

Partners in Practicum Roles and Responsibilities

Students/Interns

Student interns are those who meet the requisites established by the MSW Program for practicum education enrollment. Students must have completed the process for the practicum placement, provided a signed Understanding of Practicum Placement Agreement, and registered at the appropriate session. Some of the responsibilities of the student interns include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Follow the School of Social Work's guidelines and process for placement.
- ✓ Behavior in placement and in the community should be in accordance with the social work profession's standards of ethical performance (See Appendix P – NASW Code of Ethics)
- ✓ Close observance of and adherence to agency policies and procedures, including but not limited to dress code and notification of absences. Therefore, interns should become familiar with agency policies and procedures as soon as possible.
- ✓ Maintain agency standards and practice guidelines, including respect for clients' confidentiality, follow-up, and reporting laws.
- ✓ Be pro-active in their role as learners: identify learning needs and seek to meet them; ask questions and seek answers.
- ✓ Complete all assignments on time.
- ✓ Be open to constructive feedback.
- ✓ Share concerns/issues/questions promptly with the practicum instructor, task supervisors, and/or faculty practicum liaison.
- ✓ If asked, complete and submit process recordings or journals on time.
- ✓ Be self-reflective; take time to process feelings, thoughts, and actions.
- ✓ Attend and actively participate in the Integrative Practicum Placement Seminar.
- ✓ Attendance and participation are a major requirement of the practicum education course. Students must complete the minimum number of clock hours on a weekly basis as stated in the Educational Agreement.
 - Although each agency may have their own attendance log and procedures, students are required to complete the official log of hours and activities that will be provided at the Practicum Education Orientation. These logs would be completed in our Experiential Learning Cloud (Tevera) portal.

- Be on time for placement, practicum orientations, and practicum seminars.

Practicum Instructors (2 years post-graduate experience)

The Practicum Instructor is a community person who meets the selection criteria discussed further below in this handbook. The practicum instructors voluntarily serve as teachers, role models, evaluators, mentors, and supervisors for students in practicum. The practicum instructor may elicit the assistance of other professional staff within the agency, known as Task Supervisors, to help students learn specific tasks, e.g., intake, staffing, recording, procedures, etc.; however, the practicum instructor has the overall responsibility for planning, monitoring, and evaluating the student's learning. Some of the responsibilities of the Practicum Instructors are as follows:

- ✓ Provide workspace, equipment, and materials to interns.
- ✓ Introduce interns to the agency and staff.
- ✓ Provide or make arrangements for orientation regarding the agency's policies and procedures within the first two weeks of field placement. They should also provide orientation regarding the organizational structure, functions of the agency and the student's unit, client referral, and funding sources
- ✓ Work with students on developing an educational agreement that includes planning and evaluation of activities throughout practicum placement.
- ✓ Be available to evaluate the student's accomplishment of tasks and provide constructive feedback on a regular basis.
- ✓ Deliver a minimum of one hour per week of private one-on-one professional feedback and direction to the student regarding performance in order to enhance the student's learning experience.
 - The following are seen as key elements for effective supervision:
 - Reciprocity
 - Honest feedback
 - Respect for the level of awareness that the student brings
 - Openness to conflict
 - Safety (emotional and physical)
 - Willingness to collaborate with the student
- ✓ Attend required practicum orientations and training sessions, and when possible, participate in workshops, seminars, and symposia on practicum instruction and other social work practice-related subjects.
- ✓ Offer accessibility to students, including interim or contingency plans for providing such accessibility when not available, and enforce safety procedures.

- ✓ Assist students with linking theory to practice by assuring a sufficient number and variety of cases/assignments to students at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels as much as possible within the agency context.
- ✓ Assign learning experiences in accordance with the course syllabus, students' Educational Agreement, and Competencies. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Reading/researching about the agency, relevant social policies, client populations, and needs.
 - Reviewing records and other recordings
 - Assigning primary responsibility for a caseload, group, and/or community intervention.
 - Participation with other professionals.
 - Making referrals and home visits
 - Visiting/contacting other social service agencies.
 - Keeping a professional journal.
 - Developing and discussing Process Recordings.
 - Following up on students' questions/concerns in a timely fashion.
- ✓ Maintain and promote an environment in which students are treated with respect throughout interactions in the office and the community.
- ✓ Complete mid-term and final written evaluations and meet with practicum liaison to provide feedback regarding students' performance.
- ✓ Be punctual in meeting with students for regularly scheduled practicum instruction and in meeting with the Faculty Practicum Liaison.

Task Supervisors (also referred to as Preceptor or Ancillary Practicum Supervisors/ must be a degreed professional)

At times, practicum instructors use other agency personnel to supervise social work interns. The type and quality of this ancillary supervision varies by sites. Under the direction of the practicum instructor, the ancillary practicum supervisors may take part in the following tasks:

- ✓ Provision of an additional practitioner role model/work relationship.
- ✓ Teaching a specific expertise, skill, and function.
- ✓ Meeting with the student regularly for on-the-job assistance.
- ✓ On-site task-focused supervision.
- ✓ Feedback to the student and practicum instructor regarding the assignment and work progress.
- ✓ Teaching interns how to conduct intakes.

- ✓ Delivering basic social services (information & referral).
- ✓ Teaching interns how to perform case documentation.
- ✓ Teaching the agency's policies and procedures.

Practicum Liaisons

The Faculty Practicum Liaison is a member of the social work faculty who coordinates, monitors, and evaluates the practicum education experience to ensure that conditions are present to encourage optimal learning and professional development. The faculty practicum liaison will visit with the practicum instructor and the student two to three times during the semester. The first visit usually takes place during the Practicum Education Orientation or is otherwise scheduled early in the semester. The purpose of the initial visit is to clarify expectations of the agency, the students, and the school, to identify areas for personal and professional growth, and to set goals for future placement experiences. A different faculty practicum liaison may be assigned to the student for each semester when they select to do the split placement.

The Faculty Practicum Liaison is responsible for assigning and recording the final *Pass or Fail* grade. Some other responsibilities of the Faculty Practicum Liaisons are as follows:

- ✓ Assist with the development of a Practicum Educational Agreement in order to structure the internship to address objectives, competencies, practice behaviors, and students' educational goals.
- ✓ Interpret practicum curriculum competencies to Practicum Instructors and clarify expectations regarding internship competencies and appropriate practicum experiences to students and Practicum Instructors.
- ✓ Monitor the level of supervision/instruction provided to students and the appropriateness of assignments.
- ✓ Monitor the internship through liaison visits, student and practicum instructor feedback, and faculty consultation.
- ✓ Ensure completion of Educational Agreements, Mid-Term and Final Evaluation, and bring the signed appropriate forms to the Practicum Education Office in a timely fashion.
- ✓ Mediate between the student and practicum instructor to address issues of concern that may impact the learning process and to facilitate problem-solving.
- ✓ Mediate when there's conflict in the practicum/agency and request the intervention of the Director of Practicum Education when a solution cannot be achieved at that level.
- ✓ Monitor students' progress in the practicum internships and provide alternatives for improvement in the practicum.
- ✓ Depending upon student and Practicum Instructor needs, the Faculty Practicum Liaison may assist Practicum Instructors in the identification of students' learning styles and planning learning experiences to fit this style.
- ✓ Assist Practicum Instructors in the development of supervisory and teaching skills.

- ✓ Evaluate practicum placement agencies and provide feedback to the Director of Practicum Education.

Director of Practicum Education

The Director of Practicum Education carries full responsibility for the administration of the Practicum Education Office at the UTRGV School of Social Work. Some of the responsibilities of the Director of Practicum Education are as follows:

- ✓ Coordinates and evaluates every aspect of practicum education, including but not limited to Preparation Meetings, Individual Meetings with students, Practicum Education Fairs, and Practicum Placement Orientations.
- ✓ Responsible for securing practicum placement for students and for referring students to appropriate practicum placements based on their program of study. Students' preferences and special needs will be accommodated, contingent on availability.
- ✓ Intervene only as a last resort if an issue in the practicum placement cannot be resolved by the student, practicum instructor, or practicum liaison.
- ✓ Maintains continuing evaluation of the agencies and practicum instructors
- ✓ Provides a training seminar for all Practicum Instructors designed to acquaint, instruct, and provide learning opportunities for Practicum Instruction and student learning.
- ✓ Provides Field Instructors and agencies with educational material that delineates time schedules, University and Social Work policies, and educational responsibilities.
- ✓ Identify specific educational objectives and competencies that the student must meet during their placement process.
- ✓ Design and implement an evaluation to ensure that practicum instruction objectives and competencies are being met.
- ✓ Maintains open communication and support with Practicum Liaisons.