's physical and emotional well-being in the wake of the incident, and on an ongoing basis if needed.

b) The Director of Practicum Education will document the incident, the steps taken to address it, and will meet with the student and faculty Practicum Liaison to assess the student's readiness to return to the practicum and any other issues relevant to the situation. The Director of Practicum Education may alert the MSW Director about incidents and concerns on an as-needed basis.

III. **Safety Guidelines for Students in the Practicum**

a) **Agency Protocol**

It is important for students to know the agency's safety and security protocol for office and home visits with clients at the start of the placement. If the agency does not have safety and security policies and/or procedures, the Practicum Instructor and student should review and discuss any issues related to safety and security in the setting. Students are urged to bring their questions and concerns to the Practicum Instructor. Regular communication, particularly about safety concerns, is strongly encouraged.

The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, Practicum Instructors, and Practicum Liaisons as they consider the particular safety issues in their settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will be determined by the individual situation and the specific nature of the setting.

b) **Security of Belongings**

All students in the practicum are expected to have a secure place to keep coats, handbags, cell phones, laptops, and other belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked and could be in a desk drawer or filing cabinet. Students should not leave handbags and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed.

Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle. Neither the agency nor Simmons can be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.

c) **Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients**

When working with clients, it is important to remember that the treatment process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. With some people, this can contribute to problems with behavioral control, and can raise issues of safety for the client, the social worker, the student intern, and others.

We urge all SSW students to consult with your agency Practicum Instructors to prepare adequately for handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons. Students should be aware that training in the use of restraints may be required of all employees in certain settings. This is for the safety of all in milieu settings.

d) **Safety Guidelines for Office Meetings**

If a student will be meeting with a client with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important for the student to discuss the situation promptly and fully with the agency Practicum Instructor. Based on the outcome of this discussion, there may be a decision that a student will not see the client or will see the client under specific circumstances or controls. However, if it is decided that a student will see the client, several points should be considered. A client's mental status should be assessed. When considering the location of the meeting, it might be helpful to think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person might sit. It may also be helpful to think about whether to include someone else in the meeting. When discussing the time of the appointment, it can be helpful to plan a time when many others are nearby and available should help be needed. It is also important to discuss the plan for backup and assistance in the event that the client becomes agitated. A student should never

see a potentially dangerous client alone, nor without someone else in the agency aware of the situation, the appointment time, and the location of the meeting. Students should keep supervisors informed about their schedules at the agencies at all times.

e) Safety Guidelines for Travel by Car

When interns are traveling by car to an agency or to home visits, it is advisable for the agency to know the students' destination and the approximate time they will return to the office. Students should remain alert, lock doors, and close windows. Students should carry a fully charged cell phone in the event of an emergency.

Policy Regarding Intern Use of Vehicles for Agency Business

Practicum agencies occasionally require or request that student interns use vehicles in the performance of their internship activities, which may include transporting clients. This may involve student interns driving their own vehicles or agency vehicles; or student interns as passengers in an agency vehicle or vehicle owned by an agency staff member. The use of a vehicle for purposes of carrying out internship activities is acceptable in some internship situations, provided that adequate safeguards are in place to manage the potential risks. Documentation outlining each party's responsibilities should also be in place. This policy is intended to assist in identifying the safeguards that are minimally necessary; and to allocate responsibilities among the parties appropriately.

Responsibilities of the School of Social Work Practicum Education Department:
Inform students that they should inquire prior to the placement about agency expectations regarding use of agency and/or personal vehicles for placement purposes. This offers students the opportunity to opt out of the use of their vehicles or agency vehicles for their internship, with the understanding that this could limit the internship options available to them. Address vehicle use and related issues of safety, insurance coverage, and liability in the Practicum Education agreement.

Responsibilities of Practicum Agencies:
Have a vehicle safety policy which addresses the use of agency and student personal vehicles to conduct agency business (including transporting clients) with specific attention to:
- Driver eligibility (including driving record checks)
- Liability insurance coverage, including the type of insurance coverage students are expected to have on their own vehicles
- Evidence of agency insurance coverage for use of agency vehicles
- Safe driving tips
- Procedure for reporting to designated agency personnel any incidents including, but not limited to, accidents, moving violations, disruptive or concerning client behavior while being transported
- Procedures for assessing, always in consultation with an agency supervisor or other qualified staff person, appropriateness of clients to be transported (including an assessment procedure to determine if an additional staff person should be in the vehicle)
- Steps to take in the event that a client evidences concerning behavior during transport
- Provision of the agency vehicle safety policy and evidence of liability insurance to the Practicum Education Department
- Student interns should receive a copy of the agency's vehicle safety policy, availability of appropriate safety training, and supervision with regard to safely transporting clients

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

Simmons SSW thanks Boston University School of Social Work for sharing their vehicular safety policy that was used in developing this policy.

f) Safety Guidelines for Travel by Foot or Public Transportation

When traveling by foot or public transportation, students are encouraged not to carry valuables to the extent possible. Money, licenses, keys, and other essentials might be carried in a pocket. If a handbag carried under the arm is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is helpful to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting, and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert, and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area.

g) Safety Guidelines for Home Visits

It is important to familiarize yourself with a client's file prior to a home visit. If there is a question about safety, plan accordingly with Practicum Instructors. It may be determined that meeting at a neutral place or going with another worker is the appropriate plan. Someone at the agency should always know the student's itinerary. It is helpful to stay alert and to think about what to wear, which room to meet in, and where to sit. Students may ask clients to place pets in a separate room if there is a perceived safety risk. If a student feels threatened at any point during the interview, it is advised to err on the side of caution and terminate the visit. If a student is unwelcome in a client's home, the student should not force the issue. If a student hears an argument from inside the house or apartment, the student may decide to reschedule the visit or call to assess the situation before entering. A student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone. A cell phone is essential for students conducting home visits.

h) Health Safety

Students should be alerted to the existence of biohazards. They should receive training and information about how to protect themselves from infectious diseases and other potential health hazards.

IV. Post Incident Protocol

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, the Practicum Instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should contact the Director of Practicum Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.

The Director of Practicum Education will document the incident and the steps taken to address it and will meet with the student and Practicum Liaison. Together, they will assess the student's readiness to return

to the practicum and any other issues relevant to the situation.

Simmons SSW thanks Boston University School of Social Work for sharing their safety policy that was used in developing the SSW safety policy.

V.   Social Media Guidelines

Social media communities are exciting ways to connect with others and share information. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. Social Work professionals, including students, are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether they are using a personal site or an agency site. Common issues that social workers need to understand and manage when utilizing social media include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) in our relationships with clients, colleagues and in our practice settings. Utilizing social media communication tools as a social work professional requires ongoing attention to these ethical challenges.

Professional Use of Social Media Versus Personal Use of Social Media:
As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting your professional identity versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. We must be cognizant that the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals does not cease when we leave the agency nor is it confined to the physical setting of an office. Our ethical obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication tools whether we use them professionally or personally.

Dual and Multiple Relationships:
The NASW Code of Ethics states, "social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships…in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client…and social workers…are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries" (1.06c). The Code goes on to note that "dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively" (1.06c). Our ethical obligations to clients, colleagues and other professionals are no different when using social media apps as well as communications via our cell phones such as texting or email.

Social Media Profiles and Sites:
Managing friend and follow requests and maintaining privacy settings is critical regardless of whether you use social media for personal and/or professional reasons. Allowing clients, former clients, or others, such as supervisors (and Practicum Instructors) in your professional circle to cross into your personal life may complicate and blur your professional boundaries. This is particularly tricky when managing personal online accounts. As a professional, you must fully consider the extent of your privacy settings, how you will manage friend and follow requests, your level of self-disclosure, and how you will monitor wall posts or other interactions on your site. Be aware that if you do not employ any privacy settings on your social media site, your

profile is public and anyone can see what is on your page. Additionally, people can see when you are tagged in photos, view comments made by others, note your status updates and see who you've "friended."

All professionals must evaluate the scope of their social media connections. Since this is still an emerging professional topic, some professionals may be cautious and guarded in their use of social media while others may be more open and exposed. It is your responsibility as a professional social worker to abide by the Code of Ethics, including your virtual communications, and use social work values and principles to guide your interactions.

Text, Email and Messaging :
With the proliferation of handheld smart devices, accessing the Internet and connecting with others is literally in the palm of our hands. Text, email and messaging are quick and effective ways to communicate with others; however, many ethical, legal, and clinical issues must be addressed when using these communication tools. For example, if you text a client, is the text considered protected information under HIPAA? Are you ethically, legally, and/or clinically bound to respond to a client who texts you after hours? How will you maintain the privacy and confidentiality of these digital communications? Should texts be included in the clinical record? If you maintain a public social media profile, anyone can read or reply to what you post. Are you prepared to monitor and respond to questions and comments from clients who follow your accounts?

These and many other issues are emerging as professionals learn to navigate new and evolving technologies. As such, it is important to consider the security, privacy, and confidentiality of all communication methods, adhere to agency policies, and when in doubt, seek consultation and supervision before embarking into unfamiliar or uncertain areas. Below are some general guidelines for the use of social media communication tools.

Maintain Confidentiality and Privacy:
There is a huge potential for unintentionally sharing protected information when using social media so always use good ethical judgment. Be cautious when you post information about your agency (practicum and classroom work, if you are a student) or agency staff. Do not post confidential or private information about clients or colleagues. Be aware of agency policies regarding the use of social media and scrupulously follow agency policies. Do not discuss a client, patient, or situation on a social media site even if you are disguising the information. In general, do not post anything about yourself that you would not want on the front page of a newspaper. It is incredibly difficult to remove anything from the Internet so once it is posted, tagged, shared, or followed, you better feel good about it.

Respect Time and Property:
Before using social media communication tools on behalf of your agency, be sure to seek approval of any messages or posts. Be careful not to endorse or promote a product, cause or position without prior approval. If you have personal sites, maintain them on your own time using your own computer. (If you are a student, your time in practicum and the resources provided to you in your practicum are to be used for practicum related matters.)

Be Accurate and Authentic:
Do not pretend to be someone else or hide your identity when using social media. Be clear if you

are sharing personal views and use good judgment regarding sensitive issues. Verify information before you post it, correct mistakes in a timely manner, and be aware of legal liability issues such as copyright infringement, defamation, and posting proprietary information.

Protect Your Identity:
Understand how privacy settings work and review them regularly. Refrain from providing too much personal information such as your home address or full birth date. Don't post in advance when you plan to be on vacation or away from home for an extended period of time.
- Activate privacy settings on all social media.
- Do not interact with or allow clients to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks (i.e., "friending").

Think Before You Post:
There is no such thing as privacy on a social media site or the Internet. Comments can be forwarded or copied, posts and pictures can be found on search engines years after the initial publication, and archival systems save information even after you delete it. Consider the image you are portraying by the photos and comments you post. Are you projecting the image you want future employers (and faculty members), liaisons and friends to know you by? What you write or post is ultimately your responsibility so be thoughtful about your online communication. Be certain that what you post today will not come back to haunt you a few years from now.

Do No Harm:
Social media channels provide an excellent means to build our community, however, as you navigate these channels, do no harm to yourself, your practicum site, your clients, the School of Social Work or to the social work profession in the process.

Failure of students to adhere to these standards, or failure to maintain a client's confidentiality in any form, including the use of social media, will result in a disciplinary process, which may include dismissal from the MSW program. Please refer to the MSW Policy Manual for more information on this topic.

Simmons SSW thanks UNC-CH School of Social Work for sharing their Guidelines for the Use of Social Media that was used in developing the SSW social media guidelines.

PRACTICUM SELECTION AND AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES: POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

To meet the objectives of Practicum Education, the School is affiliated with a broad spectrum of human service agencies and programs. Settings include, but are not limited to:

- Child/family home-based programs
- Homeless shelters
- Advocacy programs for immigrants and refugees
- Public schools
- Councils on aging
- Municipal social services
- Specialized programs for LGBTQ clients

- Acute treatment settings for substance use disorders
- General hospitals
- Community health centers
- Integrated care settings
- Criminal justice
- Outpatient mental health clinics and programs
- Residential treatment centers
- Hospices

Practicum Faculty keep abreast of shifts in service needs and populations at risk in order to keep the School's curriculum current with emerging trends and developments in social services and to identify fields of practice that need professional social workers. Affiliated placement agencies must demonstrate a commitment to training social work students and have programs that reflect the values and ethics of the profession, as well as the School's mission, goals, and objectives. The agency and Practicum Instructors provide the opportunity for interns to develop a social work identity and to gain knowledge and skill in social work practice at multiple levels of social work practice (individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities) with particular emphasis on direct clinical practice in the specialist year.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AGENCY TO THE SSW AND PRACTICUM SITE CRITERIA

In order to qualify as a placement site, agencies must have standards and a philosophy acceptable to the School, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and the professional community. The setting must adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and provide needed services to the community. The agency must be willing to follow School expectations delineated in the Practicum Education Manual. In forming an affiliation, agencies must fill out an Intake Form, meet with a Practicum Faculty member to discuss partnership, and complete an Agency Profile Form to be reviewed and approved by a member of the Practicum Faculty. Subsequently, the SSW will submit a copy of the School's Standard Affiliation Agreement for review and signature. If the partner agency wishes to use their own agreement, it will be submitted to the SSW General Counsel for review.

It is expected that agency staff will offer an orientation to the setting, its services, its safety procedures, and its policies for their students. The agency should provide a range of learning experiences with attention to their educational value for the particular trainee, and consideration for agency needs. Client assignments should facilitate student development, knowledge, and practice skills.

In making a commitment to participate in the training of MSW students, administrators are expected to adjust the workload of Practicum Instructors to allow adequate time for student teaching. **A minimum of one hour per week is required for clinical supervisory meetings/instruction with each student and their primary supervisor. Group supervision is encouraged; however, it cannot replace the required one hour of clinical supervision/practicum instruction.** In addition, time must be allotted for reading and providing feedback on **Process Recordings** and other reports, planning informal conferences, and consulting with the Practicum Liaison and other school representatives as needed. If the Practicum Instructor is new to student supervision, the agency should be willing to allow time for them to attend the **Seminar on Practicum Instruction for new supervisors.** In addition, the agency should assume responsibility for support and/or supervision of beginning Practicum Instructors and coverage of student cases at times when the student is in school or on vacation.

Each year, practicum agencies update their profiles with the SSW and describe the learning opportunities for the upcoming academic year. Since each placement is assigned a faculty Practicum Liaison, this liaison plays a key

role in the continuing assessment of the quality of the setting as a training site.

Expectations of agencies include:

- An ability to engage students in learning across the nine competencies.
- Practicum Instructors should receive support and consultation on their supervision in the agency.
- Practicum training must be valued and supported in the agency.
- In its commitment to overall quality of service to clients and training, it is expected that agencies will provide supervision, staff development, and other learning opportunities for staff and involve students in relevant offerings.
- The agency will recommend highly qualified staff to serve as Practicum Instructors (see *Criteria for Selection of Practicum Instructor*) and when possible, a staff member will serve as overall liaison for the school (i.e., the training director).
- The agency will, to the best of its ability, provide an adequate amount of direct clinical service for learning.
- The agency will provide adequate office space, access to a telephone, and should reimburse for travel during the intern hours (not to include commuting expenses) and other expenses incurred in carrying out the social work role.
- The agency will orient the student to agency practices and procedures, documentation requirements, safety issues, and provide needed specialized training for work with the agency's client population.

Agency selection criteria is based on a site's capacity to provide these learning experiences and to also facilitate the development of various skills including:

- Integration and analysis of theory and practice
- Advocacy practice
- Engage in social policy practice
- Intervention with systems
- Application of evidence-based practices
- Development of critical thinking and self-reflection
- Biopsychosocial assessments
- Effective use of therapeutic relationships
- Interprofessional collaboration and teamwork
- Evaluation of practice outcomes

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF PRACTICUM INSTRUCTORS

Practicum Instructors/supervisors of Simmons students are fully qualified according to school standards and Council on Social Work Education standards. It is essential that Practicum Instructors be fully identified with the social work profession and committed to its values and ethics. The instructors in Massachusetts should be certified as licensed independent social workers (LICSW) or should be eligible for this license. All primary supervisors must have a Masters in Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE accredited program and two years of supervised post-masters experience. The Practicum Instructor should have worked in the placement agency for a year, although exceptions are sometimes made. **The Practicum Instructor must submit a resume and licensure information for verification and approval by the Practicum Education Department.** Practicum Instructors that do not meet the above criteria may be considered on a case-by-base basis, but there is no guarantee they or the site will be approved.

Essential qualities of Practicum Instructors include having an interest in supervision, the ability to integrate theoretical perspectives and stimulate critical thinking through everyday practice. The Practicum Instructor is expected to keep abreast of current content and trends in social work practice. The Practicum Instructor must be objective in evaluating the student's performance and be able to collaborate with the assigned faculty Practicum Liaison, particularly when difficulties arise.

Practicum Instructors should be grounded in a broad social work perspective and sensitive to issues of diversity in regard to race, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation. Practicum Instructors should have knowledge and skills in several modalities such as family treatment, group work, and advocacy. In addition, Practicum Instructors should be able to refer students to other supervisors, readings, or consultants regarding content areas with which they are not familiar. Practicum Instructors should be familiar with and able to teach the various roles utilized by clinical social workers. They should also be aware of the range of social work practice settings to enhance the student's broader training and to help them develop skill in accessing other services for their clients.

Practicum Instructors (and other agency staff as appropriate) are expected to teach direct (micro) service to individual clients, couples, families, and groups, and to teach skills to intervene on their behalf with larger systems, organizations, and communities. Depending on setting and client needs, students are expected to learn several of the following skills: advocacy, outreach, negotiating and coordinating services, administration, consultation, small program planning, and policy development.

The agency and Practicum Instructor are expected to provide an adequate and varied client load for the 3 days per week (or in some cases 2 days per week) practicum placement. The instructor ensures that the student is incorporated into the agency system and helped to learn its philosophy, mission, place in the community, practices, and procedures.

Expectations for Practicum Instruction can be summarized as follows:

- A minimum of one hour per week is required for clinical supervisory meetings with each student and their primary supervisor
- In addition, time must be allotted for reading and commenting on Process Recordings and other reports, planning informal conferences, and consulting with the Practicum Liaison and other school representatives as needed.
- The Practicum Instructor will complete a **Learning Plan** detailing learning goals and responsibilities.
- The Practicum Instructor will complete **two** written **Evaluations of Student Performance** during the academic year.

All supervisors new to the supervision of MSW interns are required to attend a full-day Orientation to Practicum Instruction in August and to complete a Seminar for Practicum Instruction, the "SIPI Seminar," which includes the content of nine virtual, 65-minute sessions over the course of the academic year, for a total of 10 CEUs at no cost to participants. Alternatively, new supervisors can access a SIPI course at another CSWE accredited institution which may have a different structure and schedule.

The school relies upon Practicum Instructors to keep the Practicum Liaison informed about their own or student absences or any other possible disruption in the learning process. Supervisors should assist interns in securing adequate office space and equipment to accommodate students, including privacy for interviewing clients.

Student placed in agency without Practicum Instructor with required credentials or experience

It is the policy of the MSW program, to assume responsibility for reinforcing the social work perspective in the absence of the required supervision. Although it is an unusual occurrence for a student not to have an MSW supervisor with appropriate credentials and experience, the program is prepared to assume responsibility for reinforcing the social work perspective when it is necessary to do so. When the agency cannot provide the appropriate social work supervision, the MSW program takes the responsibility in reinforcement of the social work perspective by either hiring a social work supervisor or deploying a Practicum Education Department faculty person to provide supervision in addition to the agency-based supervision.

EVALUATION OF PRACTICUM EFFECTIVENESS

The evaluation of practicum setting effectiveness is on-going and begins with the first contact between the Practicum Liaison and the agency. The Liaison reports concerns about the effectiveness to the Practicum Education Department as they occur. To the extent possible, the Practicum Liaison remains assigned to the same agency from year to year in order to be knowledgeable about the agency and to maintain close working relationships with agency staff, facilitating a natural process by which the agency partner can be monitored for its ability to deliver the learning experience expected by the School.

A formal evaluation is completed by the Liaison at the end of the placement and is submitted to the Practicum Education Department.

MONITORING STUDENTS: POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

Policies:

- The Practicum Liaison has primary responsibility for monitoring the viability of the learning experience for each practicum placement, and helping the student integrate and optimize learning experiences in both class and practicum and to facilitate the mastery of social work practice.

- The Practicum Liaison is responsible for collaborating with the Practicum Instructor and the agency training director in evaluating student progress and learning and, when necessary, serves as a mediator in problem situations.

- The Practicum Liaison monitors and evaluates the educational process; follows student progress; supports and mentors students on their practice and professional development; and provides support to agencies in the form of consultation, mediation, advocacy, problem solving, and negotiation.

Procedures:

- Each Practicum Liaison reports to a member of the Practicum Faculty when concerns arise about a student's performance or the viability of the learning environment.

- Early in the year, the Practicum Liaison meets the student in order to get acquainted with the student's background, learning style, and learning needs, as well as to explain the Liaison role and the ways in which the student can access advising resources.

- The Liaison arranges individual and/or group meetings throughout the year in response to student needs and interests. Students should initiate a meeting with their Liaison around any questions or concerns.

- The Liaison conducts a minimum of 2 practicum visits each year during which time the student's learning plan and progress toward learning goals is reviewed. In addition, the Practicum Instructor reviews student Process Recordings and other assignments prior to the practicum visit. The Liaison also reviews the semester evaluation.

- The Liaison makes contact with the Practicum Instructor early in the semester to discuss the development of the learning plan, the role of the Liaison, and general performance expectations.

- The Liaison reviews the completed learning plan. Should any concerns identified by the student or Practicum Instructor arise, the Liaison is notified and works to facilitate collaborative problem-solving efforts which could include requesting a Level 2 Review.

- Liaisons report more complicated issues or problems to full-time Practicum Education Faculty person who serves as the Liaison's department contact. Liaisons also attend monthly meetings at which student concerns are also addressed.

Criteria: The Practicum Liaison, in collaboration with Practicum Faculty if there are concerns, is responsible for monitoring the following:

- Completion of practicum assignments
- Learning activities assigned that are congruent with social work competencies and multiple levels of practice
- Consistent attendance in the practicum
- Compliance with the Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Practice
- Satisfactory completion of the evaluation each semester with scrutiny to assure that performance is adequate for the student to earn a passing grade and move to the next semester of practicum learning

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO THE AFFILIATED AGENCY

Providing high quality education for students of social work practice is the responsibility of the School, the affiliated training site, the Practicum Instructor, and the student. It is essential that each party collaborate fully in achieving the goal of preparing graduates for the profession. The following statements are intended to clarify the responsibilities of the School to agency partners:

- The School will affiliate with the training site following a mutual exploration of the School and agency missions, expectations and commitment to work together in the practicum preparation of students.

- The School will provide the student's resume prior to the interview for placement.

- The School will assign a faculty member to serve as liaison to the agency and advisor to the student. The Practicum Liaison (PL) will assist in planning practicum curriculum, provide consultation to the Practicum Instructor, and collaborate in assigning a grade for Practicum Education.

- The PL will maintain good communication with the agency and Practicum Instructor and will conduct a virtual site visit with the placement at least once each semester and more often if problems arise.

- The Practicum Education Faculty will be available to consult, plan, problem solve, and discuss issues related to specific students or general training issues.

- The School will supply other materials (e.g. the Practicum Manual, Practicum Calendar) necessary for all involved parties.

- The School, in consultation with the agency, will work together to problem-solve student difficulties. The School may consider whether a student should be transferred to another setting.

- The School will endeavor to keep the agency informed about its policies, curricular content, and administrative changes.

- The School will provide the agency with a copy of its standard affiliation agreement signed by the Provost. *It is the responsibility of the agency to sign the affiliation agreement and return it to the School.* If the agency provides their own affiliation agreement, it will be reviewed by the Director of Practicum Education, General Counsel, and Provost before it is signed.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT TO THE AFFILIATED AGENCY

The student's dual role of trainee and staff member carries special privileges and responsibilities. Students, as professional representatives of the agency, are expected to identify with the goals and values of the agency and to learn and carry out its policies and procedures. It is also the responsibility of the student to learn the community resources as well as the agency's function in the total service delivery. This School strongly supports the following position statement by the Massachusetts Chapter, National Association of Social Workers:

> *"In accordance with the Patient's Bill of Rights (Chapter 214), NASW recommends that social work students identify themselves as trainees/ students/interns to patients/clients either verbally or through use of name tags except in emergency situations where it is clinically contraindicated as determined by student and instructor. Student status should be clearly designated in signing notes in the record."*

Health Insurance Policy

All students are expected to have health insurance and are responsible for obtaining their own health insurance coverage. Affiliated agencies in which Simmons students complete practicum placements also expect students to

maintain health insurance coverage throughout their placement. Please see information on obtaining health insurance via the link below.

Please note: *Simmons University does **not** offer Student Health Insurance to students participating <u>in online programs, students enrolled in less than 9 credits OR the dependent(s) of any Simmons University student</u>.* https://www.simmons.edu/admissions-and-financial-aid/financial-aid-and-affordability/billing-and-payment/student-health-insurance

Background Checks

Background checks, **including drug screens** and Criminal Offense Record Investigation (CORI) checks, are required by many placement agencies. The School encourages agencies to initiate the process of requesting a background check before placements start in the Fall. Students are urged to let Practicum Faculty know of anything that might be discovered in a background check so that an appropriate placement plan can be made. **For students who are required to complete CORI checks, drug screens, fingerprinting, immunizations, or other on boarding requirements, the student will be responsible for associated costs.** Students may be asked by an agency to request their own CORI through the School of Social Work.

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Simmons University School of Social Work
Criminal Offender Record Inquiry (CORI) Policy

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Criminal Offender Record Inquiry (CORI) checks are part of a general Massachusetts background check conducted by most of our partner training sites when students prepare to enter a clinical internship. Some of these host sites will conduct these background checks using their own resources, while others ask that the School of Social Work (SSW) assume this responsibility. If your background check is to be initiated at the SSW, the following practices and procedures will be followed.

   I.   CORI checks will only be conducted in accordance with regulations established by the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB). All students will be notified when a CORI needs to be initiated by the School of Social Work. At that time, this policy will be made available for review.
  II.   An informed review of a criminal record requires adequate training. Accordingly, all faculty and staff in the School of Social Work who are authorized to review these records will be fully familiar with the educational materials made available by the CHSB.
 III.   Prior to the beginning of a clinical internship, students will be notified by the partner training site of any "on-boarding" documentation needed. They will also advise students if the background check is required, and if the partner site will be conducting it. If they are not equipped to do so, students are required to complete the process at the School of Social Work. The School will only complete background checks for students in partner training sites that have included this stipulation in the Affiliation Agreement.
  IV.   If a criminal record is received from CHSB, the authorized faculty or staff will closely compare the record provided by CHSB with the information on the CORI request form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant, to ensure the record relates to the applicant.
   V.   Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify a social work student from entering practicum. Rather, determination of suitability based on CORI information will be made by the Director of the School of Social Work. A student with any criminal convictions, past court appearances, pending criminal cases (including misdemeanors), or past or pending disciplinary action against a professional license is advised that Simmons School of Social Work may not be able to secure a

placement. Students then have an obligation to notify the Director of the School of Social Work if any new complaints occur after the initial CORI is obtained, or if there is some other occurrence that changes the CORI status.

VI. Some training sites will require the actual data obtained from a CORI. In this case, the site will initiate their own CORI review through the CHSB.

VII. Our affiliating partners do not have to accept a student whose CORI check reveals information found to render the student ineligible for placement.

VIII. A student challenging the accuracy of the report will be provided a copy of CHSB's *Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record*. If the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the student, Simmons School of Social Work will make a determination based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the student. The School may contact CHSB and request a detailed search consistent with CHSB policy.

IX. If the School is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the CORI check, the student will be notified immediately. The student will be provided with a copy of the criminal record, a copy of this policy, advised of the information that renders the student unsuitable for a practicum internship, and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the CORI record.

X. If Simmons University School of Social Work reasonably believes that the record belongs to the student and is accurate based on the information as provided in this policy, then the determination of suitability for the practicum placement will be made. Unless otherwise determined by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to the following:
   a. Relevance of the crime to the proposed clinical internship;
   b. An honest representation of the criminal history on the admissions application;
   c. Nature of the proposed clinical setting;
   d. Length of time since conviction;
   e. Age of the student at the time of the offense;
   f. Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
   g. Number of offenses;
   h. Existence of other pending charges;
   i. Relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof;
   j. Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the student or requested by the School of Social Work.

XI. Simmons School of Social Work will notify the student of the decision, and the basis of the decision, in a timely manner.

XII. The School of Social Work is not responsible for the inability of the student to be placed as a result of findings on a CORI.

Fingerprinting

Public schools are now requiring that all employees and interns be fingerprinted (2014). The school system will guide the student through this process, and the **student will be responsible for any fees incurred in the process.**

Record Keeping

In addition to completing required Process Recordings, students are responsible for meeting general agency documentation requirements (e.g., intake assessments, chart notes, periodic summaries, termination and transfer summaries). For agencies, documentation is a crucial and mandatory part of the accountability process. Student documentation should be kept up-to-date so that appropriate services may be provided to clients when

circumstances such as illness or vacation take students away from their placements temporarily.

Confidentiality

All social workers are required to adhere to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Public Law 104-191) regulations regarding the privacy of client information outside the agency setting. Unless you have the client's written permission, confidentiality must be strictly maintained when disclosing, discussing, or writing about clients in the classroom or in assignments or Process Recordings.

Confidential Communication (Massachusetts Law for Licensed Social Workers)

The following is a statement from the section on confidential communication from the Massachusetts General Laws. The Massachusetts Board of Registration and the Massachusetts Chapter of NASW have reviewed the confidentiality law but have come to different conclusions regarding protections for social work interns and their clients. Since there is no case law on this issue, NASW's lawyer recommends that interns use an informed consent form adapted for interns. Simmons recommends that training directors review agency confidentiality and informed consent policies with social work staff and interns.

No person licensed under M.G.L. c. 112, pages 130 through 137, or an employee of such person may disclose any information he/she may have acquired from the person consulting him/her in his/her professional capacity, except:

1. *With the written consent of the person or, in the case of death or disability, of his/her own personal representative, of any other person authorized to sue, or of the beneficiary of an insurance policy on that person's life, health, or physical condition.*

2. *That a licensed certified social worker, including those engaged in independent clinical practice, and those practicing as licensed social workers or as licensed social work associates, shall not be required to treat as confidential a communication that reveals the contemplation or commission of a crime or a harmful act.*

3. *When the person waives the requirement of confidentiality by bringing charges against the licensed certified social worker, the independent clinical practitioner, the licensed social worker, or the licensed social work associate.*

4. *If the licensee has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.*

5. *Communications made in the course of a social work examination ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction when the client has been informed before the examination that any communications made during the communication would not be privileged.*

Practicum Instruction (Supervision)

Students are expected to prepare for and participate in supervisory meetings and to bring to the attention of the Practicum Instructor any obstacles they see as interfering with the learning process. Students and instructors are encouraged to consult with the Practicum Liaison as needed.

Other Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students and liaisons are expected to be in contact at regular intervals during the academic year to discuss both practicum and academic course work. This includes:

- An introductory meeting in the Fall.
- A conversation (in-person or otherwise) prior to each practicum visit.
- A discussion about concerns or problems in practicum or academic course work.
- A planning meeting (in person or telephonic) for Specialized Year placement (Generalist Year students only).
- An optional meeting to review post-graduation plans (Specialized Year students).

PRACTICUM EDUCATION PLACEMENT PROCESS

In our commitment to provide the best possible learning arrangements for students, the School is committed to affiliations with a broad spectrum of training sites serving a diverse population of clients and representing various professional practice settings, problem areas, geographical regions, and communities. A comprehensive and collaborative placement process aims to assure a good match between the student and practicum setting. In developing and vetting new practicum sites, the School utilizes intake paperwork and a verbal discussion to evaluate the potential learning environment. The goal is to ensure that the site will provide opportunities for students to engage in comprehensive learning that enables them to gain mastery in all nine CSWE competencies. At the end of each academic year, practicum sites are assessed by the assigned liaison, and concerns are reviewed by the Practicum Education Department to determine future viability for student learning. Agencies deemed unsuitable are added to a "do not use" list for future reference.

GENERALIST PLACEMENT PROCESS

A Practicum Faculty member interviews full-time incoming students and extended students in the spring/summer prior to the beginning of the academic year. Interviews also include educating students about the range of social work roles and options available for Generalist Year placements, as well as clarifying the student's professional interests. The process then begins to match students with a broad-based first year experience.

After a student interviews at an agency, the agency determines fit and either accepts or rejects the student for the placement. If the student is rejected, their resume will be sent to other agencies. In the event a student is unable to secure a placement, please see section on Failure to Secure a Placement.

SPECIALIZED PLACEMENT PROCESS

The process of placing students into second year placements begins with student/liaison collaborations. During the Fall, a Practicum Faculty member will visit students' Practice Classes (SW 421A) to describe the placement process. Students will learn how to assess their own learning needs and goals as a first step in selecting prospective placements. Students have access to an online database to assist in identifying ***examples of internships*** that would meet a variety of their needs and interests. After the classroom visits, students will be emailed a link to the practicum application.

Once the practicum application is submitted, students meet with a Practicum Faculty member (the "Faculty Placement Advisor") to discuss their professional goals and interests and explore the range of placements that

might meet their learning needs. After the meeting, beginning in January, the student will submit up multiple applications per the Centralized Application Process with the Practicum Department. Practicum Faculty will screen application materials via this submission process, then send students' applications to the respective agencies. If an agency is interested, the student will be invited to interview. After a student interviews at an agency, the agency determines fit and either accepts or rejects the student for the placement. If the student is rejected, they will be allowed to submit another application to another agency . In the event a student is unable to secure a placement, please see Failure to Secure a Placement.

PRACTICUM GUIDELINES FOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

MSW with Certificate in Healthcare students will be placed in a healthcare setting for their Specialized Year. Their Generalist Year placement may or may not be in a healthcare setting. Please see appropriate program plan for coursework requirements while in practicum**.**

MSW with School Social Work/School Adjustment Counselor Certificate students must be placed in a school for either their Generalist or Specialized years; and in an agency that serves children and families for the other practicum. Alternatively, students may consider placement in two schools, each with a different specialty or serving children of a different age. Please refer to the School Licensure Handbook for all policies related to this program of study.

MSW with Trauma Certificate students will be placed in a setting where they will be exposed to clients who have experienced trauma in various forms. It is expected that there are very few settings where this population would not be represented.

MSW Clinical Practice with Active Service Members, Veterans, and Families students will have an opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in effective and culturally-sensitive clinical practice with service members, veterans, and their families.

MSW with Public Policy Certificate students will gain an understanding of policy systems and theory, methods of policy analysis, and subject matter knowledge in two major policy arenas.

PRACTICUM IN THE STUDENT'S PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT (EMPLOYMENT-BASED PLACEMENT)

In certain situations, usually due to the student's financial need, the School and Practicum Education Department permit students to use a paid social work position to fulfill the Practicum Education requirement for one practicum. Generally, this arrangement is made for the Generalist Year practice placement. *A student should not be in the same agency for two internships.*

Students who wish to use their place of paid employment as a placement must complete an application and Agency Agreement for Employment-Based Placement by the stated deadline. The application includes a plan agreed upon by agency administration, the proposed supervisor, and the student. Each application will be carefully reviewed and decided upon within the framework of CSWE (Council on Social Work Education) and School standards and expectations. To be approved, the agency and student must agree to adhere to the criteria for such placements, which include the following:

In the hours (24 or 16) designated to receive Practicum Education credit, it is expected that the student will be *assigned to a different department or program area* and have the opportunity to gain knowledge

and skill in new methods, modalities, and interventions. The student should have the opportunity to work with different client populations and problem areas.

The agency must assign a *new Practicum Instructor to supervise the school related practicum work*, a person other than the student/employee's current job supervisor. The Practicum Instructor and agency must agree to collaborate with the School and follow educational expectations and objectives. The Practicum Instructor must be an MSW licensed at the LICSW level.

The student/employee must be recognized as a <u>social work student</u> and thus be a part of the agency's <u>social work</u> training program for at least the portion of activity designated to receive Practicum Education credit. The agency must provide learning assignments that are different from the student's regular work.

An application for a workplace internship and agency agreement form must be submitted to the Practicum Education Department for approval (Appendix D).

As with all agencies, a Practicum Faculty member works with the student and agency staff to design a placement plan based on an assessment of learning needs, agency resources and School requirements. A signed written agreement confirms the School/Agency/Student agreement.

TRAVEL TO PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS

As a general guideline, students may be asked to travel up to one hour, each way, for their practicum. This pertains to students who drive and those who use public transportation. It is, however, hard to predict variations from this guideline as the School is located in an area that is known for congested traffic. **Students are responsible for all expenses related to their commute to practicum, including parking.**

FAILURE TO SECURE A PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

In the event of three unsuccessful placement interviews, the Practicum Education Department reassesses the student's appropriateness for a placement. Planning for another placement may not begin until a Level 2 Review is held or other steps are taken as determined by the Practicum Education Department. It is at the discretion of the Director of Practicum Education, in consultation with the MSW Director as needed, to recommend dismissal from the program if an appropriate graduate level clinical social work internship does not appear to be obtainable.

If a student does not accept a qualified placement following an interview and refuses subsequent agencies that meet their criteria, a Level 2 Review will be convened. Based on the committee's review, one of the following outcomes will be stipulated:

1. In consultation with the placement team, the student will be given one additional opportunity to secure a placement;
2. Student will postpone practicum until the following year (re-entry review required).

Failure to obtain a placement has implications for a student's progress toward completion of the MSW.

STUDENT LEARNING IN PRACTICUM: FRAMEWORKS AND CURRICULUM

The SSW is committed to continuous examination and improvement of student learning outcomes within the framework of the nine CSWE competencies. The SSW has developed a structure for systematically gathering evidence of student learning, and for regularly assessing the implicit curriculum (learning environment). Student learning is assessed by course based embedded measures and through the practicum evaluation. Implicit curriculum is assessed by an annual survey. Assessment findings are reported to and analyzed by faculty and administrators and are used to inform curricular revisions, to address changes in the learning environment, and to make changes to our evaluation methods. Built into our assessment plan is a continuous feedback loop that is foundational to our capacity to strengthen student learning. Our stakeholders are included in this feedback loop and include our students, our practicum agencies, our faculty and our staff. We also post our annual findings on the SSW website for the larger public.

CSWE COMPETENCIES

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has delineated nine core competencies for all social work students. Embedded in each competency are the dimensions of practice (knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes). Observable behaviors *associated* with each competency provide opportunities for students to demonstrate abilities within each competency. Evaluation of practicum performance will be based on students' ability to demonstrate the observable behaviors. At the completion of the MSW program, students are expected to achieve competence through their Practicum Education and coursework in the following areas.

The nine CSWE competencies at the Generalist and Specialist levels with the associated observable behaviors are listed below.

GENERALIST YEAR COMPETENCIES AND OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of

Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;

- demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

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

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

- advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

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

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

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting

research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources. Social workers:

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

Competency 5: **Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards   11 implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings. Social workers:

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

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

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

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

and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making. Social workers:

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

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

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

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

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with

individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

SPECIALIZED YEAR COMPETENCIES AND OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Clinical social workers consistently demonstrate the key values of the social work profession; they have knowledge of, and critically apply to practice, the laws, policies, and regulations that are pertinent to clinical practice. Clinical social workers recognize ethical dilemmas and apply ethical decision-making frameworks to reach reasoned and principled decisions. They manage their emotional reactions, communication, behavior, and boundaries in all professional interactions. Clinical social workers understand the importance of interprofessional practice and are able to establish effective collaboration with others. They apply ethical and legal frameworks to evaluate the effective use of social media and emerging technology in clinical practice. Social workers:

- seek and utilize feedback in supervision to identify and deepen areas of growth and guide professional development in clinical practice (including the use of technology)
- anticipate, identify, and attend to ethical tensions and apply a framework rooted in the NASW Code of Ethics to guide decisions in clinical practice
- understand and manage one's own emotional responses in the best interest of the client system
- consistently demonstrate integrity and professional behavior in: appearance, communication (oral and written), and reliability in accordance with standards identified by the SSW, practicum agency, and professional codes
- use values and frameworks of the profession to effectively engage in interprofessional partnerships and collaborations

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Clinical social workers apply knowledge of the dimensions of diversity, difference, discrimination, marginalization, social and economic exclusion, and oppression to the engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation phases of clinical practice. Clinical social workers understand the link between social factors and well-being and how pervasive inequities associated with gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, immigration status, poverty, exposure to violence, inadequate housing, and transportation impact overall well-being and access to effective services. Clinical social workers utilize intersectional analysis across multiple practice settings, paying particular attention to racism and its historical context in this country. They initiate and engage in professional interactions with cultural humility, and address oppression at the individual, community, and policy levels. Clinical social workers use and apply research knowledge of diverse populations to enhance client well-being and to work effectively with diverse populations. Social workers:

- consistently identify the impact of inequities, diversity, difference, and oppression upon life experiences and the provision of services
- apply the skills associated with cultural humility, and the knowledge of social inequality to engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at all levels of clinical practice
- use Process Recordings and supervision to examine and enhance self-awareness of one's own attitudes and beliefs regarding stereotyping, bias and power-imbalances in practice client systems
- commit to raising their social consciousness in the interest of challenging the structures of racism and other forms of oppression

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice

Using knowledge and frameworks of the dynamics of institutional racism, oppression, and discrimination, and their intersections, clinical social workers develop and design strategies to promote human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice. Clinical social workers understand the critical use of theories and evidence in designing and developing social action strategies. Utilizing the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, students analyze how these dynamics manifest on the local, state, national, and global level and violate basic human rights of fairness, equity, equality, and social justice. Clinical social workers take action to advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice individually, collaboratively, and in coalitions. They develop their capacities to move into political arenas in a way that develops their own self-empowerment as change agents and allies of client systems. Of significant importance is the development of capacities to help others to empower themselves. Their practice is bolstered by mastery of advocacy and social action strategies that can then be incorporated into practice behaviors and skills, and applied at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro level of practice to effect change. Social workers:

- identify and analyze social justice issues impacting the provision of client services
- participate in agency or community level policy practice or social action strategies to promote human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice policies and services
- consistently identify and practice targeted advocacy strategies and serve to improve client outcomes at applicable levels

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Clinical social workers integrate research into practice and consider how to evaluate issues drawn from their current practice. They critically review the empirical evidence for clinical interventions. They acquire skills to perform evidence-informed interventions. Clinical social workers assess ethical implications of practicing and implementing evidence-informed practices. They critically assess, identify, and work to address gaps in evidence-informed practice, policy and service delivery to improve client outcomes, the service delivery process, and program outcomes. Social workers:

- locate, identify, and select evidence-informed practices
- demonstrate evidence-informed practice in one's own direct clinical practice and system of service delivery
- critically consider practice and organizational context to identify priority for process, outcome evaluation and/or needs assessment in supervision and discussion with practicum agency staff
- formulate an evaluation plan designed to improve client outcomes, and/or programmatic efforts, with attention to potential areas for social action

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Clinical social workers develop specialized knowledge about social welfare and economic policies at the agency, organizational, community, local, state, national, or international levels that have impacts on the clients they serve, and on the larger society or global community in terms of availability of resources, service delivery, legal protections, and income supports. They understand the steps of policy practice necessary to improve the delivery of and access to social welfare services and benefits for individuals and families. They analyze the effects of policies on marginalized and oppressed groups within a social, economic, and environmental justice context.

They understand and utilize research to inform and evaluate social policy. They articulate outcomes they would like to achieve that would be congruent with developing and implementing new policies, blocking harmful policies, modifying existing policies. To do so, they must draw from specific strategies for policy change, such as advocating, educating, testifying, mobilizing, monitoring, collaborating, and becoming active in coalitions. These activities can have an impact on the client, agency, organization, community, larger society, and/or the global community. Social workers:

- evaluate social welfare or economic policies that are relevant to clinical social work practice and assess the impact on individuals or families
- analyze advocacy needs within a clinical setting and propose a plan for implementation.
- articulate a deeper understanding of how social welfare policies can either improve or negatively impact client well-being
- develop a plan to apply skills in policy practice with aim of achieving policy change

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

Clinical social workers have the ability to demonstrate genuineness, empathy, and respect in order to form trustworthy and collaborative alliances with client systems, as the helping relationship evolves over time. Furthermore, clinical social workers use these skills to engage with client systems that have been disenfranchised and marginalized as a result of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, homophobia, poverty, and other forms of structural and institutional oppression. Clinical social workers develop an awareness of professional use of self and an ability to critically self-reflect in order to form more client-centered relationships. They demonstrate an appreciation for the unique roles, cultures, and interpersonal dynamics of individuals, families and groups and use this awareness to inform the creation of client-centered relationships. They use psychodynamic, behavioral, social constructionist, and trans-theoretical theories to inform the engagement process over the course of the helping relationship with diverse client systems. This approach is commensurate with the core values of the profession. Social workers:

- consistently demonstrate active listening, attending, and reflecting skills
- consistently demonstrate the patience that is required to build trust
- create a collaborative working alliance before moving into problem solving
- identify and utilize one's own social identity to enhance the engagement process
- seek supervision and mentorship to enhance effective use of self in practice
- use the six core values (social justice, importance of human relationships, dignity and worth of the person, integrity, competence and service) of the social work profession to guide decision- making regarding approaches to engagement

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

Clinical social workers use genuineness, empathy, and respect throughout the assessment process. They demonstrate attention to matters of safety and the immediate well-being of client systems. They use an ecologically informed approach to consider the impact of disenfranchisement and marginalization on client systems and their current functioning. They demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which personal bias and social identities may influence the assessment process. They demonstrate a commitment to social work ethics and values when examining the nature of problems. Clinical social workers demonstrate an enhanced ability to use psychodynamic, behavioral, social constructionist and reciprocal interactionist theories to inform the assessment process over the course of the helping relationship with diverse client systems. This approach is commensurate with the core values of the profession. Social workers:

- demonstrate the effective use of a mental status exam in the appropriate context
- demonstrate the use of evidence-based assessment tools to assess for safety and well-being
- demonstrate confidence in the ability to explore all domains of client systems' life and functioning
- demonstrate the capacity to develop an evidence-informed hypothesis of client functioning based on social work paradigms
- consistently practice the skills of empathy, attending, and affective exploration to elicit a client-centered picture of the strengths and challenges with which the client system interacts
- demonstrate an ability to identify the ways in which their own biases and social identities impact the assessment process
- assess client systems from a client-centered perspective, which honors life experiences, personal beliefs, current functioning, strengths and challenges, and barriers related to oppression and marginalization
- demonstrate knowledge of distinct practice approaches in formulations
- write a clear and concise assessment that reflects multi-dimensional understanding of the client/client system

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

Clinical social workers use empathy, genuineness, and respect throughout the intervention process. They have the ability to attend to matters of safety and immediate well-being among client systems throughout the intervention process. They use an ecologically informed approach that considers the impact of disenfranchisement and marginalization on client systems and their current functioning when co-creating interventions with client systems. They demonstrate an awareness of the impact of personal bias and social identities and the ways they influence the intervention process. They demonstrate a commitment to social work ethics and values by considering the ever-changing nature of assessment of client risks and protective factors throughout the intervention process. They demonstrate an enhanced ability to use distinct, client-centered interventions from various practice approaches that are consistent with the values of the profession. They understand the theoretical perspectives, empirical generalist/foundations, and treatment strategies associated with intervention methods they employ and can describe the strengths and limitations of those methods. Social workers:

- demonstrate the effective use of a mental status exam in the appropriate context throughout the intervention process
- demonstrate the skills necessary to effectively manage and attend to crises
- use evidence-informed practices for interventions that are consistent with client systems' needs, strengths, and challenges
- use information established during the engagement phase, and learned in the assessment phase, to inform interventions
- determine ongoing treatment needs, access resources, and facilitate referrals as needed
- remain attentive to eco-systemic factors that influence the treatment planning process
- consistently re-evaluate engagement, assessment, and treatment planning over the course of treatment
- engage client systems in a process that honors their thoughts, values, and beliefs with regard to developing mutually agreed upon approaches to treatment
- collaboratively create treatment plans with client systems that accurately reflect needs, challenges, strengths and eco-system factors
- demonstrate awareness of the ways in which use of self, biases, and one's own social identities create a lens through which client systems are interpreted
- demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which oppression, structural and systemic challenges pose

barriers to treatment planning
- use supervision to explore challenges in the intervention and treatment planning process

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organization and Communities

Clinical social workers understand that evaluation practice is an essential and ongoing component of all social work practice with, and on behalf of diverse individuals, groups, families, and organizations. Clinical social workers recognize the importance of critically evaluating evidence-informed clinical practice and programs while considering research evidence, practice wisdom and client values and preferences. Clinical social workers apply qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation to understand clinical needs, clients' experience of service, outcomes and practice effectiveness. Clinical social workers critically analyze the effectiveness and limitations of outcome measures, including standardized assessments and client feedback. Social workers:

- create client-driven service plans that include evidence-informed, measurable outcomes
- use the evaluation process to enhance practice in the agency setting
- use evaluation findings to modify client interventions or improve program level effectiveness

ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS OF THE PRACTICUM CURRICULUM

In addition to the nine competencies, the following tools in Practicum Education assist students in successfully completing their practicum learning; tailor their learning goals to the agency mission (while linking them directly to the core competencies); and help them to integrate theoretical perspectives across the curriculum to direct practice.

PRACTICUM SYLLABUS

The practicum curriculum is best outlined in the syllabus that corresponds to the appropriate practicum course. This section will provide an overview of the various learning experiences and requirements for Practicum Education. The clinical work and accompanying assignments are designed to help students integrate their classroom learning in their direct work with clients, organizations, and communities. During the practicum orientation, the following topics will be addressed in detail.

LEARNING PLAN AND EVALUATION

At the beginning of the internship, the student and Practicum Instructor identify goals and objectives and formulate a mutually agreed upon Learning Plan based on the nine CSWE competencies. **In collaboration with their Practicum Instructors, students will identify 2 or 3 specific activities for each competency, readily available at their particular site, that will allow them to gain mastery in each of the competency areas and help them to see the connection between micro practice and larger systems (families, communities, and organizations).** The Learning Plan is a portion of a written document that becomes the basis of the students' evaluation.

The School expects that the student assignments will be as varied as the agency's service requirements permit. However, a key criterion for the selection of clients and other assignments will be their educational value. The process for developing an educational plan should include a mutual assessment of the student's present level of knowledge and skill. The student's past experience, interests, learning needs, and special talents should

be taken into consideration. The plan will reflect the learning opportunities the agency can offer, along with the School's expectations for practicum curriculum. The Learning Plan is available on Tevera (instruction on how to access Tevera will be provided).

The student and Practicum Instructor should complete the Learning Plan by week four of placement. Once signatures are submitted in Tevera, the assigned liaison will review and contact the Practicum Instructor and/or student with changes as needed.

PROCESS RECORDINGS AND PRACTICUM ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to agency documentation requirements, the School **requires** Process Recordings (Appendix B) as a major learning and teaching tool in a student's practicum instruction. For each of the semesters that students are in their practicum placements, the Practicum Liaison will review three Process Recordings prior to the practicum visit to assure that students and Practicum Instructors have established a learning exchange prior to the practicum visit to assess progress. The student will also be asked to reflect in writing on other areas of required learning as outlined in the appropriate syllabus (social identity and diversity; social policy, and social justice; research-informed practice; and larger systems learning and organizational context).

Process Recordings enable the Practicum Instructor and Practicum Liaison to more effectively perform their teaching roles and to evaluate the student's learning needs and progress. They help the student to: rethink the interview in preparation for supervision; integrate theory and knowledge; develop interview skills; and increase the student's capacity for self-reflection. Attention should be paid to content, process, and technique, as well as the development of self-awareness. Practicum Liaisons examine three of the student's Process Recordings prior to each practicum visit. This facilitates an in-depth discussion of student progress and overall performance by the Practicum Instructor, student, and Practicum Liaison.

All students are expected to complete **5 Process Recordings** (Generalist and Specialized Years) in each semester. **Please note your Practicum Instructor may require that you complete more than 5 Process Recordings. You are required to abide by their number.**

Biopsychosocial assessments and intervention plans are recommended on each client. Many agencies have a narrative format for biopsychosocial assessments. However, due to changing agency and practice demands some assessment outlines for permanent records are very brief. Students need to develop good skills in history taking, organization of data, and formulation as a basis for thoughtful interventions. Assessment material is often used to prepare for case conferences, and as the basis for class assignments. It is recommended that students complete at least one detailed, narrative assessment each semester even if the agency does not require formal assessments or uses abbreviated forms. It is also expected that supervisors will discuss intervention plans for each client, family or group with their interns regardless of whether a formal plan is required by the agency.

Care should be taken to disguise identifying information in Process Recordings and assessments seen by Practicum Liaisons or used in class assignments in accordance with HIPAA regulation:

All social workers are required to adhere to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Public Law 104-191) regulations regarding the privacy of client information outside of the agency setting. Unless you have the client's written permission, confidentiality must be strictly maintained when discussing or writing about clients in the classroom, in assignments and in Process Recordings.

Students will be contacted by their Practicum Liaison periodically throughout the year. This helps the student

and Practicum Liaison to track caseload and supervision requirements, and to identify potential problem areas. Students and Practicum Instructors should not wait for the Liaison to initiate contact if they have a concern.

PRACTICUM INSTRUCTION

Learning through supervision is central to the development of practice knowledge and skill. **The School expects one hour of individual supervision by a primary supervisor (an MSW who is an LICSW, or an LCSW who is LICSW eligible)**. Variations to these requirements may be implemented at the discretion of the Director of Practicum Education.

The Practicum Instructor is expected to meet with the student in private, regularly scheduled, minimally interrupted conferences. **Process Recordings should be reviewed, and comments added, prior to the meeting**. Practicum instruction includes teaching content specific to the agency's area of practice, populations, and larger issues of social justice and oppression. Practicum Instructors supervising their first MSW student are required to take the Seminar in Practicum Instruction (SIPI).

The Practicum Instructor will ensure the student receives an orientation to agency programs, policies, procedures and social work role expectations. **Additionally, an orientation to safety policies and procedures will be provided.**

DIRECT PRACTICE EXPERIENCE AND OTHER AGENCY ASSIGNMENTS

IN PERSON CONTACT WITH CLIENTS

Respectful of the wide variation in service requirements in the spectrum of Simmons affiliated placement agencies, the Liaison works with individual agencies to set expectations for the number and types of practicum assignments.

In general, the School expects that students' education will address the broad needs of the agency's population with attention to diversity in race, ethnicity, age, gender, special needs, and issues of social justice and oppression. The agency should provide an introduction to the agency system, its place in the larger system of services, and the larger social context.

Two to three clients should be available for assignment to students within two weeks of students' arrival at the agency. Direct practice experiences and other assignments should increase as the year progresses. **The School expects that student practicum work assignments will develop steadily up to 50% of direct contact with individuals, groups or families**. Assigned community projects, agency organizational projects, and social action efforts reduce these numbers. In the Specialized Year, it is expected that the student will have a core of direct practice that can include individuals, dyads (parent-child, couples), families, and larger systems. Simulations of social work practice within the practicum setting do not count toward practicum hours.

The agency should include the student in staff meetings and in-service training. Appropriate space and materials should be provided. Students should be given time during placement hours to do required agency written work. If the student has additional time available, Process Recordings may be completed at the discretion of the Practicum Instructor.

LARGER SYSTEMS LEARNING

Social Work practice with individuals, families and groups is embedded in an organizational and community context, thus students are expected to have practice opportunities with organizations and communities through a wide array of agency-based experiences. Within the practicum agency these practice opportunities should include: accessing agency services and resources, participating on an agency task force or committee, making referrals, identifying gaps in services and collaboration with other workers and other agency units. Students should also have the opportunity to work on behalf of clients *across* agencies, that is, with other community agencies, institutions, and organizations. Depending on a student's practicum placement this could include collaborative work with a school, court, public defender office, child welfare agency, nursing home, mental health clinic, or health clinic.

As determined by each agency setting, students should be active participants in interprofessional teams and on committees and task forces. In addition, students are expected to learn about their practicum agency's organizational structure, policies, documentation requirements, and confidentiality practices. Students should also be provided opportunities to learn about the community served by the agency and/or the communities where clients reside.

Practice learning related to organizations and communities is reinforced in the learning plan which delineates student-learning activities regarding larger systems and interagency work (and supervisory responsibility for orienting the student to the agency and community context). Practice learning related to organizations and communities is also amplified in the standard weekly Process Recording format. In addition, all Specialized Year students are asked to reflect on the organizational context of agency practice during the Fall practicum visit.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF PRACTICE

Students' evaluation of their own practice is a critical component of their learning in Practicum Education. Each student is expected, in collaboration with the client, to establish clear goals to be achieved during the course of their work together. Students and Practicum Instructors will be encouraged by the faculty of the Practicum Education Department to establish observable goals, and to devise measures by which progress can be evaluated. Students are encouraged to review progress periodically with their clients. At the end of the client contract, the student should evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions integrating learning from supervision and course materials. Specialized Year students take a required course on *Evaluation of Social Work Practice*. Students are expected to apply concepts from that course to agency programs and outcome measurement policies. At the end of each year students are also asked to provide the Practicum Education Department with an evaluation of their practicum learning experience.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING: POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

Although the evaluation of practicum performance should be considered an ongoing process, there are two formal evaluations due to the Practicum Education Department as indicated on the calendar: one in December, and the final evaluation in April for 24 hour-per-week students or in June for 16 hour-per-week students and Accelerated Program students. Any concerns about a student's performance should not wait until the time of evaluation but be communicated in a prompt manner to the Practicum Liaison.

Evaluations are a mutual effort of student and Practicum Instructor, with the instructor taking responsibility for the final version submitted to the School after the student has read it and points of difference have been addressed. The measure of student performance is based on: the review of student Process Recordings, direct observation in the practice environment (by the Practicum Instructor and other members of the team), in team meetings, case presentations, administrative duties, and participation in the larger scope of the organization's mission. The data gathered is rated at the level of observable behaviors. It is important that evaluations be balanced in presenting strengths, areas for growth, and challenges to enable student, Practicum Instructor, and the Practicum Liaison to know which areas of learning need special attention. Ideally, the evaluation is an evolving process and nothing should appear in it that has not already been discussed with the student in regular supervisory conferences. The School recommends that prior to the completion of the evaluation, at least one supervisory conference be set aside for discussion of the student's overall performance. Practicum Instructors may request that students write self-appraisals for this purpose.

The evaluation framework is derived from the CSWE competencies and the associated observable behaviors and dimensions of practice (knowledge, values, skills, cognitive, and affective processes).

GRADES IN PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

Practicum Education will be graded each semester with Pass, Marginal Pass, Fail, or Incomplete. While performance in the practicum (and accompanying evaluation) is weighted most heavily, the semester grade also takes into consideration: attendance; written assignments (including Process Recordings); and adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Simmons SSW Standards of Professional Practice. Grading weights are listed in each syllabus.

Pass: Students who receive passing grades in practicum are those whose performance is satisfactory to excellent, and demonstrate:

- Professional and ethical behavior including excellent attendance, no tardiness, good communication with supervisors about clinical work, timely completion of agency documentation, and appropriate communication when extensions are needed
- Ongoing progress toward learning goals
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills that enhance clinical work and/or relationships with other students, faculty, and staff
- Consistent ability to make use of supervision, follow supervisory directions, and seek supervisory guidance when necessary
- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics in regards to confidentiality, boundaries, and appropriate workplace behavior
- Sufficient Practicum Education hours/attendance
- Assignments of consistently good quality that meet expectations according to the course syllabus
- Ability to demonstrate compassion, empathy, integrity, respect for others; cultural humility; and to adhere to the Simmons SSW Standards of Professional Practice.

Criteria for Determining Marginal Pass or Fail Grades in Practicum Education	
Marginal Pass (MP)	**Fail (F)**

Engagement and Performance of Duties	
Unprofessional behavior includes but is not limited to excessive absences, tardiness, not informing appropriate agency personnel of absences, inadequate communication with supervisors about clinical work (including non-completion of Process Recordings as required), lateness with paperwork, inadequate documentation, etc.	**Unethical** behavior (including but not limited to violations of NASW Code of Ethics, Standards for Professional Practice, or Simmons Code of Conduct), or if unprofessional behavior is discussed with the student and the students' behavior fails to adhere to professional standards If a student stops attending placement (without Practicum Instructor and Practicum Education Department approval) If a student does not complete any of the work associated with the course
Learning Goals	
Insufficient progress toward learning goals, as documented in the evaluation	Insufficient progress toward more than half of the student's learning goals, as documented in the evaluation
Communication	
Consistently problematic communication and interpersonal skills that negatively affect clinical work and/or relationships with other students, faculty, and staff. Students may have made efforts to resolve these issues, but there is additional improvement needed to demonstrate the student's advancement in Competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior. The Practicum Instructor, Practicum Liaison, and Practicum Education Department contact are in agreement that the student demonstrates the potential to improve with additional supports. Includes, but is not limited to, inadequate or inappropriate communication with supervisors about clinical work.	Consistently problematic communication and interpersonal skills that negatively affect clinical work and/or the student's or university's relationships with other students, faculty, and staff. Depending upon the timing and nature of the behaviors, students have been made aware of problematic communication patterns and interpersonal skills and have made no effort to resolve these issues, as determined by the Practicum Liaison and/or Practicum Education Department. Fail is appropriate for instances when the Practicum Instructor, Practicum Liaison, and/or Practicum Education Department contact expressed concerns that the student's communication patterns and interpersonal skills may contribute to harm of clients or others in the professional setting.
Supervision	
Consistent inability to make use of supervision (including, but not limited to, repeated difficulty	Consistent inability to make use of supervision (including, but not limited to, repeated difficulty

in following supervisory directions, and failure to seek supervisory guidance when necessary), and student has attended supervision only 4-6 times over the course of the term, has less actively participated in supervision, and has presented challenges taking feedback from supervisor.	in following supervisory directions, and failure to seek supervisory guidance when necessary), and student has attended supervision 3 or fewer times over the course of the term, has not actively participated in supervision, or argues about supervisor feedback, delays implementation or application of supervisor feedback, only partially applies supervisor feedback, or complains to co-workers about supervisor feedback.
Codes of Ethics, Professional Practice, and Conduct	
Violation(s) of the NASW Code of Ethics, Simmons School of Social Work Standards for Professional Practice, and/or Simmons University Code of Conduct.	Severe (as determined by the University) and/or repeated violations of the NASW Code of Ethics, Simmons School of Social Work Standards for Professional Practice, and/or Simmons University Code of Conduct, including, but not limited to, instances where the student has been told to cease the conduct in question but continues to engage in the some or all of the conduct or engages in different conduct that further violates the Standards for Codes.

Incomplete: Practicum may be extended beyond the standard deadline with Director of Practicum Education or MSW Program Director approval.

*A Marginal Pass or Fail is assigned at the discretion of the Director of Practicum Education according to the specific nature of circumstances and the capacity of the student to reflect on, and correct, the situation.

CONSEQUENCES OF MARGINAL PASS OR FAIL IN PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

- Students who receive a **Marginal Pass** at the end of any semester of practicum will have a Level 2 Review, engage in a performance improvement planning conference, and will be placed *on academic probation.* This **may** result in the student being asked to complete additional time in the practicum at their own expense.
- A student who is asked to complete extended time in the practicum for learning and performance needs may be required to register for an additional semester or year of placement at the student's expense. A passing grade will be required to move on in the program.
- Students who receive two marginal passes in practicum **will be dismissed** from the program.
- **Students will be given only one opportunity to extend a placement for performance reasons.**
- Specialized and Advanced Standing students should anticipate that a grade of marginal pass in practicum would impact their graduation date.
- **A grade of F in any semester, or two MPs in practicum, will result in dismissal from the program.**
- **Candidates in the MSW with SSW/SAC are required to earn a grade of "pass" in SW446B and**

SW447B in order to be recommended for licensure through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). See School Licensure Program handbook for more detailed information and program requirements.

The decision to grant the student an extended or repeated year of placement is predicated on: 1) the Practicum Education Department's confidence in the student's ability to function in the professional role and; 2) a performance evaluation that demonstrates the student's ability to make progress towards the required competencies.

Continuation in classes after a student receives a MP in the practicum should be carefully considered and discussed with the Practicum Liaison **(continuation in classes is not an implicit guarantee that a student will graduate from the MSW program)**.

The grievance of a grade in Practicum Education would be made in the same manner as any other grade grievance in the SSW. Please refer to the Student Handbook for further information on this process.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PRACTICUM

To withdraw from practicum after the add/drop period, students must receive approval from the Practicum Liaison and the Director of Practicum Education. Withdrawal from practicum may necessitate withdrawal from the accompanying practice class (SW421 or SW424) as it is required that they be taken simultaneously. Students who withdraw during the semester will be required to repeat the entire semester. Students' transcripts will show a "W" grade (for "withdrawn") if a student withdraws from practicum after the 4th week, and up to the end of the 8th week. No withdrawals are permitted after week eight; the instructor will then record the grade earned until that point.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION IN PLACEMENT

There may be occasions when students have concerns about aspects of their placement (e.g. amount of supervision, agency policies or number of clients). Alternately, agencies may identify concerns about a student's functioning or performance in the agency. The School requests that the student or Practicum Instructor notify the Practicum Liaison promptly regarding any concerns that arise. Following this initial contact, a **Level 1 Review** involving the appropriate parties (Practicum Liaison, student, and Practicum Instructor) will be held to assess and locate areas of difficulty. Plans are generally made to alleviate or resolve problems by carefully designed and monitored strategies. The outcome of a Level 1 Review to address student performance concerns will include a Performance Improvement Plan (Appendix C), written by the Practicum Liaison, with copies distributed to the student and Practicum Instructor. Goals set forth will be reviewed per the designated timeline. The Liaison and Practicum Instructor will remain in close communication with each other and the student throughout this process.

If it is deemed that the student is not making adequate progress at a follow-up meeting, a Level 2 Review will be held, facilitated by the Associate Director of Practicum Education or the Assistant Director of Practicum Education. The Performance Improvement Plan will be reviewed along with any additional concerns and progress noted by the student, liaison and Practicum Instructor. An additional plan of action will be determined at this point and potential replacement will be considered. **Please note that any review meetings Level 2 review will be held if the student fails to attend without notice. In such a case, the Performance Improvement Plan will be developed by those in attendance.**

If the nature of the concerns necessitates, the MSW Director will be consulted to determine the need for a Level 3 Review. This may include circumstances in which a student is dismissed from placement due to a violation of the Standards for Professional Practice, agency policy, Simmons policy, the NASW Code of Ethics, or the Practicum Instructor's direction in such a way that the safety and well-being of clients or the community is put at risk.

Please refer to the **MSW Student Handbook** for further information about the review process.

TERMINATION OF A PLACEMENT

If attempts to resolve the problem fail, it may be determined that a student can no longer remain at the current placement. If this occurs, at the discretion of the Director of Practicum Education, there are several possible outcomes:

a) The student may be placed in a different agency.
b) The student may be asked to extend the required practicum hours.
c) The student may receive a Marginal Pass or an Incomplete at the end of the semester and be required to complete an additional semester of practicum and obtain a passing grade to continue (see **Grades in Practicum**).
d) The student may be asked to take a leave of absence from Practicum Education or from the MSW program (see **MSW Student Handbook** for LOA Policy).
e) The student may receive a failing grade ("F") and be dismissed from the program.

STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR CHANGE OF PLACEMENT

On rare occasions, a student requests a change of placement. Such requests must be made to the Practicum Liaison who will then consult with the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education. **Students cannot leave an agency without first speaking with their Practicum Liaison (or a member of the Practicum Education Department) and engaging in a problem resolution process, which would include a meeting with all relevant School and agency representatives to develop a plan. The following process below must be followed**:

a) Contact the Practicum Liaison
b) The Practicum Liaison will assess the situation and recommend a plan after conferring with the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education, with the goal of resolving the problem(s)
c) If placement in a different setting is deemed necessary or appropriate, it is expected that an appropriate termination process will be planned for all clients and that a professional way of bringing closure with the agency will be followed

A student who prematurely ends a practicum, without approval of the Director of Practicum Education, risks receiving a failing grade or being referred to the Academic Standards Committee (see Policy Handbook).

All placement disruptions will be assessed to determine the extent to which the need for a replacement is due to agency or supervision issues and/or student performance issues.

If it is determined that the student will return to practicum, the Practicum Education Department will do its best

to locate an alternate placement as quickly as possible. *Please note, the ability to secure an alternate placement is impacted by many factors, most importantly the availability of an appropriate match for the student.* Therefore, this process may take some time, and in some situations may necessitate a leave from practicum. An extended separation from practicum may necessitate withdrawal from the concurrent practice class. This will be determined at the discretion of the Director of Practicum Education in collaboration with the MSW Director.

Students replaced on or after October 12, 2024 for any reason must expect to complete a minimum of 3 additional weeks in the practicum to account for time needed to orient to a new placement setting, develop a new Learning Plan, and engage new clients. This is in addition to time owed to complete the total number of practicum hours (see **Practicum Work Hours**). There may be circumstances that necessitate a student add even more time, either to address the student's learning needs or to meet agency needs.

Students should be aware that any placement disruption or replacement could have the effect of delaying graduation date. Alternate graduation dates include August, October, and January.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM PRACTICUM

Students who are on a leave from practicum (mandatory, conditional, voluntary) will be asked to meet with the Director of Practicum Education and provide relevant documentation prior to approval for returning to practicum. Please see the **MSW Policy Handbook** for additional information pertaining to leave of absence policies.

PRACTICUM ADVISING

The School of Social Work is committed to maintaining a large Practicum Education Department consisting of both full and part-time faculty. **Practicum Faculty serve as advisors to students in the practicum and support professional goal setting.** Additional assistance with course sequencing, program requirements, access to available supports, course registration, change in status, choice of specializations, and routine dropping of a class is provided through the Office of Academic Advising.

The Director of Practicum Education administers the department. The Director, Assistant Directors, and Practicum Specialists are experienced social workers and are assigned to the Practicum Education Department full-time. A full-time workload includes advising students, being a liaison to practicum agencies, placement planning, teaching seminars for new Practicum Instructors, orientation for students entering practicum, development of new placement sites, program planning, and other administrative responsibilities. Adjunct faculty members are an integral part of the Department and are usually assigned fifteen advisees.

ROLE OF PRACTICUM LIAISON (PL)

The purpose of advising is to help the student integrate and optimize learning experiences in <u>practicum</u> and to facilitate the mastery of social work practice. The Practicum Liaison (PL) is responsible for collaborating with the Practicum Instructor, and the agency training director in evaluating student progress and learning and, when necessary, serves as a mediator in problem situations.

In the role of PL, the Practicum Faculty member monitors and evaluates the educational process, supports and mentor's students on their practice and professional development, and provides support to agencies in the form

of consultation, mediation, advocacy, problem solving, and negotiation.

The Practicum Liaison role includes:
- Assessment of agency viability;
- Involvement in the replacement process if necessary;
- Assurance of adequate caseload and other learning experiences in the practicum;
- Collaboration with the Practicum Instructor in the development of an individualized learning plan;
- Provision of liaison services between School and agency;
- Consultation around practicum related problems;
- Recommending the student's practicum grades

Early in the year, the PL meets the student in order to get acquainted with the student's background, learning style, and learning needs, as well as to explain the liaison role and the ways in which the student can access practicum advising resources. The Liaison arranges individual and/or group meetings throughout the year in response to student needs and interests. *Students should initiate a meeting with their liaison around any questions or concerns.*

To the extent possible, the PL remains assigned to the same agency from year to year in order to be knowledgeable about the agency and to maintain close working relationships with agency staff. The Director and Practicum Faculty establish strong partnerships with administrators and Practicum Instructors who work collaboratively on behalf of student learning and professional development. Students typically transition to a new liaison/advisor each year.

The academic advising relationship is a collaborative one. Students are expected to initiate contact with their liaison when they need assistance and to respond to outreach from their liaison in a timely fashion.

Students should:
- Let their liaison know immediately if problems arise. Sharing as much as one can about circumstances will enable the liaison to be more helpful.
- Respond promptly to emails and phone calls from the liaison.
- Attend and come prepared for all scheduled practicum advising meetings.

ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER

The School's Academic Advising Center is available to all SSW students. The Center is a resource for general academic questions, concerns about course selection or sequencing, or for students who are encountering academic concerns and seeking support (after first consulting with the student's Liaison). The Associate Director of Student Support will assess the situation and may refer students to a number of resources including the Writing Center or the Center for Academic Achievement. Some students may be referred for tutoring at the discretion of the Associate Director of Student Support.

STUDENT PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

The University carries a blanket insurance policy with the United Educators. The policy covers each student in practicum. The limits of liability are $1,000,000 for each claim and $3,000,000 aggregate. If you wish to receive a copy of our policy, please contact the Practicum Education Department at 617-521-3943 or

[sswogpracticum@simmons.edu.](mailto:sswogpracticum@simmons.edu)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY, ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES, ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Simmons University's Sexual Harassment Policy, information relating to Accessibility Services and Academic Integrity, the Student Code of Conduct, and other policies can be found here: https://internal.simmons.edu/students/academics/syllabus-policies

PRACTICUM EDUCATION RESOURCES

Practicum Education Resources
https://internal.simmons.edu/students/academics/ssw/msw-students/practicum-education/resources

The Practicum Education Resources webpage contains forms and resources, including:
- Practicum Education Calendar
- Syllabi
- Competencies and Practice Behaviors
- 2022 EPAS Learning Activity Examples
- Process Recording Templates
- Employment-Based Placement Application

Tevera
https://simmons.tevera.app/#/logon

Tevera is the online placement platform to capture all aspects of the student's practicum experience, including:
- Written assignments
- Process Recordings
- Learning Plans
- Evaluations
- Tracking Student Hours

APPENDIX A: PRACTICUM EDUCATION CALENDAR

**Simmons School of Social Work
Practicum Education Calendar - MSW On Ground Program
2024-2025**

August	
14	Practicum Instructor Orientation - 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
28	Practicum Orientation - 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm **Mandatory (Year I & Advanced Standing Students only)**

September	
3	Practicum starts (**Year II** and **Advanced Standing**)
9	Practicum starts **(Year I)**

October	
4	Due: Learning Plan **(Year II)** Due: Learning Plan **(Advanced Standing)**
11	Due: Learning Plan **(Year I)**

November	
1	Due: Fall Student Progress Report
11	HOLIDAY - Veteran's Day*
27 - 29	HOLIDAY - Thanksgiving Recess: Students are entitled to the Thanksgiving Recess from their Practicum

December	
6	Due: Mid-Year Evaluation (All Students)
13	Practicum ends for the Fall Semester (All Students)
23	HOLIDAY - Winter Break: University is closed December 23 - Jan 3

January	
6	Practicum resumes (**Year I**, **Year II**, & **Advanced Standing**) Practicum starts **(Accelerated)**
20	HOLIDAY - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*

February	
7	**Due: Learning Plan (Accelerated)**
28	**Due: Spring Student Progress Report (Advanced Standing and Year I & Year II 24 hour students only)**

March	
3 - 7	**Spring Break***
10	**Practicum resumes after Spring Break (All Students)**

April	
21	**HOLIDAY—Patriot's Day***
25	**Due: Final Evaluation (Advanced Standing and Year I & Year II 24 hour students only)** **Due: Mid-Year Evaluation (Accelerated)** **Due: Spring Student Progress Report (16 hour students) *16 hour students do not turn in their Final Evaluation until July**

May	
2	**Practicum ends for the Spring Semester (Advanced Standing, Accelerated, and Year I & Year II 24 hour students only)** (unless otherwise determined with the placement and approved by the Practicum Education Department)
12	**Summer Practicum Placements resume (see below)****
16	**Commencement**
26	**HOLIDAY – Memorial Day***

June	
19	**HOLIDAY–Juneteenth***

July	
4	**HOLIDAY—Independence Day***
25	**Due: Final Evaluation (Accelerated and 16 hour students)**

August	
8^	**Practicum ends (Accelerated and 16 hour students)**

*Individual arrangements with agencies may be necessary to prevent interruption of client services during holidays and recesses.

- o Public school & other school placements follow the agency calendar; please consult Practicum Instructor for variations in placement dates.
- o For holidays that occur on Practicum days, students will follow the agency schedule.
- o See Manual for policy on religious holidays.

Students and Practicum Liaisons should schedule individual advising meetings during September and as needed throughout the year. Practicum Liaisons should schedule site visits with the students and Practicum Instructors for at least once each semester.

**Students in Placements Over the Summer (Accelerated and 16 hour students)
Accelerated and 16 hours per week students are entitled to a week off from May 2 – May 12, between the end of Spring session and the beginning of Summer session. The week may be negotiated between the agency & student to minimize disruption to services delivered to clients (this does not pertain to students placed in school settings).

^Summer dates have not yet been confirmed by the registrar (as of 7/31/24). These dates may be subject to change.

The 2024-2025 calendar is subject to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or other circumstances.

APPENDIX B: PROCESS RECORDING OUTLINES

PROCESS RECORDING OUTLINE - INDIVIDUAL

Session #: _____ **Student's Name:** _____ **Date**: _____

Agency/Department: _____ **Supervisor Completing Observation:** _____

Introduction:
Include who participated in the session, the setting (office, home visit, phone, etc.), general impressions of client's appearance and behavior, and purpose for the meeting. (Please disguise client name and identifying information.)

Student Learning Goals:
Identify 1-2 learning goals for the session, for example, explore affect, ask open-ended questions, intervene using a cognitive behavioral approach, etc.

Recording of Interview:
Text in gray below is there to guide you as you fill in your process recording. You may delete that information after you know what is expected in each area. This section should be at least 4 pages.

Student – Client Interaction Dialogue	Self-Reflection/ Rationale for Intervention	Reflection on Diversity	Supervisor's Observations

(Beginning students should record all interactions, verbal and non-verbal. As the first year progresses students will become more selective and develop better recall of the interview and key interactions and use of words. By the end of the first year and in second year, the recordings should take less time and will focus on learning goals like diagnostic assessments, sitting with or pursuing affect, beginnings or endings, listening skills, etc.)	(Students share their affective and cognitive reflections about the client, the interview, and the student's use of self. This is a place to critique one's work and progress in mastering interviewing skills, planned interventions, self-awareness of countertransference feelings,) and integration of theory with observations. (Rationale for intervention: includes application of theory, reasons for choosing a particular intervention, use of evidence informed practice.)	(Use this section to reflect on different aspects of diversity (i.e. race/ethnicity, class, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.) What instances during the interview/interaction did your race/ethnicity come to influence the conversation or your choice of intervention? How does power, privilege, and/or intersectionality play a role in your interactions? What elements of your client's experience are different from yours? Highlight how intersectionality, power, and privilege influence your client's behavior, choices or current state. How did you engage in dialogue with the client about these aspects?	(Supervisor's comments should be constructive and supportive. May include modeling of different ways to phrase questions or intervene.)

Impressions:

What are your impressions about how you handled the interview? What are your thoughts about your client's progress? How do you understand your role?

Reflection on Policy, Research, and Ethics:

Choose one of the following topics to reflect on for this session. Over the course of the semester, please reflect on each of the topics.
1. What specific public policies are currently impacting your client and how? How do they affect your work with the client?
2. What data, research, or evaluation tools might be helpful in growing your work with this client?
3. What ethical dilemmas have arisen in this clinical situation and what questions do you have?

Plan:

What is the plan for future sessions?

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Questions for Supervision:

Which aspects of the interview would you like feedback on? What questions do you have for your Practicum Instructor?

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PROCESS RECORDING OUTLINE FOR GROUP OR FAMILY SESSION

Student's Name: _____   **Date**: _____

Agency/Department: _____   **Supervisor Completing Observation:** _____

Group Name: _____   **Session #:**_____

Group Facilitator(s): _____

Instructions:

Complete Section I: A two-page Process Recording on a portion of a group or family session. *(Please disguise client name and identifying information.)*
Complete Section II: Reflections on additional aspects of the group or family session.

Section I. Group or Family Session Dialogue Process Recording

Student – Client Interaction Dialogue	Self-Reflection/ Rationale for Intervention	Reflection on Diversity	Supervisor's Observations
(Beginning students should record all interactions, verbal and non-verbal. As the first year progresses students will become more selective and develop better recall of the interview and key interactions and use of words. By the end of the first year and in second year, the recordings should take less time and will focus on learning goals like diagnostic assessments, sitting with or pursuing affect, beginnings or endings, listening skills, etc.)	*(Students share their affective and cognitive reflections about the group or family session, the interview, and the student's use of self. This is a place to critique one's work and progress in mastering interviewing skills, planned interventions, self-awareness of countertransference feelings, and integration of theory with observations.)* *(Rationale for intervention: includes application of theory, reasons for choosing a particular intervention, use of evidence informed practice.)*	*(Use this section to reflect on different aspects of diversity (i.e. race/ethnicity, age, class, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.)* *What instances during the interview/interaction did your race/ethnicity come to influence the conversation or your choice of intervention?* *How does power, privilege, and/or intersectionality play a role in your interactions?* *What elements of your client's experience are different from yours?* *Highlight how intersectionality, power, and privilege influence your client's behavior, choices or current state.* *How did you engage in dialogue with the client about these aspects?*	*(Supervisor's comments should be constructive and supportive. May include modeling of different ways to phrase questions or intervene.)*

Section II. Reflections

Purpose of the group/family session

[blank text box]

Who was present in the group? If the seating arrangement was relevant to the group process, please explain, including facilitator/co-facilitators' positioning. Was the group virtual or in-person?

[blank text box]

Briefly describe what happened in the session (key issues, themes, flow of the session)

[blank text box]

In what ways were family or group members included in the conversation? How were you responsive to both content and process (what was being said), (affect, non-verbal communication, what seemed under the surface)?

[blank text box]

Describe the different roles that group members took on during the session.

[blank text box]

Discuss some of the interventions you and others used or you observed in the group/session?

[blank text box]

What data, research, or evaluation tools might be helpful in growing your work with this group?

Plans for the next session

What other questions, thoughts, concerns about facilitation/co-facilitation, did this group/session raise for supervision or class?

PROCESS RECORDING FOR LARGER SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS

Student's Name: _____ **Date**: _____

Agency/Department: _____ **Supervisor Completing Observation:** _____

Use this form to reflect on student's involvement in systemic approach/intervention dealing with the following:

1) Organizational conflict(s)
2) Community issue(s)
3) Policy challenge(s)

What is the presenting issue needing to be addressed? What is the larger system's goal?

For example:

Issue*: "Address the health disparities amongst the underserved Latino immigrant community in the inner city dealing with homelessness, access to affordable health insurance, language and cultural barriers."*

Goal*: "Improve the community health outcomes of Latino immigrants in the inner city."*

Objectives of activity in relationship to goal –

For example:

"Conduct community needs assessment to gather data on the needs of community members and analyze specific social determinants of health."

Description of activity/event –

Include other relevant information about context, identifying key stakeholders.

For example:

"Meet with community members and leaders to discuss the need for a community needs assessment to target specific social determinants of health amongst the immigrant Latino community. Key stakeholders would include community members, interpreters, community health workers, and local school staff."

Content –

What interactions occurred, roles of participants [including yourself], use of leadership roles. *(Please disguise client name and identifying information.)*

For example:

"Community members attended a community meeting to discuss the need for more bilingual and culturally sensitive community health center personnel including physicians, nurses and social workers available to assist patients at the local health center. Community health center staff discussed the limited funding to hire more trained bilingual staff and physicians. Immigrant Latino community members discussed their distrust in the health system due to language and cultural barriers, as well as not having access to affordable health insurance. Student interns helped facilitate the meeting, though at times, input from community members was not completely gathered as there was no translation available."

Dynamics of power and difference –

Whose voice was most heard throughout the interaction? Whose voice was overshadowed or missing? What did the interaction highlight about the dynamics of the participant's race, gender privilege, and difference?

For example:

"Community members who did not speak English did not speak up directly during the meeting. Instead, they used family members to interpret to voice their concerns. Community health leaders dominated the conversations and were oftentimes caught up in medical jargon and budgeting financial constraints related to the request for additional funding for community health workers, bilingual and culturally trained physicians and social workers. It is important to note the racial divide of the predominant white staff of the health center and the black and brown immigrant Latino community members."

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Analysis/Assessment –

Were objectives achieved? What factors contributed to a positive outcome? Which ones made it difficult to achieve objectives?

Assess student's role in activity, impact of activity, achievement of goals and analysis of improvement for future activities and or goals.

For example:

"Language and cultural barriers made it difficult to obtain the input from community members. To further improve the next community meeting, a more structured and specific agenda can be created to help community members understand the needs and purpose for a community needs assessment with the overall goal of achieving better health outcomes for the community."

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Clinical Connections –

What individual/group clinical skills are useful in this context? How might a clinical analysis of the interactions provide additional insight and support for your work?

For example:

"Reflecting on the history of trauma in this community, many individuals may still feel hesitant to participate in systemic work. This may lead to further isolation and the potential for the continuation of harm if the root cause of the issue is not addressed."

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Plans –

What needs to happen for continued success or forward movement of the activity?

For example:

"For the next community meeting, it is important to have translation services available in order to provide culturally sensitive interpretation to better gather vital data from active community participants."

Questions for Supervision –

Which aspects of the activity would you like feedback on? What questions do you have for your Practicum Instructor?

For example:

"What research is available regarding the most effective implementation of a community needs assessment for inner city Latino immigrant communities, in particular?"

APPENDIX C: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(This should be completed collaboratively by the Practicum Liaison, Practicum Instructor, and the Student)

I. Identify the specific objectives and goals for each area of improvement, including suggested supports, plan for improvement, and strategies to meet each objective/goal:

Current area in need of improvement	Improvement Goal (*be specific*)	Specific Activities to meet Goals	Role of Student, Instructor, and Liaison in achieving this goal	Timeline for improvement goals	Additional Suggested Supports

APPENDIX D: EMPLOYMENT-BASED PLACEMENT APPLICATION

Overview of Employment-Based Placement

An employment-based practicum is an internship at your place of employment where there are designated hours for your internship separate from your hours of employment. The placement must offer different learning opportunities, and also a different supervisor who is designated for practicum learning purposes only. Practicum Education is a fundamental component of social work education; it provides the opportunity to integrate classroom knowledge and practice. It is very important that an employment-based placement not be viewed as a job but as a learning experience providing a setting for the acquisition of knowledge and skills and a professional social work identity. **A placement arranged in the student's employing organization is the exception rather than the norm.** Employment-based placements allow students to complete a required internship while remaining employed.

What is the process for getting an employment-based placement approved?

These placements are approved when it is determined that new knowledge and skills can be achieved in the student's workplace. Arrangement and approval of employment-based placements require the participation of the student/employee, job supervisor, an agency administrator, potential Practicum Instructor and the Practicum Education Department. Extra attention is necessary to assure that the planned placement meets all of the school's requirements and learning objectives and does not duplicate current job tasks and responsibilities.

The student/employee must be allowed the time and opportunity to become involved in discrete learning activities with specific learning objectives, which are related to the school's learning objectives. Structural changes will likely be necessary to protect the learning environment from employment demands. For example, a student may be an employee for two days and a student for three days. The student must have a qualified Practicum Instructor who meets all of the criteria of the school and is not the student's current supervisor.

Who can serve as a Practicum Instructor?

The Practicum Instructor must have an LICSW, and must have completed (or be willing to register for) the Seminar in Practicum Instruction (SIPI) supervision seminar offered by the School. On occasion, if an LICSW is not available, other licenses may be considered if approved by the Practicum Education Department. Discuss with your Practicum Faculty member in advance of submitting the application. They must also agree to supervise the student for one hour a week and review weekly Process Recordings, complete Evaluations, and participate in site visits. The Practicum Instructor cannot be the student's job supervisor. If the agency does not have a qualified Practicum Instructor on staff they may look to other qualified social workers associated with the agency such as contract staff, volunteers, or board members. If an off-site supervisor is selected, the student should have an on-site task supervisor who, again, is not the supervisor for the employment portion of the experience.

What are the benefits of an employment-based placement?

Because the student/employee already knows and is oriented to the agency, the learning curve may not be as steep at the start of placement. The student /employee brings new learning back to the agency from the school which can enhance agency practice. The agency demonstrates commitment to professional development and retains a quality employee and protects its investment in the employee.

What are the challenges of an employment-based placement?

It can be difficult to maintain the separation of student and employee roles. It can be challenging for the student, and fellow staff, to navigate the shifting roles the student/employee occupies. A disruption in a student's job may also disrupt placement and vice versa.

What are the optimal conditions for an employment-based placement?

The most successful employment-based placements are in agencies that are supportive of social work education and workforce development, and large enough to accommodate the student's/employee's current job and a different setting for their placement. Employment-based placements work best when the agency is committed to retaining the student and the student has been employed in the agency for a significant length of time (preferably more than 2 years) and has demonstrated a commitment to the agency.

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APPLICATION INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYMENT-BASED PLACEMENT
AGENCY AGREEMENT AY'2024-2025

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Application Process

Students must meet with a member of the Practicum Faculty ("Faculty Placement Advisor" or FPA) during the placement process to discuss the feasibility of an employment-based practicum. Once discussed, the student will email the completed application to their FPA by the due dates outlined. Students should include a copy of the proposed Practicum Instructor's resume with the application. Or, students should request the proposed Practicum Instructor email the resume directly to the student's FPA.

Application Checklist
Before proceeding, students must review the following checklist for eligibility.

1. ☐ Students must be in both good academic standing and with the employing organization. The student should not be a probationary employee or the subject of disciplinary action within the agency.

   ☐ The identified Practicum Instructor must be an LICSW* who is not currently the employee supervisor for the student and has not previously supervised the student. The Practicum Instructor must complete and submit the Practicum Instructor Profile online.
   > *On occasion, if an LICSW is not available, other licenses may be considered if approved by the Practicum Education Department. Discuss with your FPA in advance of submitting the application.

2. ☐ The Practicum Instructor must agree to provide a minimum of 1 hour of individual supervision each week. The practicum instruction must have an educational focus and incorporate Process Recordings as a learning tool. Group supervision is encouraged; however, it cannot replace the required one hour of clinical supervision/practicum instruction.

3. ☐ The Practicum Instructor should attend an Orientation offered by the Simmons University School of Social Work in August. If not previously completed, the Practicum Instructor must also participate in a Seminar in Practicum instruction (SIPI) series during the upcoming academic year and download and review the Simmons Campus Based Practicum Education Manual.

4. □ The student must be assigned to a different department or program from student's job and have the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in new methods, modalities, interventions, and populations. The student cannot provide the same services to the same clients that they are serving in the role of employee and the role of intern during the internship.

5. □ The student's educational goals should be the primary focus of the internship position.

6. □ Only one employment-based practicum is allowed unless the student is a participant in an approved Simmons Educational partnership or has had prior approval from the Practicum Education Department.

_____

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT-BASED PLACEMENT

DUE DATES:

- March of the prior academic year: Deadline for Specialized Year (YR II) applicants
- June of the prior academic year: Deadline for Generalist Year (YR I) applicants

(For example, for practicum during the 2024-2025 academic year, the deadline would be during the spring semester of the 2023-2024 academic year, in March and June 2024, respectively).

Students should submit the completed application to their FPA.

The proposed Practicum Instructor must complete the [Practicum Instructor Profile form](#) embedded on the Practicum Education Department website in order to finalize this application.

<u>APPLICATION WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR APPROVAL UNTIL IT IS COMPLETED IN FULL</u>

Student Name: _____

Employer: _____

Employer Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Agency Website: _____

Simmons Email: _____

CURRENT JOB: _____

How long have you been employed by this organization? _____

Have you satisfied your probationary period? _____

If applicable describe other positions held in this organization:

Briefly describe your current work duties below: Identify current title/position population served and interventions utilized.

CURRENT WORK SUPERVISOR
Name: _____
Title: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Unit Name: _____

NAME OF PROPOSED PRACTICUM AND NAME OF PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT:

_____
Physical Address: _____

Specify how proposed internship activities will differ from current/regular work responsibilities. Be specific when responding to the following prompts.

Proposed learning activities:

Describe what different intervention methods you will utilize?

If applicable, describe how the placement will entail work with a different population:

Who will be providing practicum instruction/supervision for the proposed internship?

Is the proposed Practicum Instructor a different supervisor than the work supervisor?
□ Yes
□ No

PROPOSED PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR
Name: _____
Unit/Program Name: _____
Title: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____
School and year MSW earned: _____
Does the Proposed Practicum Instructor have an LICSW?

☐Yes (LICSW #: _____)
☐ No:
If no, when do you plan to take the examination?

Does the Proposed Practicum Instructor have additional certifications/licenses? (e.g.LCSW, SAC, etc.)

Has the Proposed Practicum Instructor completed a Seminar in Practicum Instruction (SIPI) for new Practicum Instructors?
☐Yes (Name of school and year: _____)
☐No

Note:
Practicum Instructor is required to submit the [Practicum Instructor Profile](#) form, which includes a spot to upload a resume.

PROPOSED WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

Specify planned hours in placement, work, and classes at Simmons University. Complete each section with specific times/hours, a check mark is not sufficient.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Placement							
Work							
Classes							

* Typical placements start in September and end in May.
- Year I placement days are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday for a total of 24 hours.
- Year II placement days are Monday and Thursday plus a 3rd day (excluding Tuesday) for a total of 24 hours.

* Some students request a 16 hour/week placement. These placements start in September and end mid-August.

PLACEMENT HOURS WILL BE (CHECK THE OPTION BELOW):

☐ Paid by the agency/employer
☐ Over and above paid hours
☐ A combination of paid/unpaid time

EMPLOYMENT-BASED PRACTICUM AGENCY AGREEMENT
(To be reviewed and signed by all parties)

We have discussed the use of (Agency and Department/Unit)
_____for (Student/Employee)
_____as a Simmons School of Social Work
practicum site during the 2024-2025 academic year. We agree that it is a feasible plan for this student/employee to complete an employment-based placement. The student will be released from regular work duties for 24-hrs/week, September-May (or 16-hrs/week; September-August, if approved) to fully attend to the internship. The student's internship time will focus on learning, not on the work demands of the agency. The Practicum Instructor/supervisor will be allowed adequate time to: attend to the student's supervision; attend the Orientation to Practicum Instruction at Simmons University School of Social Work; attend a Seminar in Practicum Instruction series (if needed); and other internship-related matters. The School's expectations can be met within this agency (for details, please refer to the attached Policy for Employment-Based Placement and the Practicum Education Manual.)

<u>REQUIRED SIGNATURES:</u>

Agency/Program Director Signature: _____   Date: _____
Print name of Agency Director: _____
Email: _____
Phone _____

Student's Current Work Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____
Print Name of Current Work Supervisor: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Student's Proposed Practicum Instructor Signature: _____   Date: _____
Print name of Proposed Practicum Instructor: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Simmons Practicum Faculty Member Signature: _____
Print Name: _____
Date Approved: _____

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Practicum Faculty member you are working with, or the On Ground Practicum Education Department at sswogpracticum@simmons.edu or 617-521-3943.