

Application Policies and Procedures

The application for admission to SOWK 418, 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 Department of Social Work 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 announced in SOWK 443, Social Work Practice II. Students who will be off campus during the application semester are required to submit their application in advance of their absence.

Application Packet

All materials should be submitted in a standard size manila 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 and is located on the social work homepage <www.mankato.msus.edu/socialwk/swhp.html>.
- ✓ 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 practicum supervisor. Remember this is a critical step towards building your professional credibility in the practice world.
- ✓ Signed copy of the Professional Comment, Appendix 3.
- ✓ 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 practicum supervisor.*
- ✓ A copy of your SW-312 evaluation. *This will not be sent to your supervisor.*
- ✓ A copy of your graduation plan and its approval from the registers office. *This will not be sent to your supervisor.*

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

Application Review Process

The practicum coordinator reviews all applications, creates a narrative summary, and makes recommendations regarding all applications. The Department of Social Work faculty will then review the applications, summaries, 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 decisions:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ The applicant is **retained, but delayed** for acceptance into the practicum due to special circumstances.
- ✓ The applicant **will not be retained in the program and is denied practicum admission**. An explanation regarding this decision will accompany this response.

Practicum Placement Procedures

If students are not admitted to SOWK 418, Social Work Practicum, they will stop the process at this point and meet with the practicum coordinator, the advisor, and the Department chair as needed for clarification, additional instructions, or re-direction.

Students admitted to SOWK 418, 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 in their admission letter of the date and time of a mandatory meeting. *Missing this meeting will delay the placement process.* If it is impossible to attend this meeting for any reasons, please notify the practicum coordinator 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 student 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, brief information about licensure issues, safety, and roles and responsibilities will be discussed.
- At this meeting students will be given specific direction on how to meet the Department of Social Work's requirement for professional liability insurance. This may be purchased through a private insurer, but the practicum coordinator will provide information about affordable insurance available through membership to the National Association of Social Workers.
- Electronic **permission for registration** for SOWK 411, Social Work Practicum Seminar, and SOWK 418, Social Work Practicum, will be given by the practicum coordinator. 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 coordinator.

2. Selecting Possible Practicum Sites - Applicants may look at the database for practicum placements before or after the mandatory meeting. The database is located in the social work office or by contacting the practicum coordinator.

- Do not contact any of the practicum placements without prior permission of the practicum coordinator. This is the responsibility of the practicum coordinator.
- Students will be asked to provide the field instructor with a list of three – five top choices for placement (including any new placements).

- If the placement that the student desires is not on the database, the student must discuss this with the practicum coordinator. 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. Placements outside that radius should be discussed with the practicum coordinator at the earliest possible time. The student requesting such a placement should also understand there may be additional financial responsibilities regarding transportation to SOWK 411, Social Work Practicum Seminar, and for the practicum coordinator to make site visits.

Appendix 1

Timeline for completion of placement steps

- ✓ Senior Paper must be completed by the end of the semester before practicum is scheduled to begin. The mentor and second reader must have signed-off on the final copy. (Keep in mind the faculty are on break between semesters and may not be available as a mentor or second reader)
- ✓ Practice II 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 provided to the practicum coordinator by the first day of your placement
- ✓ Register for Social Work 411, Social Work Practicum Seminar and Social Work 418, Social Work Practicum before the first day of your placement on the University’s MARS system.
- ✓ Provide the practicum supervisor a professional letter two weeks before you begin your placement reminding them of the start date and time. Remind the practicum supervisor that the days of practicum are Monday-Thursday, 7 1/2 to 8 hours per day with Friday reserved for classes. Provide the practicum coordinators with a copy of this letter.
- ✓ Submit the signed Contract with Placement Agency for Provision of Education and Training 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 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 (www.). 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 practicum supervisor. This is a critical step towards building your professional credibility in the practice world.
- ✓ Signed copy of the Professional Comment, Appendix 3.
- ✓ 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 practicum supervisor.*
- ✓ A copy of your SOWK 3I2 evaluation. *This will not be sent to your supervisor.*
- ✓ A copy of your graduation plan and its approval from the registers office. *This will not be sent to your supervisor.*

Appendix 3 Professional Comment

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.

1. Prior convictions may limit your future employment. Federal and state law governs this. In some instances, a criminal background check is required prior to placement. If, during the past five years you have been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony for which a jail sentence could have been or was imposed, please specify in order to avoid conflict in advance with agency requirements. (Do not include petty misdemeanors). You may need to be redirected to appropriate areas of practice.
2. Other lapses in conduct not expected of a professional social worker 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 Code of Ethics
3. The social worker should not allow his or her 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. If you have had substance abuse difficulties, an agency may require you to sign a statement signifying that you will refrain from use of alcohol or other mind altering drugs during the period that you are in 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 personal background, could result in academic and/or ethical sanctions. I am at this time able to practice social work within the legal and ethical requirements of the profession and the law.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 4

Practicum Application

Department of Social Work
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 practicum 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:

Social Security Number:

Faculty Advisor:

Overall grade point average (GPA):

MSU GPA:

Social work required courses GPA:

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 50-word narrative on your strengths as a social work practicum student. Be as specific as you can.**
- 4. Please write a 50-word narrative on your limitations as a social work practicum student. Be as specific as you can.**
- 5. Please describe your goals for the practicum experience. Be as specific as you can in 50 words.**
- 6. Please describe in 50 words the model of supervision that you require. It may assist you to consider previous supervisors with whom you worked well.**
- 7. Are you now or have you ever been convicted of a felony or gross misdemeanor? Yes/No; if yes, when please give specific date(s), conviction, and resolution (use a separate sheet if 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, if necessary).**