THE FIELD EDUCATION EXPERIENCE:
UNDERGRADUATE JUNIOR STUDENTS

Objectives and Guidelines

The Junior Field Placement is our undergraduate social work student’s first exposure to agency practice and the generalist social work model. This placement takes place in the spring semester of the junior year and students are required to attend field 8 hours per week, completing 96 hours in the placement. Students may complete the 8 hours per week spread over 1 or 2 days depending on agency need and student schedule.

Learning Experiences for BSW Juniors

The scope of students’ activities will vary, depending on the setting and on their previous experience, skills and knowledge, as determined by the field instructor. As appropriate, the field instructor is encouraged to have the student observe and shadow social workers and other personnel in the agency, and then have responsibility for selected tasks/activities.

Non-client tasks:
- Review agency mission statement, organizational structure, policy and procedures manual.
- Learn about the client’s path to service.
- Identify the national, state, local policies that drive service delivery.
  
  *The above tasks will be incorporated into the agency profile paper required in SS352.*
- Use basic interviewing skills to interview agency personnel about their jobs.
- Use basic interviewing skills to determine the position of agency personnel on an issue relevant to the service provision in the agency.
- Review client records.
- Attend social work client case conferences.
- Attend social work department meetings.
- Attend at least one task or project group meeting.
- Attend a content-specific workshop related to the population your agency serves or the type of problems addressed.
- Update a community resource directory.

Client tasks:
- After training and observation, answer and field intake phone calls.
- Observe an intake. Conduct intakes later in semester if this opportunity exists within agency.
- Observe a discharge meeting. Conduct discharge meetings either with agency worker present or available, or independently, as determined by field instructor.
- Observe counseling or case management interview(s).
- Write process recording based on observation of worker’s session, or session where meet with client, or speak with client by phone.
- Accompany worker on home visits, court visits, etc.
- Observe and participate in a group, e.g.:
  - Socialization group
  - Life-skills group
  - Psycho-educational group
  - Group therapy
- Go on field visits or recreational activities with client group staffed by agency personnel.
- Where there is a residential placement or day treatment program, participate as part of the therapeutic milieu by engaging residents through:
  - Active listening and empathic responding
  - Rapport building
- Attend one or more community events sponsored by the agency.
Self Observation:

- Begin to become aware of self in relation to others. Share this with the field seminar instructor through class discussion and assignments.
- Share self-observations, as appropriate, in weekly 15-30 minutes of supervision provided by field instructor.

THE FIELD EDUCATION EXPERIENCE:
UNDERGRADUATE SENIORS & FOUNDATION YEAR MSW STUDENTS

Objectives and Guidelines

This 16 hours/week field experience, supporting what students are learning in all of their coursework, is intended to provide students with an integrated generalist social work experience. Generalist social work practice has been defined as: multi-method, multi-level, theoretically eclectic, and dual focused (private and social justice issues), with an emphasis on problem solving and empowerment.¹ Students gain experience working with multiple client systems, i.e. individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations, using a range of intervention modalities. Working with diverse populations, students are expected to work toward addressing problems of racism, sexism, homophobia and any other forms of oppression affecting the wellbeing of their clients.

In the practicum, students acquire knowledge and skills related to the social work processes, including relationship building, problem/issue/need identification, assessment, goal setting, contracting, planned change and intervention, evaluation, and termination. To broaden this traditional theory and practice framework, a risk and resilience (strengths) paradigm, culturally competent practice with diverse and at risk populations, and social work values are integrated with the social work processes.

Students learn to apply explanatory and change theories to their assessment of clients, and to assist in planning client interventions. Interns’ micro experiences directly support what they are learning in their Generalist Practice course. In addition, the weekly Field Seminar, taught by the Field Liaison, provides a forum for students to integrate social work course content and field work experience through various activities, including seminar discussion, discussion of mezzo and macro assignments, case presentations, and role plays.

Students also gain knowledge and skills related to mezzo and macro practice, supporting what they learn in the classroom. In the spring semester Generalist Practice course, students learn to assess and facilitate change in organizations and communities in an effort to improve human well-being. In social work interventions with small groups and organizations, students master theories and skills associated with group, organizational, and community interventions.

Throughout the BSW and MSW foundation curricula, issues related to social work values and ethics, diversity, social and economic justice, populations at risk, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, generalist practice, and research are examined within the context of the student’s field practicum. Consistent with social work values, all students seek to respect differences in the needs, attitudes, and behaviors of diverse populations.

Students learn to practice professional social work in a manner consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, including the ability to identity and analyze the difference between professional and personal values, and how these may impact practice effectiveness.

Learning Experiences for BSW Seniors & Foundation Year MSW Students

Our goal is for students to have an integrated field internship experience, with a range of micro/mezzo/macro activities/tasks/assignments spread out over the course of the academic year. That said, we know that different settings are able to offer different kinds of experiences, so that students’ experiences will vary accordingly.

I. Micro-level practice: one-on-one or work with individuals

“Micro-level intervention focuses on work ... to foster changes within personal functioning, in social relationships ...”

2 Students should have the opportunity to work with *individuals* to enhance their social functioning, or, in some way address the interactions, relationships and interdependence between the individual and other social systems. Some of the student’s work should involve working with an individual going through a change process that alters his/her conditions in life. The kind of work an intern will engage in (e.g. case management, counseling, intake, assessments) and length of treatment will vary depending on the setting.

II. Mezzo-level practice: families and groups

Mezzo-level practice refers to “family and small group work” in which small numbers of people who share similar interests or common problems convene regularly and engage in activities designed to achieve certain objectives.”

4 Mezzo-level practice requires skills such as communication, mediation, negotiation, and education. Examples of mezzo activities include: convening a group in response to community need, participating in community development task force, or co-leading a support group. Students should be able to identify formal and informal groups, therapy- or treatment-oriented groups, task groups, etc. Interns should have the experience of either observing or co-leading a group as part of the internship experience. Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of *family* functioning. Although many students will not work directly with families, they should be able to gain an understanding of clients’ family functioning through interviews, observation and supervisory discussion.

III. Macro-level practice: large groups, organizations, and community

Macro-level social work involves indirect practice with “the goal of benefiting large groups of clients or general society, presenting opportunities to induce large-scale positive change in the lives of many clients through systemic solutions.”

5 A critical part of the internship experience is gaining an understanding of the agency in its larger community context. This includes understanding the role of the agency within the larger community, its fit with other service providers, its funding sources, relevant public policies, etc. Students may elect to work with a client group to address particular issues; to form a group to lobby/advocate on an issue; to organize a community project, or to develop a community-related publication. Other examples of macro activities include: preparing testimony for a legislative hearing, testifying at a hearing regarding health care benefits, conducting a needs assessment, writing a grant proposal, or evaluating an agency program.

V. Variations in Social Work Roles

We anticipate that students will have an opportunity to either assume or discuss with the field instructor or other agency member most of the social work roles listed below:

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<td>Advocate</td>
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<td>Problem Solver</td>
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### VI. Educational Tools

Formulating ideas in writing provides a useful learning tool for students, especially when they receive feedback from the field instructor and seminar instructor. Process recordings are required of seniors and foundation-year MSW students (after 1st month in practicum); see course syllabus for information on number of process recordings required each semester. It is the school’s expectation that the field instructor will review each process recording and offer constructive feedback as part of supervisory conferences. Psychosocial assessments or diagnostic work-ups, like summaries, focus attention on the whole case. Tapes, both audio and video, are highly regarded for teaching interviewing skills. They are not as useful for viewing cases as a whole. Use of documents, tapes, etc., such as those outlined above, are for educational purposes only.

### THE FIELD EDUCATION EXPERIENCE:

#### ADVANCED YEAR MSW STUDENTS

**Objectives and Guidelines for Advanced Year MSW Students**

The advanced curriculum field experience builds on the generalist skills gained in the foundation experience. Students are placed in field agencies that provide them with supervised practice experience consistent with their chosen concentration. Taken concurrently with the practicum, the advanced seminars prepare students to integrate skills learned in chosen theory and practice courses with their field practicum experience, providing opportunities for the sharing of clinical cases and/or macro projects. Issues related to social work values, ethics, diverse populations, social and economic justice and populations at risk are examined through seminar discussion.

**Clinical** students, choosing from among several theory and practice courses, learn to differentially apply explanatory theories (psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioral, transpersonal, family systems, and others) to the assessment of client systems across the individual or family life cycles. They learn to distinguish the appropriate treatment modality (individual, couples, group, family) for particular client problems, and to differentially apply practice models to treatment planning and intervention. Students gain skills at an advanced clinical level in relationship building, problem identification, assessment, goal setting and treatment planning, intervention, termination, and evaluation with various age groups.

**Social Change (macro)** students learn to differentially apply theories of community organization, social policy, planning, administration and management in an understanding of problems and needs, and also as a guide to methods of intervention for social change purposes. They gain expertise and skill in social management, social planning, and policy analysis, including skill in professional writing, speaking and program evaluation.

**Combined** concentrators take courses in both the Clinical and Social Change sequences, thereby acquiring depth in the methodology of both clinical and macro social work practice. Their placements offer both micro and macro practice learning opportunities, sometimes with two different field instructors providing supervision, so that students gain knowledge and skills required to work with clients to those required to run a program – from working with clients, to writing grants, to managing budgets, to monitoring the success of a program.

Consistent with social work values, all students seek to respect differences in the needs, attitudes, and behaviors of diverse populations. They conduct their practice adhering to the NASW Code of Ethics.
Learning Experiences for Clinical Students

In the (20 hours/week) clinical setting, students should have the opportunity to work with individuals, couples, families, and groups, to the extent possible within a particular agency. Students’ work with varied client systems will enable them to build significantly upon the knowledge and skills developed in the foundation year practicum. They should become able to demonstrate skill at an advanced clinical level in relationship building, problem identification, assessment, goal setting and treatment planning, intervention, termination, and evaluation with various age groups.

In many settings, students will have three to four interviews a week increasing to about ten interview hours per week, depending on other factors such as time spent in consultations, in work with groups, home visits, etc. There is no substitute, however, for the experience of working directly with a variety of clients/client systems.

I. Work with Individuals
Depending on their areas of interest and the agency setting, students may work with children, adolescents, young adults, adults and/or older adults. In their clinical work, students will continue to develop their ability to apply social work knowledge and skills to clinical practice at an increasingly advanced level.

II. Work with Couples and Families
The student should be offered the opportunity to work with families and/or couples. This may not mean providing couples or family therapy, but does mean familiarity with the basic dynamics of a particular family and interacting with most or all of the family members for the purpose of accomplishing a contracted goal.

III. Work with Groups
Group experiences may include: counseling or treatment-oriented group, membership in a task group, a conference group, or a committee within the agency or community. When these opportunities are not available, the student may observe an ongoing group, although this is not the ideal situation. Recording of group process is required. This includes identification of goals and dynamic interaction. Leadership styles, member roles, communication, and stages of group development must be noted.

Learning Experiences for Social Change Students

The Social Change student should have a variety of participant and observational experiences selected from the areas of policy, administration, community organizing, planning and management in the advanced (20 hours/week) placement. Both analytic and interactional skills are to be practiced and developed. The educational experiences are drawn from a student’s prepared list of learning objectives and the Learning Plan. See the Guide to Macro Projects for an extensive list of possible internship activities/projects.

Learning Experiences for Combined (Clinical/Social Change) Students

Students in the Combined Concentration will have a wide range of learning experiences in both the clinical and macro areas of social work practice in their placements, which will require 20 - 24 hours/week. Usually combined concentrators will split their micro and macro assignments fairly evenly over the course of the academic year. However, sometimes, due to the work of the agency, a student may be involved in primarily micro work in the first semester, transitioning to more of a macro focus in the second semester. Contact the field liaison or the Director of Field Education for further guidance. See the previous two sections for further information about the kinds of learning experiences available.