



Washington
University in St. Louis

BROWN SCHOOL

Master of Social Work

Field Instructor Handbook

Office of Field Education

2019-2020

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Welcome to the Office of Field Education

Dear Colleague,

Welcome from the Brown School Office of Field Education (OFE)! Field instruction at the Brown School is a required didactic component of the Master of Social Work (MSW) program and the responsibility of the Dean and faculty who delegate the implementation of practicum policies to the OFE. This office reports directly to the Associate Dean for Social Work.

The purpose of your **Master of Social Work Field Instructor Handbook** is to provide you with information regarding the social work field education requirements, policies and procedures that have been established for practicum students and field instructors affiliated with Brown School. Please read and retain your handbook as a valuable reference and contact the OFE staff if assistance or support is needed.

Thank you for partnering with the Brown School to provide graduate-level experiences to our students.

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Missions and Policies of the Brown School and Washington University

Mission of Washington University in St. Louis

Washington University's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge, and protect the freedom of inquiry through research, teaching, and learning. Washington University creates an environment to encourage and support an ethos of wide-ranging exploration. Washington University's faculty and staff strive to enhance the lives and livelihoods of students, the people of the greater St. Louis community, the country, and the world.

Vision & Mission of the Brown School

Our Vision – To create positive social change through our path-breaking research and educational excellence.

Our Mission – To educate and prepare future social work and public health leaders in areas of policy, practice, and research; to pioneer research and apply results to impact policy and practice locally, nationally, and internationally; and to collaborate with organizations to use evidence to improve access to and quality of social services and to address social and economic justice.

Evidence-Based Social Work– The Brown School faculty believes that the increasing research base of our professions and the ongoing technological revolution in data management and communication make it possible to move beyond rhetoric about the need for an evidence base for our professions and to teach students about how to consciously and judiciously use evidence in collaborative social work and public health decision making.

Overview of the MSW Practicum

Purpose of Practicum

The practicum experience is an integral part of professional social work education. It is designed to provide authentic practice situations where learning that occurs in the practicum setting complements academic course work through practical application of theories, concepts, and specific practice behaviors for the field experience – thus, the term “practicum.”

The purpose of the graduate-level social work practicum at the Brown School is threefold: 1) to provide challenging, innovative and substantive learning experiences to students, 2) to prepare students to assume responsibilities as social work professionals exhibiting ethical and professional behavior, and 3) to ensure skilled supervision by experienced field instructors who have been affiliated with the Brown School based on demonstrated knowledge in the field.

Timing of Practicum

Practicum hours are scheduled based on a student's educational plan and the organization's need. Schedules are negotiated between the student and the field instructor. Practicum can be completed on a part-time or full-time basis totaling up to no more than 40 hours per week. Following the Brown School's academic sequencing, most students begin foundation practicum in the second semester of their first year (when they have completed and/or are currently enrolled in all seven foundation courses). Students entering the MSW program with advanced standing status can begin their concentration level practicum their first semester of enrollment. Students with advanced standing status interested in going out-of-state or abroad are eligible in their second semester of enrollment.

Practicum Recruitment and Selection

The OFE does not assign students to practicum organizations. Students follow a process of self- or- guided selection, via the process below.

Practicum position descriptions may be created by practicum organizations and posted to the Brown School's practicum database, called Symplicity, for students to view. All positions must be approved by OFE once submitted for posting. Once they are approved, positions are available for students to search for and view, and students will contact organizations based on their interest and qualification for posted positions. For more information on how to post practicum positions, please email ofe@wustl.edu.

Field Advisors share the responsibility for assisting students to select field experiences. This model allows each student to consider learning experiences that contribute to professional identity, provide a comprehensive base of theory, knowledge, and skills, and build on their own personal short and long-term career goals.

Required Credits and Practicum Hours

Traditional MSW students (in the 2-year program) are required to complete a total of eight (8) academic credits in practicum, equivalent to 960 hours of field work, with a passing grade to graduate. The eight credits are divided into two practicum levels: three (3) credits for foundation practicum (360 field hours) and five (5) credits for concentration practicum (600 field hours) (see “Practicum Levels” section). Students in Advanced Standing (with a BSW and previous practicum experience) are required to complete five (5) credits of concentration practicum (600 hours). Each credit of practicum is equivalent to 120 field hours. Students may register for one (1) credit (120 field hours) to a maximum of five (5) credits (600 field hours) per semester. The breakdown of hours worked per week (part-time or full-time) is negotiated between the student and field instructor. However, students may not accumulate more than 40 field hours per week in practicum unless they are in an international setting. Students may continue to volunteer or work at the practicum organization beyond the completion of the contracted practicum hours, as long as the duration and terms of continued service are agreeable to the student, the organization, and approval is granted through the Washington University Office of International Students and Scholars (for international students only). Please note: students will not be covered by the university’s liability insurance after they have completed all of their agreed-upon practicum hours at the organization.

Professional Behavior and Responsibilities of Students in Practicum

Responsibilities of students in practicum include:

- Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics social work values and ethics
- Demonstrate professional compliance with organizational policies and procedures, including adherence to the organization’s dress code
- Maintain professional boundaries and behaviors with respect to the organization’s clients, constituents, and staff
- Attend and actively participate in weekly supervisory sessions, including preparing an agenda for supervision, if requested
- Keep a timesheet of completed practicum hours and notify agency in advance when absent
- Fulfill all the learning obligations and expectations outlined in the ELA, including demonstrating all competencies and practice behaviors
- Communicate with the field instructor regarding learning needs and interests, conflicts regarding field instruction, and challenges to develop as a professional social work practitioner
- Participate in the site visit
- Consult with the organization about safety and liability
- Contact the OFE if problems and/or concerns arise
- Submit the following required documents to the OFE in order to receive a practicum grade:
 - Student Self-Evaluation of Competencies and Performance
 - Practicum Timesheet

Additional student responsibilities are discussed in the “Practicum Requirements for Students” section and throughout this handbook.

What Field Instructors Need to Know Before the Start of Practicum

Field Instructor to Student Ratio

It is strongly recommended that field instructors supervise no more than three (3) students in practicum per semester. This field instructor-student ratio (3:1) affords the field instructor the opportunity to effectively engage and supervise a manageable number of students without compromising time needed for the field instructor to attend to his or her own job duties. An exception to this policy may be made for professionals whose primary job is to supervise practicum students, interns, or volunteers.

Educational Learning Agreement (ELA)

The ELA serves as the learning agreement and guide to frame the students’ progress towards gaining competency in their field experience. In consultation with the field instructor, students are required to complete the (ELA) specific to their practicum level and concentration. Each behavior listed in the ELA must be addressed during the course of the practicum experience. Completion and submission of the ELA to the OFE *within the first 40 hours of practicum* is the responsibility of the student, with consultation and support of the field instructor (see “Practicum Requirements for Students” section).

Orientation for Students in Practicum

A successful practicum partnership between a field instructor and student begins with a well-planned orientation process. An effective orientation process can help a student quickly acclimate to their practicum setting, better understand their role in the organization, and clearly define their tasks, duties, and responsibilities in the practicum. The orientation of a student to their practicum organization and/or site should include:

- Adaptation to the culture and environment of the organization – tour of facility, student’s office space, review of dress code, work schedule, holiday/vacation schedules, use of phone, travel reimbursement, resources manuals, and reference materials
- Agreement on the student’s role in practicum, including boundaries of student’s involvement in projects, meetings, or committees, persons with whom the student may consult, and the student’s working title (e.g., research associate intern)
- Review of the history, mission, funding sources, services and organizational chart
- Review of organizational policies and procedures, including the organization’s stance on confidentiality
- Review of the code of ethics followed by the organization or practicum site
- Review of organizational procedures for documentation, record keeping, and reporting work time
- Introduction to key administrators and staff in the organization
- Introduction to key community resources and persons outside of the practicum organization with whom the student is likely to interact
- Review of personal safety issues and training necessary to protect the well-being of the student

Students who will be engaged in practicum tasks and duties off-site from the practicum organization (e.g., in community centers or health clinics) should also be oriented in a similar manner as indicated above to the culture, operations, and policies of the work site.

Site Visit

All practicum students are required to receive one site visit approximately midway through the student’s entire practicum experience as indicated on the face sheet of the ELA. For practica at out-of-state or international locations, an e-mail, phone conference, or video conference may be arranged. The visit is scheduled by a Brown School professional. The field instructor, student, and site visitor will meet for approximately 30 minutes to an hour to discuss the student’s progress in practicum; therefore, the field instructor’s participation in this meeting is vital (see “Site Visit” in the “Practicum Requirements for Field Instructors” section).

Professional Liability Insurance

Washington University carries a \$2 million insurance policy per person for its various professional fields. This program covers duly registered Brown School students for events that may occur while performing duties in their field practicum. Field instructors and organizations can obtain proof of coverage by contacting the OFE.

Automobile Insurance

The University does not provide automobile liability coverage to students. Students who will be using their personal vehicle or a company vehicle for organizational business should negotiate automobile coverage with the organization prior to the start of the practicum.

Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities or those requiring special accommodations in the field should discuss those needs with the field instructor and the Washington University Office of Disability Resources so that reasonable accommodations can be identified and planned for accordingly. Reasonable accommodations are tools or arrangements that facilitate or enhance the performance of a student with a disability or special needs.

Criminal Background Checks, Drug Screenings, HIPAA Certification, and Verification of Health Status

Some practicum organizations may require screenings, certification, and verification or vaccinations from students prior to beginning practicum. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to the following: criminal background check, drug screening for illicit drugs, vaccinations, HIPAA training/certification, and/or verification of health status. Washington University does not require or facilitate such requirements of students. The field instructor should communicate directly with the student about these requirements and compliance with organizational standards and policies. Students are individually responsible for obtaining the required background checks, screenings, required trainings/certifications, and all associated costs and fees.

Students' Activities in Compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics

The Brown School supports the policies of affiliated practicum organizations. However, because practicum students are not employees of these organizations, students are encouraged to pay special attention to the requirements of their practicum tasks and duties in order to comply with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.* The code of ethics provides values and beliefs which serve as the foundation for morally responsible, social work practice that should guide students in their professional behavior as agents of the organization while in practicum.

Organizational Policies

Students are required to comply with the rules and policies of the practicum site, insofar as they pertain to students' activities during practicum. It is the responsibility of the field instructor to ensure that students are well-apprised of the organization's policies, consequences should violations of such policies occur, and dress and professional comportment aligned with organizational policies. Field instructors should also discuss with the student the potential for conflicts of interest regarding the policies of the organization and principles/ethics of the social work profession, if applicable (see "Students' Activities in Compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics" section).

Lobbying Activities

Students who will be engaged in formal lobbying activities as a part of the practicum experience should discuss with the practicum organization and the OFE the issue of registering as a lobbyist with the appropriate governmental entity. If the field instructor and student determine that registration is appropriate, the student must register as a lobbyist with the practicum organization and not with the University. It is the responsibility of the organization and student to comply with all laws and regulations relevant to lobbying.

Sharing Sensitive Information

The OFE will share all practicum-related information, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), with appropriate persons including the student's academic advisor, the practicum field instructor, and the Associate Dean for Social Work. Relevant information is defined as information that may have an impact on the student's learning experience, clients, constituents, the practicum organization, field instructor, or staff. Such information, as appropriate, will be shared to enhance the learning process. Field instructors are also expected to share relevant information with the OFE. The practicum organization may require the student to sign a release of information form for some types of information.

Practicum Deliverables and Work Products

While in practicum, students should operate under the following assumption: a work product produced in the course of a practicum, under the supervision, guidance, and review of a representative(s) of the organization, using the organization's data and/or resources is considered the property of the organization. An exception may exist when the student is provided with written permission from the organization stating otherwise. Compliance with all federal and state regulations governing copyright, HIPAA, etc. is the standard of conduct.

Mandated Reporting

As emerging social work professionals, our expectation is that students adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and state law and report incidents of suspected neglect or abuse **where required by law**; however, we encourage students to discuss these situations with their field instructors to gain a full appreciation and knowledge of the reporting process. It is also recommended that students familiarize themselves with individual State Laws (where they are completing practicum and/or where they intend to practice after graduation) that define who is a mandated reporter and provide the circumstances under which you are required to report. The following website may be helpful to you in finding the applicable state laws:

http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm

Safety and Security of Students in Practicum

The safety of students in practicum is a priority for the OFE, and if not addressed, concerns about personal safety can significantly impact learning opportunities in the field. While the University does not wish students to be protected from the realities of professional practice, immersing students in the realities of practice can also expose them to safety and security risks.** The University and practicum organizations must partner to reduce risks to students in practicum. Therefore, field instructors and practicum organizations, when applicable should:

* Note: Dual degree MPH/MSW students must also comply with the public health "Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health" while in practicum. Copies of the "Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health" and the "NASW Code of Ethics" are available under the "Community Resource – Field Instructor Resources" menu on the Brown School website (brownschool.wustl.edu).

**Note: Students are expected to follow organizational policies, procedures, and protocols regarding the necessity of home visits, if applicable.

- Discuss safety and security matters with the student during the interview and throughout the practicum
- Relay information about the prevalence of or potential for violence while conducting practicum activities to the student
- Explain and enforce organizational safety protocols with the student, including building and office security, emergency procedures, management of violent clients and home visit safety procedures.
- Provide a tour of the surrounding neighborhood/community and address concerns the student may have regarding work in the community or area
- Allow the student to observe staff engaged in the work for which the student is preparing
- Allow the student to be observed while engaged in learning activities
- Provide the student with security resources (i.e., safety training and cellular phones) available from the practicum organization

Examples of activities that warrant special concern and discussion with the student and the Office of Field Education prior to the start of practicum include, but are not limited to:

- Physical restraint of clients
- Transportation of clients in the student's private vehicle or company vehicle
- Transportation of a client with a history of violent behavior
- Practicum work when at times, the student will be alone or in volatile areas where other staff will not be present

In the event that a student is involved in an incident resulting in the risk of or experience of any personal threat or assault to themselves or others during the practicum, they must complete an Incident Reporting Form (see "Incident Reporting" section).

Practicum Levels

Foundation Practicum

The foundation-level practicum is the first practicum experience students are required to complete. Students must complete three (3) practicum credits (360 field hours) at the foundation level, at selected organizations that are approved to provide foundation-level practica.

Site Requirements and Supervision for Foundation Practica – Foundation-level practicum sites must meet **all** of the following requirements:

- Located in the Greater St. Louis metropolitan area (within a 60-mile radius of St. Louis City)
- Have an approved and affiliated on-site field instructor who has an MSW degree
- Have the capacity to provide students with a minimum of 50 hours of direct client contact

A student must complete the foundation core courses and foundation practicum (i.e., 360 practicum hours with a grade of "PASS") in order to begin the concentration-level practicum.

Integrative Foundation Practicum Seminar – The Integrative Foundation Practicum Seminar, a one credit 15-hour course, is taken concurrently with the first semester of the foundation practicum. The seminar integrates theoretical constructs and evidence-based practices with hands-on skill application and exposure to varied professional roles, values, and ethics of the social work profession. In the seminar, students utilize discussion, case presentations, group exercises, writing, and other assignments to process their field work experience, including supervision and client interactions. Students will have the opportunity to debrief practice challenges in a supportive environment; and begin honing professional development skills through a peer-to-peer learning experience. The seminar focuses on generalist social work practice, with an emphasis on issues of diversity, ethics, social advocacy, social change, and social, economic, and environmental justice.

Concentration Practicum

Students must complete five (5) practicum credits (600 field hours) of concentration practicum. Following successful completion of the foundation practicum (or upon the designation of advanced standing status for BSW-degreed students), the concentration practicum must be completed in one of the nine (9) concentration areas: American Indian/Alaska Native, Children, Youth and Families, Health, Individualized, Mental Health, Older Adults and Aging Societies, Social and Economic Development – Domestic and International, and Violence and Injury Prevention. Concentration practicum hours may **not** be completed concurrently with foundation practicum hours (students are not allowed to register for foundation and concentration practicum hours in the same semester). The OFE does not recommend that students complete both foundation and

concentration practicum at the same location. However, an exception to this policy may be made if specific conditions are met. Students must contact the OFE directly to request an exemption to this policy.

Site Requirements and Supervision of Concentration Practicum – Concentration practicum hours can be completed in the Greater St. Louis area, out-of-state, or abroad (internationally), but must be completed under the supervision of an affiliated and on-site field instructor with an MSW or related master's or higher degree.

Individualized Practicum – Those students who wish to have a learning focus different from the established concentrations of study may develop and request approval of an individualized program of study from the Associate Dean of Social Work. This may be done by combining two or more concentrations or by focusing on a different population or social problem arena. For example:

1. Student interested in health and mental health – In this case, a student might choose an inpatient psychiatric setting for the practicum and select either a health or mental health focus for their general responsibilities.
2. Student interested in women's issues – In this case, a student might select a practicum in a women's shelter or areas of reproductive health and counseling with the focus on the theory, policies, ethics, services, etc., of women's issues.

Students individualizing their concentration area must use the behaviors identified and approved in their Individualized Program of Study Planning Form to develop the Individualized Concentration ELA.

Elective Practicum

An additional one (1) credit to five (5) credits of practica can be taken as elective courses, once concentration practicum requirements have been completed with a passing grade. One elective practicum credit equals 120 hours in the field and may be completed at the same practicum organization where the concentration practicum was completed or at a different field site.

Advanced Standing Students

MSW students admitted to the Brown School with advanced standing and approval of undergraduate practicum hours are exempt from the foundation-level practicum and the integrative foundation practicum seminar. Students are required to complete only the concentration-level practicum for five (5) credits (600 field hours).

Dual Degree MPH/MSW Practicum

Dual degree MPH/MSW students are required to complete three practica experiences to graduate: MSW foundation practicum (3 credits), MPH practicum (3 credits), and MSW concentration practicum (2 credits), for a total of eight (8) practicum credits. The MSW foundation practicum must be completed prior to starting the MPH or MSW concentration practicum. The MPH and MSW concentration practica can be completed in succession or concurrently, either at the same site or at different sites. Dual degree MPH/MSW students receive equivalent credit for the MPH practicum, which serves as a dual MPH/MSW practicum and requires that the practicum organization is affiliated for **both** MPH and MSW. Subsequently, when completing the MPH practicum, dual degree students must develop and complete **two** Educational Learning Agreements (ELAs), a MPH ELA and a concentration-specific MSW ELA.

Types of Practicum

One-Semester and Two-Semester Practica

In consultation with the field instructor, students may elect to complete practicum over a period of one semester or two semesters. In a one-semester practicum or in the first semester of a two-semester practicum, an approved copy of the Educational Learning Agreement (ELA) should be provided to the field instructor by the student. Students are required to submit only **one** ELA during their practicum experience at any one organization.

Practicum at Place of Employment

The OFE does not recommend that students complete practicum at their place of employment. However, an exception to this policy may be made to complete *one* practicum experience if all of the following conditions are met:

- 1) Student must obtain permission from their current day-to-day work supervisor and identify an affiliated field instructor, (one person may not serve as both work supervisor and field instructor).
- 2) The field placement must be in an entirely different program/department than the one in which the student is employed.

- 3) Practicum hours may not be counted as work time, nor can work time be counted as practicum hours.
- 4) The practicum must be structured solely for the educational benefit of the practicum student and provide training to prepare the student for professional practice. It is not meant to supplant, replace, or substitute for existing employees or organizational structure of an agency.
- 5) The practicum must be structured to meet the academic program requirements of the Brown School; and structured to attend to the professional competencies and practice behaviors outlined in the ELA *and* correspond to the student's educational level (e.g., foundation or concentration, if MSW).
 - a. The student must be evaluated as a learner rather than as an employee.
- 6) The organization must ensure that the practicum adheres to the US Department of Labor regulations, including the Wage and Hour Division (Fact Sheet #71 (April 2010): Internship Programs under the Fair Labor Standards Act), which is attached hereto: <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>
- 7) The practicum may provide a stipend. If it does so, the practicum must adhere to all IRS Department of Labor and Wage and Hour Division policies and regulations.

Out-of-State Practica

Upon approval from the OFE, students who have completed the foundation-level practicum with a passing grade can apply to complete a concentration-level practicum outside of the Greater St. Louis metropolitan area in any U.S. city or state. Out-of-state organizations and professionals must meet the same criteria to affiliate as local practicum organizations and field instructors. Students requesting to complete their practicum at an out-of-state location must complete and submit the required application and documents (available on Inside Brown) at least one semester before the practicum is to begin.

International Practica

An international practicum is defined as a field placement that is completed at a Core Affiliated Practicum (CAP) site in a country or U.S. territory outside of the United States. International practicum students are required to comply with all OFE field-related requirements, guidelines and timelines. Students will also be required to attend to mandated competencies and practice behaviors established in the ELA and declared area of specialization or concentration. Students interested in completing an international practicum must receive joint approval from the OFE and the Global Programs Office. The approval for an international practicum involves a multi-step process in which students will work with faculty and staff through a **guided selection process**.

Paid Practicum

A paid practicum may be offered at the discretion of the practicum organization. While it is appreciated when practicum organizations are able to provide compensation to students in practicum, it is not a requirement for an organization to serve as a practicum site.* There is no minimum or maximum amount of compensation a student may receive. However, under no circumstances may the field instructor or practicum organization alter the agreed upon Educational Learning Agreement, contracted practicum hours, or practicum requirements as a condition of a compensated practicum without the approval of the Assistant Dean, Field Education. In addition to the Practicum Timesheet required by the OFE, field instructors may require students to complete the organization's timesheet to track and verify practicum hours in compliance with the organization's protocols.

**Note: For the consideration of offering students compensation for practicum, please note that students do incur a financial expenditure for registering for practicum, as it is a course for which students must pay. Students completing practicum out-of-state do incur additional travel and lodging expenses for which they are financially responsible, as Brown School does not provide stipends or financial support to students for practicum.*

Practicum Requirements for Students

Mandatory Practicum Information Session

Prior to entering the field, each student is expected to attend a practicum information session facilitated by the OFE. The mandatory information session is designed to help students prepare for field work. During the session, information on practicum selection, practicum requirements, procedures, and due dates for practicum-related documents are discussed.

Practicum Registration

Course Requirement – Practicum is a course requirement and students must register for the practicum course corresponding to the appropriate practicum level to receive credit for field work. Practicum may be completed in the fall, spring, and summer semesters each academic year.

Symplicity Registration – In addition to registering for practicum as a course through the University’s system, students are required to register their practicum online with the OFE no later than **two weeks prior** to the start of practicum or by the specified due date. Online registration (via Symplicity) is required for every practicum site and will be approved if both the organization and field instructor are currently affiliated. Notification will be sent via email to the student and field instructor regarding non-acceptance of the registration with an explanation for the rejection of the practicum. A student may not accumulate practicum hours with a non-affiliated organization or under the supervision of a non-affiliated field instructor.

Educational Learning Agreement (ELA)

The student must meet with the field instructor to develop an ELA. The ELA serves as a contract to guide and monitor the student’s progress toward gaining professional social work competency during the field experience. To receive credit for practicum hours, the student must submit a signed electronic copy of the ELA to the OFE via email for review and approval by the specified due date or before completing 40 hours in practicum, whichever occurs first. Accumulation of practicum hours may continue while the ELA is being reviewed. Students and field instructors will be notified if revisions are required and/or when the ELA is approved. No credit for hours completed during practicum is given if an ELA is not submitted and approved according to practicum guidelines. Specifics of the ELA are described in “Instructions and Overview of the Educational Learning Agreement” in the “Practicum Requirements for Field Instructors” section.

Student Self-Evaluation of Competencies and Performance

No later than two weeks prior to the anticipated ending date of the practicum, students should complete the Student Self-Evaluation of Competencies and Performance (available on Inside Brown). This completion will trigger an automatic email notification to the field instructor with a link to their final evaluation and the email will include your feedback for their review. The self-evaluation is completed at the end of an entire practicum experience at any one agency. In the self-evaluation, students are asked to evaluate each competency and practice behavior from the ELA based on the following five- point scale:

5 = Advanced (Consistently exceeds expectations)

4 = Proficient (Consistently demonstrates ability)

3 = Developing

2 = Beginner

1 = Does not demonstrate

N/A= Choose “N/A” if competency or behavior has not been addressed (applicable ONLY in the first semester of a two-semester practicum)

Students must also provide specific examples of their practicum performance in various professional areas as indicated in the evaluation.

Practicum Timesheet

Students are expected to document all hours accumulated throughout the practicum on the OFE’s Practicum Timesheet, which is available to students on Inside Brown. Completion of the Practicum Timesheet is governed by Brown School’s policies regarding Academic and Professional Integrity. The timesheet must be monitored by the field instructor, signed by the student and field instructor (after completion and review of the student’s self-evaluation and the field instructor’s evaluation). Next, the timesheet must be submitted to the OFE at **the completion of all practicum hours at any one organization that the student is in practicum**. Students may not accumulate more than 40 hours per week in practicum. This timesheet does not circumvent the organization’s time reporting mechanism.

Student Assessment of Practicum Experience (SAPE)

Students are encouraged to thoughtfully and critically assess their practicum experiences by completing the SAPE survey at the end of their practicum. Field instructors have requested this candid feedback to improve their effectiveness as mentors and to enhance the organization’s practicum experience for future students. Field instructors are periodically provided the results of the survey to use as feedback to evaluate, for example, their personal effectiveness as a supervisor/mentor, the organization as a learning environment, or enhancement of the practicum experience for future students.

Practicum Requirements for Field Instructors

The field instructor/student relationship is critical to the development of competent social work professionals. Therefore, field instructors are provided the following resources and training.

Field Instructor Training

Field instructors are required to receive field instructor training from the OFE.

Field Instructor Certification Program – The Field Instructor Certification Program is a six-session training program for local field instructors (**in the St. Louis metropolitan area**) who want to supervise MSW or dual degree MPH/MSW students in practicum. This program is facilitated by the field staff and directors from the Brown School, Fontbonne University, St. Louis University, and University of Missouri-St. Louis. Each of the six sessions is offered at least once throughout the academic year and field instructors have a two-year time period to complete all six sessions. **A field instructor required to participate in the certification program must attend Session 1 and Session 2 of the Collaborative Field Instructor Training before they can begin supervising practicum students.** Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are offered for each of the six sessions and a certificate will be granted to field instructors upon successful completion of the program.

Instructions and Overview of the Educational Learning Agreement

The ELA is the learning contract developed by the student in consultation with the field instructor. Essentially, the ELA serves as the student's "job description" for practicum and should be used as a guide for developing and monitoring learning activities, goals, and objectives. A revised copy of the ELA or a written addendum specifying new tasks and duties for the student must be submitted to the OFE if substantive changes are made in the student's primary assignments. Details and instructions on completing the ELA are following.

ELA Face Sheet – The ELA Face Sheet serves as the cover page for the ELA and provides the student, field instructor, and OFE with specific information related to the practicum, contact information for the student and field instructor, the number of credits (corresponding to contracted work hours) to be completed, the number of semesters the student intends to be in practicum at the organization, and additional information helpful to the OFE. The bottom half of the Face Sheet provides a place for signatures, which are required. Once the ELA is completed and signed, the student is responsible for emailing it to their field advisor for final approval. Students and field instructors are notified via e-mail when the ELA is approved or if revisions are required.

ELA Part I: Field Experience Overview – The Field Experience Overview is to be completed by the student in consultation with their field instructor. First, students are asked to provide a general, but thorough, description of the organization, including the structure and mission of the organization, as well as the population(s) being served. Next, students are asked to identify goals and objectives for the practicum, as well as projects or deliverables that will be created in practicum. Students are then asked to check off specific items covered during orientation to the organization.

ELA Part II: Competencies - The Competencies section allows the student and field instructor to identify 1-5 specific learning activities related to each of the nine (9) social work competencies. Each page lists the competency and associated behaviors. Students and field instructors should generate the list of activities together. Field instructors will then identify methods of evaluating the student on each of the competencies.

ELA Competencies and Behaviors – Students must address all nine (9) competencies while in the field. Each competency is operationalized through the scope of corresponding behaviors, which must also be addressed by the completion of the practicum.

ELAs for Dual Degree MPH/MSW Students – Dual degree MPH/MSW students are required to submit two ELAs: one for the MPH program and one for the MSW program. Field instructors should consult with dual degree MPH/MSW students to assist with construction of tasks, assignments, and duties relevant to each ELA.

Weekly Supervision

Field instructors are required to provide one hour of weekly, individualized supervision to each student in practicum. The weekly meeting should include an agenda of topics prepared by the student to discuss. Topics may include:

- Updates on the student's progress with tasks and projects

- Challenges/problems faced by the student
- Accomplishments/goals the student has achieved
- Issues of cultural competency and diversity (within the organization and with clients/constituents)
- Processing of the organizational culture
- Identification of training opportunities for the student
- Discussion and mentoring regarding the student's professional development and career goals
- Discussion of news and information impacting the social work field, and that is relevant to the organization's field of service, the student's tasks/projects, etc.

Group Supervision – Organizations hosting more than one practicum student or other interns may choose to offer group supervision to students as a **supplement** to (but not in lieu of) individual supervision. Group supervision may be used to orient a group of students to the organization, allow students the opportunity to meet other interns and coordinate student projects, or provide a forum for guest speakers and professional development for students that enhance their practicum experience.

Task Supervisor – The Brown School differentiates between an affiliated field instructor and an organizational task supervisor. A task supervisor is often a staff member who assumes specific responsibilities for the student's practicum learning as delegated and monitored by the field instructor. A task supervisor does not replace the field instructor nor can the task supervisor substitute for the field instructor in weekly supervision.* Therefore, the task supervisor is not expected to meet Brown School's criteria for supervision and evaluation, but should be informed of Brown School's practicum requirements and procedures. It is the responsibility of the field instructor to help the student integrate the task supervisor's contribution into the overall learning experience.

**Note: The OFE recognizes that on occasion, a field instructor may be unavailable to meet with the student for weekly supervision (e.g., field instructor is on vacation or at an out-of-town conference/meeting). In these instances a task supervisor may meet with the student to monitor their progress and address any concerns or issues. However, this substitution is only acceptable for short-term situations. Field instructors who will be absent for supervision over an extended period of time must notify the OFE to discuss a plan for continuing supervision.*

Overview of Site Visit

An OFE staff member or another Brown School professional will monitor the student's progress in the field and conduct one site visit approximately midway through the student's entire practicum experience indicated on the face sheet of the Educational Learning Agreement (ELA). As implied the "site visit" is to occur on-site at the practicum organization or field site (unless the practicum location is out-of-state or international). The student and field instructor facilitate the scheduling of the site visit by suggesting a time for the visit. The objectives of the site visit include:

- Ensuring weekly, well-organized supervision meetings are occurring
- Facilitating productive educational relationships between the student and field instructor
- Monitoring competencies through student activities, learning, and practice behaviors
- Monitoring and facilitating integration of course and field learning
- Identifying needs and curriculum development trends from a field perspective
- Strengthening Brown School and community relationships
- Implementing or evaluating a "Practicum Support Plan," if applicable (see "Practicum Support Plan" in "Problems in the Field" section")

Field Instructor Evaluation of Practicum

After reviewing the student's self-evaluation, the field instructor completes the Field Instructor Evaluation of Practicum, available online through a link that will be emailed to the field instructor, along with instructions on how to complete the evaluation. The field instructor will receive notification to complete their evaluation of the student **after** the student's self-evaluation has been completed. In the evaluation, the field instructor evaluates the student's performance of each practice behavior and each competency area using the five-point scale below. The field instructor also evaluates the student's overall performance of the practicum experience, rates aspects of the student's professionalism, and suggests a grade for the student. Field instructors should print their final evaluations for review

with students. The field instructor's signature on the Practicum Timesheet verifies that the field instructor has reviewed their evaluation with the student.

5 = Advanced (Consistently exceeds expectations)

4 = Proficient (Consistently demonstrates ability)

3 = Developing

2 = Beginner

1 = Does not demonstrate

N/A= Choose "N/A" if competency or behavior has not been addressed (applicable ONLY in the first semester of a two-semester practicum)

Monitoring, Evaluations, and Practicum Grades

Site Visit

A Brown School professional will monitor the student's progress in the field and conduct a minimum of one on-site visit per student's entire practicum experience. As implied, the "site visit" is to occur at the organization (unless the practicum is at an out-of-state or international location, in which case a video or phone conference will be scheduled).

Evaluations

Evaluation is viewed as a continuous process occurring throughout the course of the practicum experience, a necessary aspect of public accountability and, hence, a necessary part of social work practices. **The Student Self-Evaluation of Competencies and Performance is completed by the student and provided to the field instructor two weeks prior to the completion of all practicum hours at any one organization that the student is in practicum.** Following the review of the student's self-evaluation during supervision, the field instructor must complete and submit [online] their evaluation of the students' performance using the **Field Instructor Evaluation of Practicum** by the last day of practicum. Both of these evaluations provide important feedback regarding the student's progress and professional aptitude in the practicum.

Practicum Grades

Practicum grades are based on the demonstration of professional competencies, and through the application of knowledge, skills, and abilities in the field.

The Office of Field Education uses the following assessment tools to assign your final grade.

Tool	Due Dates (Non-graduating Students)	Due Dates (Graduating Students)
Student Self-Evaluation	Two weeks before the last day of practicum	Fall: November 15 Spring: April 14 Summer: August 17
Field Instructor Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be mailed to field instructor when student completes Self-Evaluation 	On the last day of practicum	Fall: December 2 Spring: May 1 Summer: September 1
Timesheet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be completed by the student throughout practicum and reviewed during the site visit 	On the last day of practicum	Fall: December 2 Spring: May 1 Summer: September 1

The Grading Scale is:

- Pass with distinction (High Pass)
- Pass
- Fail

Final grades are determined by the field advisor. The following will be taken into account:

- 1) Educational Learning Agreement (ELA)
 - a. Timely submission of the ELA
 - b. Quality of the ELA
 - i. ELA is thorough and reflects a substantive practicum experience

- ii. ELA describes students' work as it relates to Social Work and/or Public Health competencies
- 2) Student Self Evaluation
 - a. Timely submission of the Student Self Evaluation
 - b. Quality of reflection in Student Self Evaluation
 - i. Student describes their work in their practicum and how it ties to the competencies
 - ii. Student ties their practicum work to the mission of the organization
 - iii. Depth of student reflection on communication, leadership, and professional growth
- 3) Field Instructor Evaluation: Grade suggested by Field Instructor
- 4) Timesheet: Timely submission of completed, signed timesheet

Problems in the Field

There are occasions when problems arise during the practicum involving the student or that affect their practicum experience. It is crucial that any problems or concerns associated with a student's performance in the field, with a field instructor, or with the practicum organization are brought to the attention of the OFE as soon as they become apparent.

Student Behavior

All Brown School students are expected to practice professionally, ethically, and morally during practicum. This expectation is expounded throughout the academic year in various trainings and coursework, and is mandated within the practice behaviors and professional competencies and the Educational Learning Agreement. Yet, there may be times when a student's behavior (intentional or unintentional) impedes successful performance in the practicum or is detrimental to the mission and/or operations of the practicum organization. When such behaviors occur, field instructors have several courses of action to remedy the situation:

Practicum Support Plan (PSP) – If alerted to problems related to student behavior early in the semester, the field instructor, in consultation with OFE, may develop a “Practicum Support Plan” to assist the student with improving behavior. The support plan is completed by the field instructor, signed by the student, field instructor, and field advisor, and must contain the following information:

- Narrative of identified concern/behavior
- Description of previous attempts to address the concern, including educational feedback, increased supervision, changes in the Educational Learning Agreement, or other interventions
- Plan for resolution, including specified deadlines, clearly stated objectives for all involved parties (i.e., student, field instructor, task supervisor, etc.) and their subsequent responsibilities, and what measures of success will be utilized to determine if the support plan is successful

A copy of the plan must be provided to the student, the field instructor, and the student's field advisor. The Assistant Dean, Field Education must be kept informed of all problematic field-related instances involving the student and field instructor, and may become directly involved at any point in the process. If the student's performance remains unsatisfactory following the implementation of the PSP and it appears that a failing grade will be the resulting occurrence, communication and/or a meeting between the student, field instructor, advisor, and the Assistant Dean, Field Education will be scheduled.

Student Termination from Practicum – If the objectives of a Practicum Support Plan (as summarized above) cannot be achieved and the student's behavior does not improve, after consultation between the student, field instructor, and field advisor, a student may be terminated from practicum. The field advisor will consult with the student and the field instructor regarding the specifics and requirements of the termination, and initiate the process. A student may also be removed or terminated from practicum for the following reasons:

- Failure to meet academic and behavioral standards of the policies and procedures of practicum (as outlined in the OFE “MSW Field Education Student Handbook”)
- Failure to disclose critical background information on application forms or in pre-practicum and practicum interviews

Unanticipated Circumstances

Some problems that occur during practicum are due to changes beyond the student's or field instructor's control such as changes with the field instructor (e.g., field instructor leaves or is terminated), changes within the organization (e.g., internal restructuring or loss of funding), or changes with the student other than behavioral problems (student illness or death in the

family). The field instructor or organizational representative is required to notify the OFE as soon as possible when circumstances necessitate change in supervision or if a practicum must be terminated. A student may also be removed from the field due to:

- Decision of the OFE and/or recommendation of the site visitor that the organization is not meeting the outlined learning objectives of the Educational Learning Agreement
- The practicum organization or field instructor fails to demonstrate commitment to the Brown School field program requirements
- Failure of the field instructor in providing consistent supervision over the student's learning experiences and activities
- Student's personal safety is jeopardized by continuing in practicum

Change in Field Instructor – Whenever possible, the field instructor or organizational representative (in the event that the field instructor is no longer employed by the organization or otherwise incapacitated) is encouraged to explore all options that might allow the student to remain at the practicum site under different, pre-approved, supervision. If another professional from the organization is available to replace the field instructor, students may complete a “Petition to Change Field Instructor Form”. The OFE will only approve a supplemental supervisor in this case if the proposed professional is able to meet the requirements for affiliation. On a case-by-case basis, the OFE will work with the practicum organization to determine an alternative plan for supervision.

Student Requested Termination of Practicum – Students may request to terminate a practicum by completing the “Petition to Terminate Practicum Form” which must be signed by the student, field instructor, and OFE. A review of the practicum situation is completed by the Field Advisor. A review does not end a practicum experience until approval is granted. If the approval for termination is granted, the student may receive a grade for hours completed, if they are equal to at least one credit (120 field hours). If the student has accumulated less than 120 practicum hours, they will forfeit the hours invested and be expected to complete all required hours in his or her next practicum.

Incident Reporting

Washington University is not in a position to take action against incidents involving students that occur off site, but the School will assist students in documenting any incidences in which a student is involved (see “Safety and Security of Students in Practicum” section). Students, field instructors, and/or advisors can use the Practicum Incident Reporting Form to document the details of the incident and to assist in determining the action needed to be taken. The form is available for students through Brown School and available to field instructors upon request from OFE. This form should be completed in addition to reporting documents required by the practicum organization, field site, Washington University, Brown School, or other investigating officials, and in no way substitutes for the forms, policies, or procedures that are required by any parties affected by or responding to the incident. Completed forms should be returned to the OFE.

Criteria for Continuation of Affiliation Partnerships

Affiliation partnerships between Brown School, field instructors and organizations are the hallmark of successful practicum experiences for our students. To ensure the synergism of the partnership is supported, the OFE requires field instructors and practicum organizations to continue to meet the criteria of the affiliation as outlined in the affiliation application process below. Partnerships of affiliation are granted for a period of three years and must be renewed every three years. However, the OFE, the field instructor, or the organization may request to terminate or suspend an affiliation partnership at any time. Such requests should be made in writing.

Criteria for Continuation as an Affiliated Practicum Organization

- Currently employ an affiliated field instructor
- Commitment in philosophy, policies, values, ethics, and practice of the social work profession and services (and the public health profession and services for dual MPH/MSW sites)
- Ability to provide graduate level learning opportunities that are consistent with the student's educational development and the organization's social work mission and services
- Competent staff (including at least one affiliated field instructor) sufficient to maintain program services without relying on students' contributions)

- The ability to provide the resources necessary for students to carry out assignments, (e.g. telephone, desk, computer, administrative support, etc.)
- Willingness to invest necessary resources in student learning, including adequate release time for field instructors to attend School-sponsored meetings and to supervise students (defined as sufficient time for adequate review of the student assignments and learning goals; the requirement is at least one hour of individual supervision per student per week)
- Commitment to social work education, ability to provide quality learning opportunities for students as measured by quality and scope of assignments, diversity of clients/partners, service to underserved populations, and other appropriate criteria
- Clear differentiation between the student's role as employee and the student's role as a graduate-level learner if student is employed at the organization
- Organization must have existed for a minimum of one year and have received an affiliation site visit by an OFE staff member, when feasible

Criteria for Continuation as an Affiliated Field Instructor

- Demonstrated competence in supervision
- Provision of one hour per week (per student) regularly scheduled supervision meetings
- Provision of graduate-level practice experiences in keeping with individual student needs/abilities
- Demonstrated commitment to the construction of the Educational Learning Agreement
- Willingness to share expertise, time, and professional experiences with student(s)
- Willingness to meet with student(s) informally via unscheduled conferences and meetings (as needed)
- Participation in site visit during student's practicum experience
- A pattern of positive interactions with students, advisors, and OFE staff
- Timely and appropriate communications with the OFE as needed
- Timely submission of evaluations and other practicum documents
- Submission of updated Field Instructor Application as requested periodically by the OFE
- Continued employment in "good standing" with the practicum organization
- Demonstrated professionalism in conduct and character

Field Instructor Benefits

Brown School field instructors are provided the following benefits:

- Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
 - Three CEUs are granted each academic year to active field instructors
- Continuing Education and Professional Development Events (at a reduced cost)
 - Access to the Professional Development Series
- Opportunity to Audit Brown School Courses
 - Ability to audit courses, with instructor approval, at the Brown School
- Evidence-Based Resources
 - Access to online Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Resource Area

For more information regarding field instructor benefits, please contact ofe@wustl.edu.

Communications with the Office of Field Education

When situations arise that necessitate the need for consultation or sharing information, field instructors should initiate communication with the OFE. Timely communication is critical. Circumstances may include but are not limited to:

- Outstanding student performance in practicum
- Inquiries regarding policies and procedures
- Student behavioral issues or concerns in practicum
- Requests to terminate practicum
- Requests to terminate or suspend the practicum affiliation
- Incident reporting
- Organizational changes (downsizing, restructuring, facility closing, address, telephone number, email address, etc.)
- Changes in contact information for the field instructor or organization