Minnesota State University, Mankato
Department of Social Work

BSSW Program

Social Work Practicum, SOWK 455
Field Manual for Capstone Completion
For
Bachelor’s of Science in Social Work (BSSW)

Revised Fall, 2013
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Introduction

Social Work 455, Social Work Practicum, and Social Work 450, Integrative Seminar are the Capstone academic experience of the BSSW Program in the Department of Social Work at Minnesota State University, Mankato, leading to graduation with the Baccalaureate of Science in Social Work (BSSW) degree. This degree allows its holder access to specific opportunities, rights, privileges, and obligations pertaining to the practice of social work in the State of Minnesota, nationally, and internationally. This manual contains information regarding Departmental policy, practice standards, and processes to which the student must comply for completion of the Capstone requirement and ultimately, graduation. It also includes the Department’s definition of generalist social work that underpins the Mission Statement, the BSSW Competencies and Practice Behaviors. It is strongly encouraged that students review this entire manual carefully in order to appreciate where this course lies within the social work curriculum, the requirements for successful completion of the field practicum, the BSSW Program faculty’s expectations, and the transition into professional social work through licensure.

University and College Goals

University: This course meets the goals of Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU, M) and by promoting exploration, understanding, explanation, and transformation of the social world through undergraduate teaching and learning, research and scholarly activities to local, state, national, and global communities.

College Goals: This course contributes to the achievement of a liberal arts education that provides a broad base of knowledge and skills essential for all college-educated adults in the twenty-first century in three specific areas: 1) development of critical thinking, communication, and problem solving skills; 2) increased students’ knowledge of historians and social and behavioral scientists discovery, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events and ideas; and 3) ethical and civic responsibility.
Department of Social Work Mission Statement

The Department of Social Work at Minnesota State University, Mankato promotes learning to prepare students to become social workers who practice with competence and integrity at the generalist (BSSW) and advanced generalist (MSW) levels. The Department supports and enhances the work of social service agencies through consultation, scholarship, research, leadership, and other service activities. The Department affirms its commitment to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, with an emphasis on small and rural areas, by enhancing human well-being, promoting social justice, and alleviating poverty and oppression for all members of our diverse society within its global context.

Goals of the BSSW Program

Preamble: The baccalaureate Social Work major prepares students for generalist professional social work practice at all system levels with an emphasis on small communities and rural areas within the global context, and provides a foundation for graduate Social Work education.

The Goals of the baccalaureate Social Work program are to:

1. Promote identification with the social work profession and commitment to the values and ethics of the profession that serve as a guide to professional practice [EPAS 2.1.1 & 2.1.2].
2. Advocate a commitment to affirming diversity and working to advance human rights and social and economic justice with an emphasis on small communities, rural areas and the global context [EPAS 2.1.4 & EPAS 2.1.5].
3. Teach knowledge, values and skills required to engage in planned change and research informed practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities [EPAS 2.1.6, 2.1.7, & 2.1.10a-d].
4. Encourage critical thinking to analyze and respond to contexts that shape policy and practice [EPAS 2.1.3, 2.1.8, & 2.1.9].

[The numbers in parentheses after Goals 1-4 refer to sections of the "Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards" (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).]
Departmental Competencies and Practice Behaviors (CSWE):

Competency 2.1.1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers:

PB#1: Advocate for client access to the services of social work;
PB#2: Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
PB#3: Attend to professional roles and boundaries;
PB#4: Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
PB#5: Engage in career-long learning; and
PB#6: Use supervision and consultation.

Competency 2.1.2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers:

PB#7: Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
PB#8: Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers "Code of Ethics" and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work "Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles";
PB#9: Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
PB#10: Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.
Competency 2.1.3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

Social workers:

PB#11: Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
PB#12: Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
PB#13: Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

Competency 2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, geographic location, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim.

Social workers:

PB#14: Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
PB#15: Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
PB#16: Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and
PB#17: Review themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.
Competency 2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers:

PB#18: Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
PB#19: Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
PB#20: Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

Competency 2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers:

PB#21: Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
PB#22: Use research evidence to inform practice.

Competency 2.1.7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment. Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live with an emphasis on rural and small communities; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers:
PB#23: Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
PB#24: Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Competency 2.1.8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers:

PB#25: Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
PB#26: Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

Competency 2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.
Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers:

PB#27: Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services with an emphasis on rural and small communities; and
PB#28: Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

Competency 2.1.10(a)–(d)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

Competency 2.1.10(a)—Engagement
Social workers:

PB#29: Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
PB#30: Use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
PB#31: Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

Competency 2.1.10(b)—Assessment
Social workers:

PB#32: Collect, organize, and interpret client data;
PB#33: Assess client strengths and limitations;
PB#34: Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
PB#35: Select appropriate intervention strategies.

Competency 2.1.10(c)—Intervention
Social workers:

PB#36: Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
PB#37: Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
PB#38: Help clients resolve problems;
PB#39: Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
PB#40: Facilitate transitions and endings.

Competency 2.1.10(d)—Evaluation

Social workers:

PB#41: Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.
Generalist Social Work Definition
Minnesota State University, Mankato
BSSW Program

Preamble:
Generalist Practice is the delivery of a social work services across systems with all populations, affirming diversity and advocating for human rights and social and economic justice. Generalist practice is built on a liberal arts foundation and incorporates social work knowledge and theories, values and ethics, and skills. Generalist practice is informed by research and responds to the contexts in which services are delivered.

The baccalaureate generalist social work practitioner:
1. Identifies with the social work profession and is committed to the values and ethics of the profession that serve as a guide to professional practice (EPAS Comps 2.1.1; 2.1.2).
2. Affirms diversity and works to advance human rights and social and economic justice with an emphasis on small communities, families, groups, organizations, and communities (EPAS Comps 2.1.6; 2.1.7; 2.1.10, a-d).
3. Applies knowledge, values, and skills to engage in planned change and research informed practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (EPAS Comps 2.1.6; 2.1.7; 2.1.10, a-d).
4. Uses critical thinking to analyze and respond to contexts that shape policy and practice (EPAS Comps 2.1.3; 2.1.8; 2.1.9).
5. Commits to professional competency through life-long learning, scholarship, and service spanning local to global environments (EPAS Comps 2.1.1; 2.1.9).

Place in the Curriculum
SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum, is taken in the final semester of a student’s academic career with the MSU, M Department of Social Work. It is taken in conjunction with SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar, with SOWK 447, and with Social Work Practice IV (organizations). These courses provide the final links between students’ academic learning in their general education/liberal arts sequence, and the social work curriculum.
Integration of SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum and SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar

SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum, and SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar, must be taken in the same semester. SOWK 455 is designed to provide a chance to fully engage in the field of social work, practicing all the knowledge, skills, and values to which the student has learned and demonstrated competence throughout their courses in social work and from the liberal arts foundation. The primary purpose of SOWK 450 is to offer the student the opportunity for support and direction in practice. Second, it affords the student social worker a successful transition to that of generalist social work professional by the end of the semester. The following section will explicate that support by discussing the two course descriptions, purposes, and integration of the outcomes.

Purpose

SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum
The practicum experience is designed to give students agency exposure that permits them to build on coursework by integrating and utilizing knowledge, skills, theories, and values that are applied in generalist social work practice. One of the primary purposes is to allow students contact with individuals, families, groups, organizations or communities involved with the social service delivery (as practitioners and clients) who are distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental disability, age, and national origin, in order to learn how to provide services adequately. Students will be able to acknowledge the impact of global social services that affect rural social service delivery.

SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar
The purpose of seminar is to help students clarify and integrate practicum issues and experiences with theoretical knowledge and the values of the profession. Seminar is a place to discuss how and when it is appropriate to intervene at micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Seminar is a safe place for students to confront and learn to deal with the social injustices within the social service system. Seminar will explore the ethical considerations of an intervention and non-intervention. Seminar is designed to be collaborative; therefore students will be required to participate by telling their experiences. It is only through this sharing that the value of practicum experiences
is realized. Students’ will be expected to utilize Seminar as an environment to demonstrate the completion of the Departmental Competencies and Practice Behaviors.

Course Learning Objectives

_SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum and SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar_

The student will take a more self-directive role during the practicum experience. It is not expected that the student will have all the knowledge and skills to complete the practicum outcomes at the beginning of the semester, but that the student will seek out opportunities as appropriate to access and acquire knowledge and skills. The objectives of SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum are directly related to, and rely on, the successful completion of the field practicum _in addition_ to materials and information presented in SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar. The list below of knowledge, skills, and values are a more specific statement of the Department’s Competencies and Practice Behaviors. The faculty believe that each student will have accomplished these by the end of their academic career at MSU, M. Students are expected, while in practicum, to learn or to draw on previous learning experiences, regarding the knowledge, skills, and values outlined here. Students will be asked to demonstrate through documentation in the Seminar assignments, as part of the Capstone expectation, and linkage to the Departmental Competencies and Practice Behaviors.

Objectives of the Course:

The objectives of this course are directly related to, and rely on, the successful completion of the field practicum in addition to materials and information presented in seminar. Below are the objectives as sub-categories of Knowledge, Skills and Values.

1) Apply information, theory, and concepts from the liberal arts foundation and the social work specific coursework, relying on generalist social work methodology, in the practicum site with clients at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro level. (Program Competency 2.1.1: PB # 1, Program Competency 2.1.3: PB # 11, 12 & 13, and Program Competency 2.1.7: PB # 23 & 24).
2) Develop population specific information and interventions via reading, training, and/or the World Wide Web, regarding clients distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender or sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental disability, age and national origin encountered in the practicum site. (Program Competency 2.1.4: PB # 14, 15, 16, & 17).

3) Demonstrate an appreciation for social and economic justice issues at micro, mezzo, and/or macro levels that may be present in the agency and in the lives of clients and the use of advocacy in resolving those issues. (Program Competency 2.1.5: PB # 18, 19,& 20 and Program Competency 2.1.8: PB # 25 & 26).

4) Develop an awareness of agency specific issues and concerns, historical and current, as presented by social work student colleagues, through agency observation, and as part of supervisory consultation. (Program Competency 2.1.1: PB #: 4, 5, & 6).

5) Recognize the different models of organizational structure and the models of service delivery systems of practicum agency and career opportunities. (Program Competency 2.1.9: PB # 27 & 28).

6) Demonstrate an understanding and application of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Minnesota Board of Social Work Standards of Practice and Ethical Conduct. (Program Competency 2.1.2: PB # 7, 8, 9, & 10).

7) Apply research skills in practicum setting by identifying, researching, and presenting information on a specific issue or concept related to client or practice issues. (Program Competency 2.1.6: PB # 21 & 22).

8) Be able to assess the activities of organizations and the dynamics of organizations. (Program Competency 2.1.9: PB # 27 & 28; Competency 2.1.10b: PB # 32, 33, 34, & 35).
9) Complete 440 hours of practicum experience, practicing generalist social work inclusive of bio-psycho-social assessment, planning strategies for social change, implementation, and evaluation that accurately describe and prioritize the needs of clients, particularly those from groups that are oppressed or are subject to discrimination. (Program Competency 2.1.10 a, b, c & d: PB # 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, & 41).

10) Be able to use practicum and seminar assignments and participation to self-assess and make performance adjustments as necessary. (Program Competency 2.1.1: PB # 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6).

11) Develop awareness of the critical importance of using theoretically and ethically sound social work knowledge, skills, and values in working at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro level with populations at risk and with populations that are distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender or sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental disability, age and national origin. (Program Competency 2.1.1 PB # 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6).

12) Understand the ethical requirement and rational for professional guidance (supervision) both in seminar and in the practicum site and the use of reflection to incorporate feedback into corrective action. (Program Competency 2.1.1: PB # 6).

**SOWK 450 and SOWK 455 Assignments Leading to Capstone Completion**

Social Work 450 and Social Work 455 provide the opportunity to demonstrate the accomplishment of the Departmental goals. Successful participation in both, along with the completion of the requisite assignments, is designed to function as the program Capstone as required by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Practicum and seminar assignments will be given to the student by the practicum coordinator, field supervisor, or a designated agency person to achieve the aforementioned Departmental competencies and practice behaviors. These may include reading, observation, seminars, training sessions, and or other educational opportunities that arise. Students are required to complete all
assignments in an organized, professional, and timely manner. Incomplete assignments may result in the delay of the end of practicum and graduation.

As with any senior level paper or experience, awareness of issues of cultural diversity, populations at risk, ethics, and best practices should be an integral part of the student’s thinking and should be reflected not only in the written work but also in your conduct and participation. Some specific assignments may vary from student to student but the following provides an overall perspective of assignments.

**Classroom and Agency Participation**

Participation is critical for both SOWK 450 and SOWK 455. It includes regular, on time attendance, attentive nonverbal behavior, participation in discussions, small group exercises, practice activities, and building on and responding to the comments of others. Participation also includes offering feedback and raising questions in seminar and within the agency.

Agency standards for dress should be clarified and followed when at the practicum site and representing the agency within the community or at other agencies. Although jeans may be allowed, it is suggested that students substitute casual trousers or khakis as they develop professional stature. Casual attire is appropriate for seminar.

Each student will be expected to co-facilitate or facilitate at least one seminar during a specific week of the semester. Students will research additional information for handouts and/or for discussion on Departmental competencies and practice behaviors of their topic. Each seminar will be interactive with the facilitators actively engaging their peers in conversation and or debate regarding the topic.

**Learning Plan**

Each student will complete a learning plan (LP), in consultation with the field supervisor and practicum coordinator, which establishes goals and individualized objectives to structure the practicum experience and to assess the student’s accomplishments. The LP (to be discussed in the first class meeting) will be completed during the first two to three weeks of practicum. This
document should be specific to the student’s learning opportunities and objectives, be specific regarding the activities in which the student will engage, and provide for a range of experiences at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. It should also demonstrate the opportunity for increasingly more responsible work with clients and within the agency. It may be amended during the semester upon agreement with the field instructor and practicum coordinator. The original LP will be submitted to the practicum coordinator for final approval, as will any amendments. This document will be placed in the student’s file. (see Appendix 8)

Field Practicum Journals
Each student is required to submit weekly journals to the practicum coordinator and the field supervisor. Journal assignments will be discussed in seminar during the first seminar of the semester. Students must submit journals on time, keeping in mind the continuing development of good documentation skills. The purpose of the journaling is to allow the student the opportunity to demonstrate their accomplishments of their learning plan goals and objective, to help the practicum coordinator understand the student’s application of their academic coursework, and to assist the field supervisor understand the student’s achievements during their field experiences, including the number of hours accrued. Weekly journaling will provide the opportunity for assessment of the student’s achievement of program objectives to meet the Capstone requirement.

Agency Project Assignment
The purpose of this assignment is for the student to complete a special project, determined by the student and site supervisor, which will be of benefit to the agency. Students are to meet with their field supervisors within the first two weeks of practicum regarding this assignment and brainstorm ideas of a special project that is of interest to both the student and the agency. This project may be an evaluation of a client’s intervention progress, an evaluation of a larger program, curriculum development, marketing plan, or other approved project that contains a literature review, methodology, and a final report. The final report of this Agency Project will be presented to the agency in written and presentation format. The practicum coordinator will require documentation of the proposed project and a written literature review.
The agency is the primary user of the final product. The documentation will be submitted to the field supervisor in a format in which “best fits” the agency; for example a detailed report, presentation, a brochure, a training curriculum, etc. The final product is to be written in the agency’s preferred format and is also to be presented to the staff or agency related meeting (i.e. Commissioner’s meeting, School Board, or other intra-agency meeting) in a mutually agreeable time and place (regular staffing, in-service meeting, etc.). Students who complete SOWK 450-455 in the spring semester may choose to present their project at the Undergraduate Research Conference (URC) at MSU, M. If students choose to present at the URC, they must fulfill the IRB requirements at MSU, M. Students are not required to present at the URC.

Documentation Packet
Students will prepare a documentation packet for the practicum coordinators to evaluate during the semester. The purpose of this packet is to evaluate the student’s professional writing skills as a partial requirement for the student’s final grade in Social Work Practicum (SWOK 455). Students are to remember that this is a pass/fail course and the student’s accumulative grade for this course must be 70% at minimum.
This documentation packet is to be submitted in a sealed envelope and arranged chronologically. The student is required to redact all documents. This might mean that the student copy the original, black out any identifying information, and then recopy the redacted record to ensure that identifying information is not decipherable. If the student fails to completely redact the information the student will receive a zero for this assignment. Because this would be a violation of MN State Statues and the NASW Code of Ethics, a Departmental review of the student’s ability to continue in the program may be conducted by the entire Department of Social Evaluation Process

SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar and SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum is on a Pass or No Credit grading scheme. Although the practicum coordinator is responsible for determining the final grade of each student in practicum and seminar, communication with the field supervisor and/or other agency personnel is an integral part of determining that grade. A passing grade represents a 70% or higher. The quality of a student's grades will be assessed using the following grading scale:

- A grade of "A" is awarded for superior work 90-100%
- A grade of "B" is awarded for excellent work 80-89%
- A grade of "C" is awarded for average work 70-79%
- A grade of "D" is awarded for less than average work 60-69%
- A grade of "NC" is awarded for failing work below 60%

A failing grade is the equivalent of anything that is less than average work or below 70%. Grading is based on the following:

- Completion of seminar assignments.
- Completion of practicum assignments.
- Attendance and participation at the practicum site and seminar.
- Well-documented student journals, submitted to the practicum coordinator once a week.
- Mid-placement evaluation, submitted during the 7th – 8th week of the practicum experience (see Appendix 9).
- Final evaluation, submitted during the 15th – 16th week of the practicum (see Appendix 9).
• Completed Evaluation of the Agency, submitted during the 15\textsuperscript{th} – 16\textsuperscript{th} week of the practicum (see Appendix 10).
Practicum Admission and Retention Policies and Procedures

Admitting students to practicum is the responsibility of the faculty of the BSSW Program. The faculty's responsibility is to assure that the social work student who graduates from Minnesota State University, Mankato has demonstrated the program competencies and practice behaviors as outlined by Council on Social Work Education, Minnesota State University, Mankato, The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the BSSW Program. SOWK 450, Social Work Practicum, and SOWK 455, Integrative Seminar, are never waived for any reason.

Completion of all required general education courses and all required social work courses (with the grade of C or better, or a Passing grade when applicable) is a prerequisite to SOWK 450 and SOWK 455. The student must receive an ‘average’ or better in their SOWK 312, Junior Field Experience, evaluation and the narrative evaluation must reflect the student’s appropriateness for the social work profession. In order to enroll in SOWK 450 and SOWK 455, all incompletes, in progresses, or any other unmet social work curriculum requirements must be met. Permission to register is granted only by Departmental consent.

Background Check Policy

Effective 08/25/05 the BSSW Program requires all students entering SOWK 455, Senior Practicum, to complete a criminal background check by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA). If you have questions about this process please speak to the practicum coordinator.

To complete the background check students will complete the following:

1. Use the Letter of Good Standing and Consent Form (Appendix 4) to verify that you are a student in good standing with the BSSW Program and give informed consent for the background check to occur. Please note the Letter of Good Standing and Consent Form must be removed from the manual, completed, and signed in front of a public notary.
2. Send the following three items to Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, CJIS Section, 1430 Maryland Ave. E., St. Paul, MN  55106

- The signed/notarized Letter of Good Standing and Consent Form, and
- the Minnesota BCA background check fee of $15 payable by personal check, money order, cashier's or certified check (please put Minnesota State University, Mankato on the memo line), and
- one (1) stamped envelope with the following address: Minnesota State University, Mankato, Department of Social Work, BSSW Program, Room 358, Trafton Science Center North, Mankato, MN 56001 - ATTN: BCA Document enclosed

Please note the envelope will require additional postage, as there may be 2 – 4 pages being mailed to the Department of Social Work. We advise that you weigh the envelope with 2 - 4 pieces of paper at your post office before mailing so you can affix the appropriate postage. We cannot accept COD’s or “postage due” packets. Failure to submit ALL the documentation or insufficient postage will result in delays the final phase of your placement process because you may not begin placement until the Department receives the MN BCA Background check.

**Information Contained in a Criminal Background Check**

Information contained in a criminal background check contains both public and private information. The State of MN defines public information as:

Minnesota criminal history records contain information on all arrests and convictions. State statutes require all law enforcement agencies in the state to report juvenile felony and gross misdemeanor arrests, and adult felony, gross misdemeanor, enhanced gross misdemeanor and targeted misdemeanor arrests to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA). They are not required to report other misdemeanor arrests, but they may report them if they choose. The law enforcement agencies send a copy of each arrest fingerprint card to the BCA. The information from each card is recorded in the CCH record. Courts and Corrections report information regarding convictions, court dispositions, probation, and custody actions which are recorded in CCH. Data on criminal convictions is public for 15 years following the completion of the sentence. Public information includes: offense, date of the offense, court of conviction, date of the conviction, sentence, level of conviction, and probation agency or place of confinement. The public information does not include an individual's arrest history.
Compliance
Failure to comply with this policy in the required timelines will result in delayed and/or denied permission to enter into SOWK 455 at the discretion of instructor.

Implications
As social work students you should be aware of the implications of having a criminal record of felonies, gross misdemeanors, misdemeanors and/or arrests. Legal problems may limit employment opportunities. Criminal convictions are reviewed when application is made for social work licensure in Minnesota and a conviction of a felony, gross misdemeanor, and some lesser misdemeanors may keep the student/graduate from being licensed and/or employed.

Confidentiality of Background Check
All records are kept confidential and secured in a locked filed cabinet in the sole possession of the BSSW Program. The standards, as set forth by the federal government which includes the Confidentiality of Alcohol & Drug Abuse Patient Records; 42 CFR Part 2 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, (HIPPA); 45 CFR Part 160 -164, in this regard, are clear and will be strictly followed.

Departmental Review
If the criminal background check is returned with felonies, gross misdemeanors, and/or misdemeanors, the Department may request further court documentation, to meet with the student, and/or to submit a written explanation and any other information considered necessary by the Department.

When a criminal background check reveals the conviction of a felony, gross misdemeanor, or misdemeanor, the Department will inform your placement agency in writing. The agency has final decision-making power as to whether they will accept the student for placement.

The Department holds the right to accept, suspend, or reject a student’s application to SOWK 455 based on a wide variety of reasons, including criminal records. Actions taken by the Department may impact the student’s continued progress in the social work program.
**Beginning Placement**

The purchase of liability insurance, NASW membership, and the Criminal Background Check is required prior to beginning SOWK 450 and SOWK 455. The liability insurance can be purchased at the Campus Hub/Cashier’s Office for $8.00. The NASW membership can be obtained on-line at the NASW website. The student rate for NASW memberships is $48.00. Please provide the field coordinator with copies of all the requirements prior to beginning placement. If copies of those documents are not received before to the beginning of placement, the student will be asked to complete the necessary paperwork and the field supervisor will be notified that the student will not be starting their practicum until all documentation is completed.

**Transfer Students**

Decisions regarding credit transfer from other social work programs that affect admission to SOWK 455 will be made on a case-by-case basis. These decisions will vary according to the nature of the courses taken, the school attended, prior agreements with other schools, etc. Students are urged to discuss transferring credit with an advisor or the chair of the Department as early as possible after transferring to MSU, M. Additionally, students will be asked to submit relevant documents (cover letter, transcripts, syllabi, examples of work) in a timely manner so that an evaluation of the completed course work can be conducted. SOWK 450, Social Work Practicum, and SOWK 455, Integrative Seminar, are never waived for any reason.

**Drop/Add**

Any student has the right to drop SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum, and SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar, within University policy. Because of the requirement that these courses have to be taken together, a student may not elect to keep one and drop the other. This decision must be discussed with the practicum coordinator, the student's academic advisor, and the field supervisor. It is important to remember the student's withdrawal may affect academic opportunities related to financial aid, graduation, and continuation in the program. Other considerations include the impact, particularly after the semester has begun, on agency services, the consumers, and the BSSW Program's relationship with the agency for future placements. Therefore a plan for withdrawal must be developed and implemented carefully in order to minimize the impact.
Students who apply to come into SOWK 450 and SOWK 455 after the semester begins may be allowed to do so within the University’s late registration period based on individual mitigating circumstances. However, students should be in communication with the practicum coordinators regarding any ongoing or anticipated situations that may impede their progression into placement. Due to the difficulties in arranging last minute placements, waiting until the beginning of the semester to have these discussions is highly discouraged. The Department reserves the right to deny all students who delay the application or the agency placement process.

**Dismissal or Suspension of Placement**

All practicum students have been exposed to the ethics and values of social work practice throughout their social work courses. Students must adhere to the of MSU Student Conduct policies, policies outlined in the Dept. of Social Work’s Student Handbook, NASW Code of Ethics and MS 148E. The following are considered serious violations of the ethics and values:

- Violation of consumer and/or agency confidentiality.
- Violation of professional relationship boundaries including, but not exclusive to, physical or sexual assault, sexual harassment, social/sexual involvement, or emotional abuse.
- Evidence of current substance abuse.
- Evidence of impairment that, in the judgment of the placement agency, jeopardizes the primacy of the consumer's or agency's interests.
- Criminal charges that reflect personal behaviors incompatible with the expected behaviors and/or ethics of professional social workers.
- Any unethical behaviors that are incompatible with the Social Work Code of Ethics (i.e., falsifying records, misleading consumers, harassment of supervisors, clients, fellow students, and/or faculty) or the MN State Statutes 148D & 148E.
- Failure to meet requirement for attendance, participation, and the accrual of hours.
- Inability to ensure client rights.

Any substantive complaints in any of these areas may result in corrective discipline, suspension, failure in SW 450 & SW 455, and/or reconsideration of the student being retained in the major. It
is the obligation of the BSSW Program to also file a formal complaint with the Minnesota Board of Social Work that may be used by them upon the students’ application for licensure.

Students have the right to appeal the decision of the instructor(s) or the BSSW Program. Please see the Student Handbook for the appeal process.

**Practicum Completion**

Students who may have difficulty completing their practicum requirements in one semester should communicate this concern to the practicum coordinator as soon as possible. The coordinator is able to work with the student in order to meet the student’s needs and the Department’s requirements. Under some circumstances, students may be able to start their practicum experience early, extend the practicum beyond the traditional 15 week semester, or establish a practicum schedule that will allow them to respond to their unique situations. Such adjustments are the exception and require prior approval of the practicum coordinator and the field supervisor. Communication and documentation of these arrangements may occur by telephone, letters, in person, fax, or email.

Situations may develop that require a placement change once the semester has started. Changes can be initiated at the request of the field supervisor, practicum coordinator, or the student. Such changes are quite rare and will only be considered under unusual circumstances. It will be the practicum coordinator’s decision whether the student is to receive credit for the time spent in the original placement.

**Attendance**

The students in practicum will be at their placement site 32 hours per week, Monday through Thursday, for 15 weeks (32 x 15 = 480 hours). The students are permitted to use forty (40) hours of the placement time as a buffer for personal or sick days, studying for or taking state licensure exam, merit exam, or other state employment exams, exam review courses, employment interviews, resume writing, or other events. The students must negotiate with their field supervisor and the practicum coordinator the dates and times of absences. The practicum coordinator and supervisor may approve alternate schedules (including Saturday or Sunday). The
students will be at the hours the agency operates or as agreed upon by the student and the supervisor. All students will be attending SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar and SOWK 447, Practice IV, on Fridays during the semester. The students will not be at the placement site during exam week except by special arrangement between the student, the field supervisor, and the field coordinator. Students will notify the field supervisor and the practicum coordinator of any absences either prior to the absence or the same day of the absence. This contact is to be either by telephone or email.

- To preserve the academic intent of the practicum, students and supervisors are asked to flex hours if the students are at the agencies for more than eight (8) hours in a day.
- Time should be allocated for practicum reflection, necessary reading, planning within the regular work day, and during practicum supervision.
- The students are required to maintain documentation of practicum hours.
- Practicum is designed for continuity of services across a full semester. Students are expected to begin the first day of classes and conclude the last class day of the semester (exceptions for this must be approved by the practicum coordinator).

In almost all instances the MSU, M, calendar governs the days the students are at the agency. A few students will find it necessary to negotiate the variance of MSU, M’s and the agency’s calendars. An example of this variation is spring break for public/private schools and MSU, M.

Absences

Practicum Site

If students are absent for reasons beyond their control (illness, family death, etc.) the student must notify the field supervisor and the field coordinator as soon as possible (at a minimum, usual professional practice requires notification within a half-hour of the beginning of the day) and provide the reasons for the absence or tardiness. If possible, the student should speak with the supervisor. If not, the student should leave a message, with a telephone number for a return call. If the student is absent from practicum beyond the 40-hour buffer, the hours absent will have to be made up at a later date. If a student fails to complete the required 440 hours within the semester, a grade of NC (No Credit), IC (Incomplete), or IP (In Progress) will be entered. The hours necessary for completion will be discussed by the student with the practicum
coordinator. The student is responsible for initiating and documenting a plan for completion of hours either at the current site or at another. The practicum coordinator will approve the plan and make any necessary practicum site arrangements for the completion of the practicum.

**Seminar**
Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted one unexcused absence. Students should communicate directly with the practicum coordinator about any additional absences. SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar, must be taken concurrently with SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum; therefore any disruption of seminar attendance may impact the continuation of the practicum.

On the rare occasion that the agency has an educational event on a Friday that the student feels strongly that they would benefit from, the student may negotiate with the practicum coordinator to attend one event. This does not excuse the student from SOWK 447, Practice IV, nor should the student expect that instructor to waive Practice IV attendance policies. Students should be thoughtful about weighing the benefit of the absence against any possible repercussions.

**Location of Placement Sites**
The practicum coordinator will maintain a list of sites within approximately 150-miles of Minnesota State University, Mankato. Placements outside the 150-mile radius may be made under special circumstances. There are cost, supervision, travel, and seminar issues that must be considered with out of state placements. Students are encouraged to discuss any plan of that nature with the practicum coordinator a year or two prior to admission into practicum. These placement requests will be considered due to unique opportunities for students that are not available in a more immediate setting. Students may be asked to take some financial responsibility for facilitating such a placement.

**Communication**
The field supervisors and coordinators have the responsibility to communicate as needed with each other using any of a variety of formats (telephone, letters, in person, fax, email, etc) as a
means to evaluate the student’s performance. The student is also responsible for communicating directly with both the field supervisor and the practicum coordinator in any of the aforementioned formats. The BSSW field coordinators may consult with the Department of Social Work faculty if the need arises.

**Employment and Practicum**

The BSSW Program follows the standards established by Council on Social Work Education that clearly state that the student’s practicum experience and supervision must be different than the student’s employment. The BSSW Program will make every attempt to work with the student and the agency if the student requests to complete the practicum requirement at their place of employment. The following conditions must be satisfied in order to have a successful placement.

- The practicum assignment must be within a different unit/division/department than that of the employment.
- The student must be assigned a field supervisor who does not also supervise their employment.
- The agency must provide release time for the practicum.
- All other practicum supervision requirements must be met.

**Inclement Weather**

Most practicum sites are located in Southern and Central Minnesota and inclement weather can be expected. In that case, the student’s departure to or from the practicum site may only be delayed an hour or so, or it could be for an entire day. Students may use the following to gain information regarding travel to and/or from their home or practicum site:

- The Statewide Road Conditions and Weather number 1-800-542-0220.
- Local radio stations for school closings and early dismissals.

If the student is at the practicum site and the weather conditions create unsafe road conditions, the field supervisor or another designated individual at the agency should be consulted. The student is permitted to leave early, take advantage of the agency’s overnight hospitality, or make other accommodations to stay overnight. Emergency assistance in cases of inclement weather is required for all out-of-town practicum sites. The student and supervisor should always consider the safety of the student in making travel plans. If a student is delayed by weather from leaving
home, they should immediately contact their field supervisor and negotiate an arrival time or absence.

Nondiscrimination in Educational Opportunity
Definitions
Minnesota State University, Mankato and the BSSW Program have clear policies regarding nondiscrimination and the possible outcomes if it occurs. The following will assist students in determining if discrimination or harassment is occurring and the steps they should take.

- Discrimination because of race, sex, or disability is prohibited by state and federal law. Discrimination because of sexual orientation is prohibited by state law. Discrimination is defined as conduct that is directed at an individual because of his/her race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, mental/physical disability or that of his/her partner and which subjects the individual to different treatment by agents or employees so as to interfere with or limit the ability of the individual to participate in, or benefit from, the services, activities, or privileges provided by the university or otherwise adversely affects the individual’s employment or education.

- Harassment because of race, sex, or disability is a form or discrimination prohibited by state and federal law. Harassment because of sexual orientation is prohibited by state law. Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that is directed at an individual because of his/her race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or disability or that of his/her partner and that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to have the purpose or effect of creating a hostile work or educational environment. Harassment may occur in a variety of relationships, including faculty and student, supervisor and employee, student and student, staff and student, employee and employee, and other relationships with other person having business at or visiting the educational environment.

- Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may occur when it is directed at members of the opposite sex or when it is directed at members of the same sex.
• Acts of sexual violence are criminal behaviors and create an environment contrary to the goals and missions of Minnesota State University. These acts will be investigated and may subject an individual to complaints and disciplinary sanctions as well as possible referral to appropriated law enforcement agencies. (Taken from the 2009-2010 Undergraduate Bulletin, Minnesota State University, Mankato.)

Reporting and Documentation
1. The student should clearly, specifically, and firmly communicate to the alleged harasser that their behavior is offensive and unwelcome.
2. Notify the practicum coordinator and the field supervisor about the harassment. If the harasser is the field supervisor, notify that person’s supervisor. Do not delay.
3. When the harassment begins, and if it continues, the student should keep a written record for the specific dates, times, places, witnesses, and the nature of the harassment.
4. The practicum coordinator will act as the student’s advocate to see that the harassment ceases. The student will not be penalized if it becomes necessary to halt the placement.

(Taken from the 2009-2010 Undergraduate Bulletin, Minnesota State University, Mankato.)

Persons with Disabilities
The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that the University provide services for persons with disabilities. Students with a disability requiring an accommodation should contact the Disability Services Office prior to starting SW 450 & SW 455 to discuss their needs and develop an accommodation plan. In addition, it may be helpful to inform the field coordinator of your disability and involvement with the Disability Services Office. The supervisor will make the necessary accommodations based upon the direction of the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Visit the ODS at 132 Memorial Library or call 507-389-2825 (v/tty). Agencies that a student expresses interest in for placement may need to be involved in creating the necessary accommodations. Students will not be able to receive accommodations during the semester if an accommodation plan has not been developed.

Scent Free Environment Policy
The BSSW Program has a “Scent-Free Environment” policy for our students, staff, faculty, and visitors. This is an accommodation in response to a request under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and as such, compliance is mandatory. There is no “right” to wear volatile
organic compounds (VOC) of natural or synthetic composition that interfere with the health of colleagues, and there is a duty to assertively avoid the use of such substances during work hours. People with multiple chemical sensitivity or environmental illness have a range of responses to these compounds, such as headaches, nausea, disorientation, dizziness, migraines, skin reactions and asthmatic reactions. Some reactions can be severe, requiring oxygen treatment, continuous medication treatment, emergency room treatment, and/or hospitalization. Therefore we take our scent-free environment very seriously.

The most common, and easiest to control, volatile organic compounds are scented products, for example, perfume, body oils, powders, hair sprays, etc. Other scents that can be harmful come from scented clothes-dryer sheets and liquids, some printed materials, some cleaning compounds, some paints, carpet glue, new upholstery, chemicals, etc. It sometimes has been difficult to anticipate harmful products because there are so many chemicals used in our environment. Please monitor your use of scented products and don’t wear them while in Wissink Hall, Trafton Science Center, or in social work classes. This is also an important consideration as you begin to work with persons in the community who may have similar allergy problems. We would encourage you to limit your use of VOCs throughout your practicum and career.

**Grievance Procedures**

Grievance procedures have been developed for the use of students and faculty. The procedures are designed to deal with disagreements that may develop during the practicum experience. The students may grieve any decision made that will affect the student's outcome for this course. The student should follow the step-by step procedure that is outlined in the student handbook. (See *The Social Work Student Handbook* at [http://sbs.mnsu.edu/socialwork/].)
Career Development and Licensure

Program competencies and practice behaviors, located elsewhere in this document, focus on knowledge, skills, and values that social work students are expected to accomplish during their educational tenure. These include program competencies and practice behaviors that support students to graduate and transition into the professional social work community. The accomplishment of those objectives prepare students to begin professional careers in generalist practice, to identify with and take responsibility for the profession, to value and affirm diversity in society and the world, to be prepared for graduate education, and to implement the goals of the profession through contributions of scholarship and service, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Students are encouraged to recognize that the knowledge, skills, and values they develop in the practicum setting are those that employers are seeking. Students are encouraged to “package” their abilities in a professionally prepared vita, resume, and or portfolio. The Career Counseling Center has staff people to work with students from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences to develop such a document.

Although it is not the policy of this Department that students must take a licensing examination, the Department strongly encourages students to do so. In Minnesota and many states, licensure is a requirement for social work practice and social service employment. Information will be provided regarding the nature of the examination, time lines for application for licensure, and for taking the examination, costs, and the requisite supervision. Information will also be made available regarding merit examinations. However, it is incumbent on the students to take the initiative to access information (including the licensure student handbook and application), contact the relevant agencies with questions, and, in general, manage their transition to professional work settings. The following are World Wide Web sites that are often requested from students for information about licensing, examinations, employment:

- Minnesota Board of Social Work (state licensing board, test information and forms)
  www.socialwork.state.mn.us/
- Association of Social Work Boards (licensure test information)
  www.aswb.org/
• Minnesota Merit System, Department of Human Resources (merit system information and forms)
  www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/agencywide/documents/pub/dhs_id_010515.hcsp

• Minnesota Department of Employee Relations (statewide career opportunities)
  http://www.doer.state.mn.us/employment.html

• Minnesota School Social Workers Association (school social work license information and statewide position openings)
  www.msswa.org/

• National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (professional organization information and opportunities for involvement)
  www.naswmn.org/

• MN School Board Association
• MN Nursing Home Association
• MN Non-profit Organization Association
Application Policies and Procedures

The application for admission to SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum, is to be completed during the semester prior to enrollment. The application is contained in this manual and on the Department of Social Work’s Home Page.

The BSSW Program will establish due dates for applications for fall and spring semesters. Notice of the due dates for the application will be posted on the social work bulletin boards and email listserv and announced in SOWK 443, and in SOWK 445.

Application Packet

All typed materials should be submitted in a standard size manila file folder. The application folder must include:

- A completed copy of the practicum application form. The practicum application is located in the appendix section of this manual and on the social work homepage. Please keep in mind this form should be prepared thoughtfully as it will be reviewed by the entire faculty and will be sent to your potential field supervisor. Remember this is a critical step towards building your professional credibility in the practice world.
- Signed copy of the Professional Commitment, Appendix 3.
- A copy of your resume. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Career Development and Counseling Center (located on the 2nd floor of the Wigley Administration Building) for review of your resume prior to submission with this packet.
- A copy of the signature page from the section on Criminal Background Checks. This will not be sent to your field supervisor.
- A current unofficial copy of your transcript. This will not be sent to your field supervisor.
- A copy of your SOWK 312 evaluation. This will not be sent to your field supervisor.
- A copy of your graduation plan and its approval from the registers office. This will not be sent to your field supervisor.

Students should maintain their own file of practicum forms submitted, correspondence with practicum coordinator and potential practicum sites, and meeting notes.
Application Review Process

The practicum coordinators review all applications and make recommendations regarding all applications to the BSSW Program faculty who then discuss the applications and recommendations. Faculty will make decisions regarding each applicant's retention in the program and admission into practicum. The applicants will receive timely and confidential written notification of the Department's decision. The applicants may receive the following response:

✓ The applicant is **retained and accepted** into practicum.
✓ The applicant is **retained and conditionally accepted** pending satisfactory completion of required course work or other stipulated requirements. An explanation regarding this decision will accompany the response.
✓ The applicant is **retained, but delayed** for acceptance into the practicum due to special circumstances. An explanation regarding this decision will accompany the response.
✓ The applicant will **not be retained in the program and is denied practicum admission**. An explanation regarding this decision will accompany the response.

Practicum Placement Procedures

If students are not admitted to SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum, they will stop the process at this point and meet with the practicum coordinators, their advisor, and the Department chair as needed for clarification, additional instructions, or re-direction.

Students admitted to SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum, should note the following paragraphs are presented sequentially and include steps for the student and the practicum coordinator. Compliance to this sequence of steps is critical. Students **must** adhere to this process if they intend to begin their practicum in a timely fashion. Appendix 2 is a checklist provided for students to track their progress.

1. **Initial Meeting** - Students will be notified SW 443 and SW 445 of the date and time of a mandatory practicum informational meeting. *Missing this meeting will delay the placement*
process. If it is impossible to attend this meeting for any reasons, please notify the practicum coordinators as soon as possible.

- The purpose of this meeting is to review the placement processes and procedures in detail, discuss the placement opportunities, respond to any questions or concerns the students may have, and formally begin the placement process.
- The necessity of timeliness in one’s effort, possible placement opportunities, appropriate dress, the liability insurance requirement, background checks, NASW membership, brief information about licensure issues, safety, and roles and responsibilities will be discussed.
- At this meeting students will be given specific direction on the steps to meet the BSSW Program’s requirement for professional liability insurance. This may be purchased through a private insurer, National Association of Social Workers, or Minnesota State University, Mankato.
- Electronic permission for registration for SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar, and SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum, will be given by the practicum coordinators. The Department secretary will enter electronic permission to register. If the student has completed all the requirements, has attended the orientation meeting, and is still unable to register, the student will check with the practicum coordinators.

2. Selecting Possible Practicum Sites – Students are asked to think carefully about their learning goals as they begin to consider practicum opportunities. Applicants may look at the database for practicum sites before or after the mandatory meeting. The database is located in the social work office or by contacting the practicum coordinators.

- Do not contact any of the practicum placements without prior permission of the practicum coordinators. This is the responsibility of the practicum coordinators.
- Students will be asked to provide the practicum coordinators with a list of their top five choices for placement (including any new placements) they believe will meet their learning goals. The practicum coordinators may have additional suggestions or information that may impact the site selection.
- If the placement that the student desires is not on the database, the student must discuss this with the practicum coordinators. Possible new placement sites are explored and
added to the roster each semester. Students are invited to provide agency name, telephone number, address, and contact name, if available, for any new site they would like to have explored.

- Placements are made within a 150-mile radius of MSU, M. Placements outside that radius should be discussed with the practicum coordinators two semesters prior to senior placement. The student requesting such a placement should also understand there may be additional financial responsibilities regarding transportation to SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar, and for the practicum coordinators to make site visits.

3. **Initial Agency Contact** - From the list of top choices, the practicum coordinators will contact the agency and determine if they are interested in a practicum student, whether appropriate client contact to meet the educational goals of the student is available, supervision, space, etc. is available within the agency.

- If it is a previously unused agency the practicum coordinator will make a site visit to orient the agency personnel to the BSSW Program’s requirements for student placements.
- If the agency is interested and can provide the required supervision, and student appropriate tasks and assignments are available, the student will be notified.

4. **Cover Letter of Introduction** - The student will prepare a generic cover letter of introduction to be mailed to potential placement supervisors along with a copy of the students' practicum application and resume. (This does not include the student’s transcript or 312 evaluation).

- All cover letters will be approved by the practicum coordinator prior to mailing. A copy of this letter will also be submitted to the practicum coordinator to be kept in the students file.
- Strict attention should be paid to correct grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and content. (Students have lost placement opportunities based on poorly constructed letters of introduction.)
- Students may also be asked to revise their resume and application if the practicum coordinators believes that it is in the student’s best interest.
• The cover letter of introduction should include the following:
  o Students’ letter head with address, phone number and email address
  o Contact person, agency name and address, date
  o Salutation – use appropriate address (Mr., Ms, Mrs., Dr., etc.)
  o 1st paragraph – introduction of the student and their interest in the agency
  o 2nd paragraph – strengths the student has that will benefit the agency from volunteer experiences, previous placements, job related skills and social work knowledge, values and skills (that are not already listed on the student’s resume).
  o 3rd paragraph – student thanks the agency for their interest and states the student will call to set up an interview within the next week
  o Close with signature
  o Add enclosures section (Enclosures: resume, practicum application)
• Agencies may also require that students complete agency volunteer applications, submit to an additional background check, or submit to required medical tests.

5. Submitting Material to the Agency - When notified that an agency is willing to be a practicum site, the student will forward, by ground mail, a copy of the practicum application, resume, and the cover letter revised to describe the student’s interest in that specific agency or the population they serve.
  • Students will follow up with a telephone call to that agency within five working days to set an appointment for an interview. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule the interview – only on rare occasions will the agency call you.
  • Agency personnel will be aware that you are sending materials. Delays may impact their continued interest in hosting a practicum student.

6. Communication with the practicum coordinators - The student will report to the practicum coordinator the date and time of the scheduled interview and apprise them of the outcome of the interview. In some cases agency personal may also call the practicum coordinator with feedback.
• Students may interview at more than one agency, however the competition for placements exists not only with one’s student colleagues from MSU, M but also from other colleges and universities. This can be particularly important to keep in mind in the urban areas.

7. Finalization of the Practicum - Students will send a thank-you letter to the each interviewer regardless of the outcome of the interview. If the placement interview goes well and all parties (practicum coordinator, student, placement site) believe this will be a mutually beneficial field placement, a letter of acceptance of the placement is prepared by the student for the practicum coordinator’s review. The student should once again make sure the practicum coordinator reviews this letter prior to it being sent.

Placement Considerations

Keep in mind that placement is a negotiable matter between the student, the practicum coordinators, and the agency. The placement is based on the student's practice interests, educational goals, and the availability of agencies that are able to assist in meeting these goals.

Agency designees have the authority to accept or decline to accept a student for placement within their agency. This decision is based on information the agency designee has about agency availability, the information provided by the student and the practicum coordinator, and the interview between the student and agency designee. The student also has the right to accept or not accept any invitation for placement from an agency. The practicum coordinators have the final authority for approval of all practicum.

The BSSW Program requires that students be placed in agencies where supervision will be conducted by a BSW/MSW credentialed supervisor. They may or may not be licensed. The supervisor is expected to have at least three years practice experience in social work and at least two years at the current agency. All new sites will receive an orientation visit that will include a discussion of the policies and procedures of the BSSW Program before students begin placement.
Interviewing Policy
The Department holds the right to deny the student entering into SW 450 and SW 455 if the student has three failed placement interviews. If the student has attended three interviews with potential practicum supervisors and been denied a practicum at all three of the agencies, the Department will meet to discuss appropriate next steps to be taken with the student.

Roles and Responsibilities
Preparing students to begin professional careers in generalist practice requires a combined effort of the practice community and social work educators. Communication between the practicum coordinators, the field supervisor, and/or the student is a critical component to the success of all placements and should occur throughout the practicum. Such communication may be initiated by coordinators, supervisors, or students.

Site Selection
SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum, and SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar, support the Department mission statement, program competencies and practice behaviors that prepare students to graduate and transition into the professional social work community by facilitating the development of practicum placements throughout central and southern Minnesota. Possible new placement sites are explored and added to the roster each semester. Agencies may come to the attention of the field coordinators through contacts in the community, a student expressing an interest in a specific agency or type of client population, or by the agency contacting the BSSW Program and expressing their interest in being a practicum site. Agencies are screened to assure their willingness to abide by Department goals and policies, to provide significant learning assignments, and to provide the appropriate level of supervision.

The BSSW Program requires that students be placed in agencies where supervision will be conducted by a BSW/MSW credentialed supervisor and where significant and appropriate tasks and opportunities exist for the student to apply generalist social work knowledge, skills, and values to enhance the well-being of people and to work toward the amelioration of environmental conditions that affect people adversely. The field supervisor is expected to have at least three years practice experience in social work and at least two years at the current agency.
If agencies describe themselves as able to meet those basic requirements, a site visit is scheduled by the field coordinator to visit the agency and further discuss the opportunities that exist. Students are placed in new agencies only after the site visit has been completed.

The site visit provides the practicum coordinator the opportunity to meet with the proposed field supervisors and other agency personnel face to face. The field manual is provided and the competencies and practice behaviors of the BSSW Program are shared and those of the field practicum are discussed. Clarification of the need for supervision, work space, time frames, scheduling, and evaluation also occurs during this site visit. This visit also provides the opportunity for agencies to share any special requirements they have of students, such as the completion of agency volunteer applications in addition to the Department application, submitting to a criminal background check, and or health screenings.

Practicum sites are evaluated by the students who are placed there at the end of the practicum. This information, along with the experience the field coordinator has with the agency, is used to determine whether a site will be retained on the database. Agencies may also opt to remove themselves from the database or to ask that no students be placed for specified lengths of time. Periodically, feedback will be provided back to agencies as evaluations from students are aggregated to provide a general review of all practicum sites. Aggregated data is used to protect student anonymity.

**Responsibilities of the Student**

The student is responsible for reading, understanding, and following this manual as it is explicit regarding completing the required prerequisites for field practicum and field seminar, applying to and setting up a placement, and assignments and requirements for participating in the practicum experience. In addition students will need to review agency policy and procedures, as directed by the field supervisor, and be prepared to act within the requirements of that agency. This includes, but is not limited to, adhering to policies regarding confidentiality for both the agency and clients, the use of computer and telephone for personal reasons, and dress code. If the student is uncertain about any specific policies that may impact their participation in the agency, the students should communicate with the field supervisor and practicum coordinator. For
example, if the student is in doubt about sharing any agency or client information within or outside of the agency (in any format) the students should discuss this with the field supervisor and the practicum coordinator. As instantaneous communication via email, blogs, and listserves has become more common, and traditional communication channels like the telephone and ground mail have not abated, students must be extremely cautious about breaching confidentiality. The student’s responsibility is to seek supervision when there is any doubt about actions they are taking within or on behalf of the agency. Information from the practicum site cannot be used in personal communication (on-line or in print) without written permission of the field supervisor and practicum coordinator.

**Responsibilities of the Field Supervisor (aka Field Instructor)**

Field supervisors are an integral part of the practicum experience by helping students to identify with and take responsibility for the profession, to value and affirm diversity and culturally sensitive practice, and to implement the goals of the profession through contributions of scholarship and service. Field supervisors have usually expressed an interest in participating in the practicum sequence of the social work program. We believe self-selection demonstrates a commitment to social work values, ethics, and the educational structure required. The Department appreciates that agencies can choose among many qualified students and that competition may exist for student placements. It is the intent of the practicum coordinators to ensure that the practicum is a mutually beneficial process, respecting the need for quality services for clients. This includes ensuring appropriate and timely support and interaction between agencies, the Department, and students.

Field supervisors are provided with an overview of student supervisory needs, skills, experience (volunteer and professional), and the particular learning goals the students has discussed during the placement process. The field supervisor is also encouraged to use the first week of the practicum as an assessment period during which decisions can be made regarding assignments, projects, or opportunities the student will allowed to pursue. The field supervisor is encouraged to maintain the ‘student’ orientation during the practicum, allowing students to grow progressively into more responsible roles while providing client services, to ask questions a new
employee might not feel free to ask, and to allow time for reflection and the active application of knowledge and skills with clients, including assignments for practicum and seminar.

The field supervisors’ responsibilities are to work with the student to develop a learning contract or plan with the student that provides a written description outlining the student specific opportunities, responsibilities, and tasks. A format will be provided in the field manual that addresses micro, mezzo, and macro practice. This is an individualized plan, negotiated between the student and the field supervisor, drawing on the learning objectives of the student and the opportunities that the agency can provide. The field coordinator has final oversight responsibility of the learning plan to assure the student has the opportunity to develop and practice a range of knowledge, skills, and values. Social work is not a stagnant profession and opportunities may arise during the practicum for student involvement that had not previously been considered. The plan can be amended to document other significant tasks and projects the student is involved with during the practicum.

The field supervisor should orient the student to the agency policies and procedures. This includes arranging for office space and facilitating any paperwork for the payment of all related expenses (i.e. mileage) as discussed and agreed upon. If the student is concurrently employed in the agency, the supervisor should also assist the student in adhering to the guidelines in this manual that address that circumstance. If the student is to receive a stipend from the agency the field supervisor should also facilitate that process.

The field supervisor must meet with the student to monitor progress toward meeting the learning plan goals and assess the student contribution to client care, in regularly scheduled, face to face supervisory meetings. These meetings should be, at minimum, one hour per week. It is expected that more informal direction, support, and supervision will occur. Although a designated field supervisor must meet with the student for the required supervision, this does not preclude the use of “task supervisors” for day to day work assignments. It is not the expectation of the Department that the student will only work with the field supervisor. Interaction with other social workers and multi-disciplinary staff will enhance the student’s understanding of professional cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.
Field supervisors should structure the students time until such time the student can function with more independence. The student should be allowed the opportunity to observe early on, with the expectation that the student will gradually take on more independent work and assignments (under supervision) so that eventually the student may be managing approximately 1/3 of the caseload of a regular worker. This increase in responsibility should be carefully monitored by the field supervisor so that client needs are always foremost. As the student begins to act in a more purposeful way with clients, the necessity for the required supervision becomes even more critical.

Field supervisors have the authority to make reading, writing, task, participation, or training assignments as needed to benefit student learning and service provision. Field supervisors are asked to balance their need to make assignments with the assignments that are required for SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar. Seminar assignments may be read by the field supervisor.

The field supervisor should also notify the practicum coordinator immediately (verbally and in writing) of any serious concerns or problems related to the student's performance. This may include concerns regarding the student’s application of principles and theory, ethical issues such as confidentiality or work-related issues such absenteeism. These concerns may also be related to student behavior within the agency in regards to attitude, cooperation, compliance with agency policy or practices, or completion of the learning plan. The practicum coordinator will address student behavior by consulting with the field supervisor, by meeting with the student, or by meeting with both the student and the field supervisor. Resolutions will be sought that meet both the needs of the student and of the agency. In rare instances students may be removed from placement due to behavior that is incompatible with the work of the agency.

The field supervisor is required to complete the student’s performance assessments at mid-term and at the end of the practicum. Those forms are available in the field manual. The student should take responsibility for reminding the field supervisor of due dates. The field supervisor may also include the input of other social workers or staff with whom the student has worked.
Although the field supervisor does not grade the student, their input significantly impacts the pass/no pass status of the student.

**Responsibilities of the Practicum Coordinators**

The practicum coordinators are responsible for overseeing all the aspects of placing students in appropriate settings with credentialed social workers, monitoring the placement through visits and journals, and consultation with both students and field supervisors. The practicum coordinator shares responsibility for ongoing dialogue regarding the process, procedures, and progress of the field practicum with students and field supervisors.

Practicum coordinators will read and respond to student journals, schedule site visits during the course of the semester, make any necessary adjustments in consultation with the student and the practicum coordinator to the learning plan or other assignments. The coordinators will also assign the final grade for both SOWK 450 and SOWK 455.

The practicum coordinators will provide ongoing orientation and updates to supervisors regarding any additions or changes to the goals and objectives of the practicum. That information will also be made available in the field manual. The field manual is distributed to all parties to clearly communicate the goals and objective of the Department, and the objectives of the practicum sequence. The manual also provides an overview of the integration of the practicum sequence that includes SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar, and SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum.

In addition to the initial site visit, the practicum coordinators will make regularly scheduled visits to agencies when students are placed in the agency. These will take place twice during the semester to monitor student progress. Additional site visits can be made at the discretion of the practicum coordinator, student, or field supervisor. The coordinators will consult with the field supervisor, as requested, about possible assignments, experiences, and or events that may occur as part of the practicum. Practicum coordinators will also be available to field supervisors for discussion of concerns or issues related to the student's progress via the telephone, e-mail, or by a visit.
Practicum coordinators will also meet with field supervisors each semester to provide an update of the program, review curriculum changes, receive feedback on the preparation of students entering field, and hear about new developments in the field that may affect the practicum. This meeting may be in conjunction with a guest speaker or educational event on campus that supports the professional development of the field supervisors. This is also an opportunity for practicum coordinators to gather feedback from field supervisors regarding the practicum program, the preparation of students coming into field, and the curriculum in general.

Potential and current field supervisors may be invited to campus periodically to meet the upcoming practicum classes and to informally discuss their agencies and possible learning opportunities during practicum. The anticipated effect of these meetings are that new sites are developed, students develop a greater awareness of the possibilities for placements, and the field supervisors can also become more aware of the caliber of the students and the changes in the social work program.
Appendix 1

Timeline for completion of placement steps

✓ Practice II and Practice III must be completed. A grade of “C” or better in any social work required course is necessary. Any In Progress (IP) or Incomplete (IC) grades must be resolved by the last day of the semester before practicum is scheduled to begin.

✓ If admission to practicum was conditional, the student must supply the practicum coordinators with proof of meeting the conditions by the end of the semester before practicum is scheduled to begin.

✓ Select, confirm, and have approved the placement site by the practicum coordinators prior to the end of the semester before practicum is scheduled to begin.

✓ Proof of liability insurance and NASW membership provided to the practicum coordinator by the first day of your placement.

✓ Proof of background check forwarded to the practicum coordinator by the first day of your placement.

✓ Register for SOWK 450, Integrative Seminar and SOWK 455, Social Work Practicum before the first day of your placement on the University’s MARS system.

✓ Provide the field supervisor a professional letter two weeks before you begin your placement reminding them of the start date and time. Remind the field supervisor that the days of practicum are Monday-Thursday, 71/2 to 8 hours per day with Friday reserved for classes. Provide the practicum coordinators with a copy of this letter.

✓ Submit the signed Memorandum of Agreement form to the practicum coordinators (Appendix 7) during the first week of practicum.

The importance of meeting these time lines cannot be overstressed. Practicum will not begin unless all timelines are met.
Appendix 2

Application Packet Checklist

All materials should be submitted in a standard size manila file folder and should be typed.
The application folder must include:

✓ A completed copy of the practicum application form. This should be typed or word-processed. This form is Appendix 4 of this manual or on the social work homepage. Please keep in mind this form should be prepared thoughtfully as it will be reviewed by the entire faculty and will be sent to your field supervisor. This is a critical step towards building your professional credibility in the practice world.

✓ Signed copy of the Professional Commitment, Appendix 3.

✓ A copy of the signature page from the section on Criminal Background Checks (page 20).

✓ A copy of your resume. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Career Development and Counseling Center (located in the Wigley Administration Building) for review of their resume prior to submission with this packet.

✓ A current, unofficial copy of your transcript. This will not be sent to your field supervisor.

✓ A copy of your SOWK 3I2 evaluation. This will not be sent to your field supervisor.

✓ A copy of your graduation plan and its approval from the registers office. This will not be sent to your field supervisor.
Appendix 3

Professional Commitment

When students enter practicum they are expected to accept and abide by social work obligations required by the profession, the law, and/or licensing regulations. Students assume responsibility for the liability risks that are inherent in their role as a practicing social worker. Each student must sign this section of the application in order to enter practicum. A copy of this form will accompany materials submitted to the potential practicum field supervisors.

1. I understand that criminal convictions may limit future employment and licensure. Federal and state law governs this. The Department has implemented a policy to require a criminal background check prior to senior placement. If, during the past five years a conviction occurred for a misdemeanor or felony for which a jail sentence could have been or was imposed, please describe these events, in writing and attach to this document. You may need to be redirected to appropriate areas of practice if a conviction creates conflicts with practicum agency requirements.

2. I understand that lapses in professional conduct are governed by licensing regulations and the profession. These are best summarized in Section I, B-3 of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Minnesota Board of Social Work Standards of Practice, which I have reviewed.

3. I understand that the student social worker should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with professional judgment, performance, or jeopardize the best interests of those for whom the social worker has a professional responsibility.

4. I understand that if I have had substance abuse difficulties, an agency may require a signed agreement to refrain from use of alcohol and or other mind altering drugs during the period of the practicum.

I have read the above and understand that any misrepresentation of known, current life stressors that might affect my performance in the practicum, or any related legal problems in my background, could result in academic and/or ethical sanctions. I am at this time able to practice social work, as a student, within the legal and ethical requirements of the profession and the law.

Signature__________________________________Date________________________
Appendix 4

Letter of Good Standing and Consent Form

Date: ____________________________

The following named individual is a student in good standing and has made application with Minnesota State University, Mankato, BSSW Program for a Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Criminal Background Check.

**Last Name of Applicant** (please print): ____________________________________________

**First Name** (please print): ______________________________________________________

**Middle** (full)(please print): _____________________________________________________

**Maiden, Alias or Former** (please print): __________________________________________

**Date of Birth**: ____________________________  **Sex** (M or F): ________________________

**Month/Day/Year**

**Social Security Number**: (Optional) ____________________________

I authorize the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to disclose all criminal history record information to Minnesota State University, Mankato Social Work Department, 358 Trafton Science Center N, Mankato, Minnesota 56001 for the purpose of Social Work 312, Junior Field Experience, or Social Work 450, Senior Practicum. The expiration of this authorization shall be for a period no longer than one year from the date of my signature.

I, ____________________________ (print name) am signing this in the presence of a Notary.

____________________________  ____________________________

Signature of Student  Date

____________________________  ____________________________

Signature of Notary  Date

**Directions to students:**
1. Sign this form in front of notary.
2. Address a return envelope to: Senior Practicum Coordinator, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Department of Social Work, TN 358, Mankato, MN 56001
3. Send this form, a $15 check addressed to MN BCA, and the return envelope to: Minnesota BCA Records, 1430 Maryland Ave E, St Paul, MN 55106.
Appendix 5
Practicum Application
BSSW Program
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Prepare this application thoughtfully and neatly. You may enter this format into your computer or download this application from the Department of Social Work's web page. The faculty and field supervisor will review this application. This application is to assist the faculty in determining your readiness for practicum. You must type your response to the questions. Do not leave any questions unanswered.

This application will also assist in making an appropriate match between your expectations, needs, and education goals and the agency in which you may be placed. Remember practicum is not training for a specific job, but continuation of your professional education.

Student's name:

Address:

Permanent address (if different):

Telephone number:

E-mail address:

Faculty Advisor:

I receive the Title-IV-E Child Welfare stipend recipient. Yes or No

Minor or Concentration:

Proposed class schedule during practicum:
1. You will be expected to provide your own transportation to and from your practicum placement. Do you have your own reliable transportation? Yes or No
2. Is there anything that might interrupt your practicum experience over the next semester?
3. Please write a 75-word narrative on your strengths as a social work practicum student. Be as specific as you can (use a separate sheet as necessary).
4. Please write a 75-word narrative on your limitations as a social work practicum student. Be as specific as you can (use a separate sheet as necessary).
5. Please describe your goals for the practicum experience. Be as specific as you can in 75 words (use a separate sheet as necessary).
6. Please describe in 75 words the model of supervision that you require. It may assist you to consider previous supervisors with whom you worked well (use a separate sheet as necessary).
7. Are you now or have you ever been convicted of a felony or any misdemeanor? Yes/No; if yes, when please give specific date(s), conviction, and resolution (use a separate sheet as necessary).
8. Are you or have you ever been known to the protective services division of any county due to a substantiated complaint of abuse or neglect to a child or adult? Yes/No; if yes, when please give specific date(s), specify complaint, and resolution (use a separate sheet, as necessary).
Appendix 6

Questions a supervisor might ask a student

Below is a list of questions that you might be asked during your interview for practicum placement.

1. Why are you interested in this agency?
2. What strengths do you bring to this agency?
3. Why do you want to be a social worker?
4. What skills or knowledge do you hope to learn here?
5. What qualities are you looking for in a field supervisor?
6. How will you use supervision time?
7. What are your previous experiences?
8. What experiences do you have with diverse populations?
9. What is your favorite social work class?
10. What social work course had been difficult for you?
11. Describe your learning style.
12. How do you handle stress?
13. Do you have a personal experience with the issues that this agency works with here?
Appendix 7

*Questions a student might ask a supervisor*

Below are a few questions that a student might ask the field supervisor during the practicum placement interview.

1. What is your experience with MSU, M students?
2. Why are you considering having a student?
3. What do you expect from a student?
4. How would you describe your supervision style?
5. What would a supervision session be like with you?
6. Are you available for informal supervision other than at the time scheduled?
7. Do you have time for scheduled supervision? How often?
8. What is a typical day like at this agency?
9. How did you get into the practice of social work?
10. What hours do you expect a student to have?
11. Are there meetings that I am required to attend?
12. How do you address issues of safety in this agency?
13. Will I need a car? Does the agency pay for mileage?
14. What training opportunities are available?
Appendix 8

BSSW Program – Minnesota State University, Mankato
Learning Agreement/Plan Form SOWK 455

Student’s name______________________________________________

Agency Identification
Field supervisor_________________________________________________
Agency Name____________________________________________________
Mailing Address___________________________________________________
Telephone________________________________________________________
Practicum Coordinator____________________________________________
Student hours: Beginning Date_______________ Ending Date__________
Weekly Schedule: M.______ T.______ W.______ Th.______ F. Seminar

Student will develop knowledge of:

Agency
☐ Agency programs
☐ Agency policies and procedures
☐ Community power structure
☐ Other professions
☐ Use of resources

Socio-economic status
☐ Poverty level or below
☐ Low income
☐ Middle income
☐ High income

Ethnic groups
☐ Asian
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Native American
☐ White (non-Hispanic)
☐ Other

Age
☐ Pre-school
☐ Elementary
☐ Adolescents
☐ Young adults
☐ Middle age adults
☐ Older adults

Sexual Orientation
☐ Gay/Lesbian
☐ Bisexual
☐ Heterosexual
☐ Transsexual

Gender
☐ Male
☐ Female

Major client intervention experiences the student will encounter during this practicum. Write 3-6 sentences that describe your practicum site and the broad areas of services in which you will be involved.

Individualized Competencies
In behavioral terms, state the major objectives that are agreed upon by the student’s field supervisor and the practicum coordinator. These should reflect the Outcomes described on pages 12, 13, 14 of the Field Manual. Consider adding personal characteristics or traits that may need to be addressed in a professional setting. A minimum of four objectives should appear for each goal. Your research project may also be included in your learning plan.
Be specific in identifying expected outcomes and methods of evaluation. Use a variety of methods to describe what you are learning from your work in the agency (your objectives). You may use feedback from your supervisor as ONE measure, implementing feedback and reporting changes you made can be another. Self-evaluation may be appropriate for some objectives but not for others. Other levels of measurement can include feedback from clients, co-workers, and numbers of contacts with agencies or referrals responded to. Keep in mind that we are looking for an evaluation not only on quantity of your work but also quality.

Objectives in the four categories should comply with the following formula: I will 1) perform, complete, or understand, 2) a specific task, intervention, or assignment with, 3) a specific number of clients or groups, 4) by a specific point in the semester, 5) and be able to evaluate my performance through supervision, documentation, or other means.

Example: I will lead an educational group, with children in a classroom, by mid-term, with performance observed by and discussed with the supervisor.

Example: I will develop a curriculum that addresses one diagnostic category and present it to the staff, by the end of the semester, with feedback provided by a pre- and post-test of the participants.

**Goal 1. Apply Social Work Processes:** These objectives should incorporate social work methodology (rapport building, data collection, problem assessment, planning, managing the intervention process, evaluating, and terminating) as they relate to intervening with micro (individual), mezzo (group/family), and or macro (agency/policy) client populations.

**Goal 2. Apply Professional Relationship Objectives:** These objective should include the development of interpersonal skills (assertiveness and initiative, for example) that enhance the professional provision of direct services to individuals, families, small groups, community AND the skills required to do the business of social work with other professionals. This category MUST include the application of social work values and ethical principles.

**Goal 3. Apply Communication Skills:** These objectives should include both verbal, nonverbal, and written skills. These are critical to the delivery of direct services to clients within micro, mezzo, and macro practice settings; and to the range of skills required to interact professionally with one’s peers within the community, in meetings, and through daily interaction.

**Goal 4. Apply Knowledge of Community and Organizational Behavior:** These objectives require the student to apply knowledge of how an agency interacts (internally and externally) in response to the greater political, economic, cultural, and practice environment in which the agency and their clients reside. Objectives can include the student’s integration into the agency, refining an appropriate work ethic, and learning time management skills.

**Practice learning opportunities in which student will engage:** (check as many as appropriate)
- Work with individuals
- Work with families
- Therapeutic group
- Support group
- Administration
- Research
- Policy development
- Grant development
- Resource development
- Team development
- Program development
- Other
Teaching materials and methodology that will be used by field supervisor: (check as many as apply)

- Daily log
- Case note/documentation review
- Question of the Week
- Individual conferences
- Group supervision
- Audio taping
- Video taping
- Direct observation of student
- Other (describe)

Signatures:

Student ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Field Supervisor ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Course Instructor ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Appendix 9
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Department of Social Work
450-455 Mid-Placement
and Final Evaluation

Student’s Name: ___________________________ Date: ____________________

Student’s Address: ____________________________________________________

Agency: ________________________________________________________________

Agency Address: _________________________________________________________

Agency Telephone Number: ______________________________________________

Supervisor’s Name: ___________________________________________________________________

Time Covered by Evaluation: ______________ Total Hours Completed To Date: _______

**RATING SCALE**
1 – does not meet minimal competency
2 – meets minimal competency
3 – meets expected competency
4 – exceeds expected competency
NA – Not applicable

**KNOWLEDGE OF AGENCY (Practice Behaviors 4, 5, 11, 14, 25, 26, 35, & 36)**

Demonstrates comprehension of agency history, philosophy and funding: 4 3 2 1 NA

Demonstrates knowledge of agency programs; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates understanding of client population served; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates knowledge of organizational structure; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Actively utilized agency policies and procedures; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Represents agency in a professional manner; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Comments by Supervising Staff regarding above areas: ____________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Comments by Student regarding above areas:  

PROFESSIONAL ROLES (Practice Behaviors 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 1N/A, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 37, 39, & 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepts and uses professional values, ethics and principles of social work</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains client confidentiality;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates accountability to client systems; (ex. keeping appointments, following through on plans, etc.)</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows ability to use own life experiences appropriately on behalf of clients;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of the student’s responsibilities and assigned tasks;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates ability to identify and use community resources;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based and practice knowledge, to provide the best services possible;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates appropriate amount of assertiveness and ability to hold clients accountable;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocates for client access to services;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses staff supervision, personal reflection, and self-correction;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes and maintains professional relationships with the public, clients, and colleagues;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of the differences between personal and professional tasks;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes personal values and any changes(s) needed in order to work effectively in the field of social work;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applies knowledge of the assessing the client within their own environment;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates self-awareness in relation to human diversity;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands, advocates, and engages in social work practice that improves social and economic justice;</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide leadership in promoting changes in service delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and practice to improve the quality of social services to all populations  

4 3 2 1 N/A

Comments by Supervising Staff regarding above areas: ________________________________

Comments by Student regarding above areas: ________________________________

COMMUNICATION AND INTERVIEWING SKILLS (Practice Behaviors 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 4N/A, & 41)

Expresses self clearly in written communications;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Expresses self clearly in verbal communications;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Shows congruence in verbal and non-verbal messages given;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates ability to establish warm, helping relationships;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates ability to listen with empathetic understanding;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates acceptance of self and others;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Expresses differing points of view without depreciating others;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates the ability to assess client strengths and limitations;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates the ability to develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates the ability to determine when it is in the clients’ best interest close cases or end services;  4 3 2 1 N/A

Comments by Supervising Staff regarding above areas: ________________________________

Comments by Student regarding above areas: ________________________________
WORK HABITS (Practice Behaviors 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 21, 22, & 23)

Works effectively with other staff in the agency both individually and as a team member; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Seeks feedback and critique regarding own work and uses feedback for constructive growth and change; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Follows agreed upon work schedule; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Is on time for appointments; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Completes assignments on time; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Handles work load, organizes time well, works efficiently; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates high standard for quality of work; (ex. completeness, neatness, accuracy, etc) 4 3 2 1 N/A

Utilizes models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation that are researched-based and client appropriate; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Uses own initiative; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Demonstrates flexibility; 4 3 2 1 N/A

Comments by Supervising Staff regarding above areas: __________________________________________

________________________________________

Comments by Student regarding above areas: ________________________________________________

________________________________________
STUDENT'S OVERALL MID-FINAL PERFORMANCE (Check One)

- Student DID NOT meet internship requirements.
- Student MET SOME, but not all, internship requirements.
- Student GENERALLY MET internship requirements.
- Student OFTEN PERFORMED AT A HIGHER LEVEL than internship required.
- Student CONSISTENTLY EXCEEDED internship requirements.

Based on your evaluation of the Student’s performance, please comment on his/her ability to work effectively in the field of social work:

_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

Supervising Staff’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________

Student’s Signature: _______________________________ Date: ______________
Appendix 10

Student Evaluation of the Agency

Student’s Name: __________________________________________________________

Agency: ________________________________________________________________

Field supervisor’s Name: ________________________________________________

Please complete the following form. It will be used in making an assessment for agency selection in the future. It may also be used for aggregated feedback to the agency supervisor and for the BSSW Program.

I. Schedule and Availability

a. Overall during the practicum, the supervisor was available for questions and supervision. Yes___ No___ Unsure___

b. Apart from scheduled meetings, the supervisor was available for additional contact. Yes___ No___ Unsure___

c. Did your supervisor provide you with a tour or arrange a tour of the placement site? Yes___ No___ Unsure___

d. Did you supervisor introduce you to other staff when you began your practicum? Yes___ No___ Unsure___

e. Did your supervisor discuss procedural matters and agency policies when you began your practicum? Yes___ No___ Unsure___

f. Did your supervisor discuss ethical and legal issues when you began the practicum? Yes___ No___ Unsure___

II. Activities

a. Your tasks, assignments, and responsibilities were always clearly defined. Yes___ No___ Unsure___

b. Your assignments, tasks, and responsibilities were general challenging. Yes___ No___ Unsure___

c. The agency provided travel reimbursement for expenses incurred while performing agency business. Yes___ No___ Unsure___
d. You had the opportunity to record case notes, social histories, or assessments.
   Yes___   No___ Unsure___

e. You experienced learning activities that involved individuals. Yes___ No___ Unsure___

f. You experienced learning activities that involved families. Yes___ No___ Unsure___

h. You experienced learning activities that involve communities. Yes___ No___ Unsure___
i. You experienced opportunities to develop problem solving competencies? Yes___ No___ Unsure___
j. You were exposed to learning experiences that provided opportunities to apply social work values. Yes___ No___ Unsure___
k. You experienced opportunities for understanding the interrelationships between social work practice and research. Yes___ No___ Unsure___
l. You experienced a general work environment that was harassment free and provided for you personal safety. Yes___ No___ Unsure___

III. Narrative Questions
    a. What were the positive features of this practicum experience?

    b. What were the negative features of this practicum experience?
c. Would you recommend this agency as a practicum site for future students? If yes, why? If no, why?

d. What recommendations would you make regarding this practicum site?

e. Does the supervisor address concerns that are raised by the student?
Appendix 11

Verification of Criminal Background Check Policy

I _______________________________ (print name) understand the MSU, M BSSW Program criminal background check policy.

________________________________________________________________________________________ Date:_________________

Student signature

Please copy and submit this page with your Application to SOWK 455