



**Dalton State College/
School of Health Professions**

**Department of Allied Health and
Social Work**

**BSW PRACTICUM EDUCATION
MANUAL**

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Steven M. Cooper, LCSW
Director of Practicum Education, Assistant Professor of Social Work
scooper@daltonstate.edu 706-272-2604

Tammy M. Rice, LCSW, DSW
BSW Program Director
Associate Professor of Social Work
trice@daltonstate.edu 706-272-4557

Department of Allied Health and Social Work

BSW Faculty and Staff:

Dr. Tammy M. Rice, LCSW, BSW Program Director and Associate Professor
BA- Georgia Southern College, MSW - University of Georgia

Mr. Steven Cooper, LCSW, Director of Practicum Education and Assistant Professor
BSW- Dalton State College, MSW - University of Alabama

Ms. Jodie Pack, LMSW, Associate Professor
BSW-Dalton State College, MSW - Valdosta State University

Mr. Nicholas Deslattes, LCSW, Assistant Professor
BSW – Dalton State College, MSW - Valdosta State University

Ms. Patricia Findley, Administrative Assistant (706) 272-2481
AAS-Dalton State College
FAX: (706) 272- 2668

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DALTON STATE COLLEGE

Bachelor of Social Work Program Overview

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The BSW Program fulfills the standards for BSW programs as specified by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). In addition, the BSW Program fulfills standards specified by the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS). Dalton State College is an institution of the University System of Georgia. Therefore, the BSW Program follows policies approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and Dalton State College. Students and faculty members of BSW Program are expected to comply with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (2017). Faculty members who are licensed also comply with the laws and rules regulating licensed social work practice in the state in which they are licensed.

PROGRAM MISSION

Grounded in social work's purpose, values, and ethical principles, the Dalton State Bachelor of Social Work Program prepares generalist social workers to be transformative professionals committed to service, social justice, and community engagement. We prepare leaders who will advocate for individuals, families, and communities and practice from an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and socially just perspective.

PROGRAM GOALS

The Dalton State BSW program goals are derived from our mission statement and our commitment to preparing social work professionals who will integrate knowledge, values, and skills to address the needs of our community. Our goals are part of a holistic social work curriculum designed to provide BSW students the opportunity to demonstrate the Council on Social Work Education professional competencies.

We prepare social workers to:

1. Engage in culturally competent, generalist social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.
2. Practice in accordance with the principles, values, and ethics of the social work profession.
3. Intervene effectively with micro, mezzo, and macro systems and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
4. Utilize evidence based, culturally sensitive, empirical research to inform practice.
5. Understand and analyze current social policies, their impact on client systems, and how to challenge social injustice while advocating for human rights.
6. Enter the profession having successfully demonstrated the nine professional competencies as identified by the Council on Social Work Education.

COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES (EPAS 2022)

The DSC BSW Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which requires that programs produce students who demonstrate competence in social work practice. Social work competence is demonstrated by the students' demonstrated ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. A competency-based approach requires assessing students' ability to demonstrate the nine Social Work Competencies that are listed below:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

- Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Codes of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context
- Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes
- Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

-Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and b. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

- a. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social workers:

- a. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery
- apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and b. identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social workers:

- a. Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

- a. Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- b. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Social workers:

- a. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and

- b. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social workers:

- a. engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- b. incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

- a. select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- b. critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

INTRODUCTION TO STUDENTS' PRACTICUM AND /TASK INSTRUCTORS

Introduction to Students

Welcome to the BSW Program at Dalton State College. This manual will provide students, practicum instructors, and task instructors with pertinent information about the practicum segment of the BSW curriculum. It contains information on practicum placement policies, procedures, and information regarding the various processes of the practicum placement experience. The manual was designed to help students, faculty, and practicum/task instructors by providing necessary information for completion of BSW practicum education requirements. It also provides information for practicum instructors to help prepare them to serve as supervisors for the student's practicum experience. It is important that students read this manual thoroughly. It will be needed throughout the program.

Every effort is made to keep the contents of this manual as up to date as possible; however, policies related to the practicum may change before a revision is completed. Therefore, it is extremely important that students maintain close contact with practicum instructors, course instructors, and the Director of Practicum Education in order to be made aware of any changes. *As a student it is your responsibility to be in contact with the significant people in the program to stay apprised of changes.*

Introduction to Practicum Instructors and Task Instructors

Dalton State College Social Work program and the BSW faculty extend our great appreciation to our agency practicum instructors. Through your participation in our program, our students are provided with the opportunity to integrate their theoretical knowledge with educationally directed practicum practice. This manual was designed with your specific role as practicum instructor in mind to help you with responsibilities in co-educating our students and to help you in providing them with the very best practicum placement experience. Without your commitment to our program, the BSW degree could not provide this important linkage of theory to practice realities. We are grateful to you for all you help us to do. Please feel free to contact faculty at any time.

You are an integral part of the DSC BSW Practicum Education Program, and we appreciate your time and energy. Your role is very important to the student's practicum success.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BSW PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

1. What is the process to obtain a practicum placement?

The Director of Practicum Education will meet with student groups at appropriate times to further discuss and share information about the placement process. This typically takes place early in the spring semester of the junior year for junior and senior placements. Practicums are assigned by the Director of Practicum Education in consultation with the BSW faculty members and the student. Students may not arrange their own practicum placements. All practicum applications are completed electronically through Tevera.

2. Can I ensure that I get my first choice for my internship?

The Director of Practicum Education makes every effort to place students in their preferred agencies and/or area of interest. When making practicum placement decisions the Director of Practicum Education will take into consideration geographic considerations, host agency availability, host agency needs and requirements, and students' interests/needs.

3. What if I don't have a car?

Almost every placement requires driving to perform practicum assignments that involve outreach, home visits, and community resource work. Generally, students in the first semester of senior practicum will ride with the employee they are shadowing, but that is not a given. Within their senior practicum settings, students may be required to drive in order to meet learning objectives. Additionally, many placements are located outside the Dalton area and require a student to be able to travel to and from the placement. Students should discuss any concerns regarding transportation with the Director of Practicum Education prior to the beginning of the junior year. *Note: Students are never allowed to transport clients.*

4. Can I have a placement in the town where I live?

It may be possible for students to be placed near their homes, depending upon the availability of approved practicum sites. A priority is placed on the host agency geographic location in the assignment process.

5. Can I do practicum work at my current place of employment?

It is *extremely* rare that a student will be able to complete a practicum at the current employment site. Students interested in a worksite practicum should discuss this possibility with the Director of Practicum Education as far in advance as possible. Typically, this is prior to the semester of a students' junior year. The student will then submit an application describing the agency and program where they work, their current position and duties, work schedule, and name and title of their supervisor. The request also includes a description of the proposed practicum work program,

assignments, practicum instructor, and placement schedule. The request should be signed by the student and the current and proposed supervisors. Submitting this does *not guarantee* approval of the request. All requests are considered on an individual basis.

6. I need to work while enrolled in school. How much time should I reserve for practicum work each term? Can my placement be arranged for evening and/or weekend hours?

The BSW junior practicum requires a total of 50 hours, 10 hours over a 5-week period.* The BSW senior practicum requires that students be in the practicum for a minimum of 16 hours per week in their assigned agency, both fall and spring semesters, totaling a minimum of 225 practicum hours in the fall (14 weeks) and 240 in the spring (15 weeks). Students must be prepared to meet these requirements. **Students must complete at least 450 practicum hours to successfully complete their internship.** * The junior practicum will not take place during the 2026-2027 academic year due to enrollment increases and placement availability. The junior practicum hours do not count toward the CSWE practicum requirement at any time.

Most students work in the practicum during traditional workday hours, 2 days a week (occasionally 3), depending on their class schedule. It is *extremely rare* for students to work practicum hours during evenings or weekends. The Director of Practicum Education will attempt to work with students to complement their work requirements, but in no way will the educational objectives of the practicum experience be compromised. In addition, the agency-based practicum instructor, or other designated personnel, must be on duty and available to the student during these non-traditional time frames. These conditions do not usually allow students to do any placement during evenings or weekends. These requirements apply for the entirety senior practicum.

7. What is the difference between an academic advisor, the Director of Practicum Education, a practicum seminar instructor, a practicum instructor and a task instructor?

An *academic advisor* is a member of the Social Work faculty who advises students on academic matters, which typically include course planning and registration.

The *Director of Practicum Education (DPE)* creates and assigns junior and senior student practicum placements in agencies in the community and handles placement-related problems should they arise. The Director of Practicum Education is responsible for ensuring that students are receiving BSW/MSW supervision as required by the Council on Social Work Education. Additionally, the Director is the liaison between practicum agencies and Dalton State College. The DPE also helps to oversee the students' practicum experiences through review of time sheets, logs, and serving as the primary point of contact for both the student and community partner.

The *Social Work Practicum Junior Seminar Instructor* is the practicum seminar course professor (SOWK 3400) and monitors and grades the student's Junior practicum work performance. The Practicum Seminar instructor may also serve as the social work supervisor for students if needed.

The *Practicum Instructor* is usually an agency staff member, and a BSW or MSW, who supervises the student a minimum of one hour each week and evaluates students in their day-to-day functioning at the agency from a social work perspective. In the event an agency does not have BSW or MSW staff to provide supervision, the DPE will secure the appropriate supervision for the student in cooperation with the agency staff. This external supervision is provided by qualified social workers

who have experience in the supervision of BSW students, and the assessment of social work competencies.

A *Task Instructor* may be formally assigned to a student. This person oversees the details of a student's activities during time at the agency. The task instructor may be the individual responsible for the day-to-day activities of the student, supervises the student and provides evaluation of the student in consultation with the Practicum Instructor.

Depending on the size of an agency and the agency staffing patterns, a student may or may not have a task instructor in addition to a practicum instructor. In some agencies, students will have a task instructor but will also work alongside other agency staff. The task instructor is typically the person making the determination regarding a student's day-to-day activities while in placement.

8. What if my agency is not what I expected or is not meeting my learning goals?

Once you have started practicum work, you should discuss any placement-related issues first with your faculty practicum professor (SOWK 4998/4999) who will help you determine if there is an immediate solution to a problem or if you should see the Director of Practicum Education. Any decisions about whether or not a student should terminate practicum work at an agency and be re-assigned to another agency must be made by the Director of Practicum Education in consultation with social work faculty and the Practicum Instructor. Changes in placement are made **only** when significant attempts to address the challenges have failed. Any disruption in a practicum placement may result in a student's delay in continuing in the social work program and/or graduation.

9. Do agencies hire students when they graduate? Which ones?

Occasionally students will obtain employment with practicum agencies following graduation. Hiring patterns vary from year to year.

PRACTICUM EDUCATION SUMMARY

The junior year practicum experiences occur in conjunction with SOWK 3400 (Junior Practicum Integrative Seminar)* and SOWK 4998 and SOWK 4999. Integrative Senior Seminar (SOWK 4995) and Advanced Integrative Seminar (SOWK 4996) also include the integration of practicum experiences to foster experiential and transformational learning.

Since the beginning of the social work profession in the late 1800's, social work training has included academic class work as well as actual practice experience in social service agencies. The attempt to develop a strong link between theory and practice remains a cornerstone of social work professional education. Through the practicum, undergraduate students are provided significant integrative experiences to prepare them for professional careers as generalist social work practitioners. The supervised practice experience or practicum is referred to in many different ways including practicum instruction, practicum work, supervision, placement, or internship.

The Council on Social Work Education (2022) has identified practicum education as “the signature pedagogy of social work education.” The Dalton State College BSW program works closely with the professional social work community in developing a quality practicum educational experience as an integral part of the undergraduate professional curriculum. Sites are available across the region and are selected through a prescribed process of site

evaluation and contractual agreements between the agency and Dalton State College. Student experiences in the agency are designed to meet objectives specified in the practicum syllabus for each semester placement. Hence, the BSW practicum is educationally directed, is implemented through a vital partnership of the social work program with selected human service organizations and is individualized to meet student learning needs and goals. Throughout the practicum placement, a student's experience is developed, directed, monitored, assessed, and educationally supported by the social work faculty

The primary purpose of practicum instruction is to provide students with educational opportunities that lead to competent practice. The practicum experience is intended to complement BSW curriculum objectives which include the provision of generalist practice opportunities for all students. Practicum experience is the heart of social work education.

The goals for competency in BSW practicum education include:

- proficiency as a generalist social work practitioner;
- application and testing of theory and knowledge in natural social work settings;
- incorporation of knowledge and skills necessary for understanding and utilizing social work ethics, values, and goals in day-to-day practice
- refinement of professional awareness, judgment, and decision-making abilities;
- understanding of the interdependence of the range of social work roles and skills, from interpersonal to macro levels, within various settings and practicums of service;
- engagement in practice with diverse cultural and ethnic groups and with groups who have been consistently affected by social, economic, or political bias or oppression.

The BSW practicum is intended to provide students with experience in the practicum as generalist social work practitioners, as well as to provide them the opportunity to integrate various theories, models, and methods of intervention in a direct service environment. Students have the opportunity to experience all levels of social work practice, including micro, mezzo, and macro levels of intervention, with primary emphasis on interpersonal skills, self-awareness in practice, and ecological systems theory. BSW practicum experiences provide the foundation for generalist practice and help to integrate classroom learning with practice realities. These experiences prepare students for competent professional practice upon graduation. BSW practicum sites are available in Dalton and the surrounding region in a variety of social work venues.

Approved agencies are typically within a 65-mile radius of campus, and it is expected that students will commute to available sites. Every attempt is made to place students so as to limit the commute from their identified home address to the agency, **but this is not guaranteed**. Therefore, **the use of a car is required**, since, without transportation, agency availability is severely limited if not impossible. Students are offered the opportunity to assume a wide range of social work roles and functions, and the opportunity to work with diverse client populations. Practicum placement sites include, but are not limited to, child welfare, juvenile justice, older adults, substance abuse, domestic violence, non-profit organization, mental health settings, forensic social work settings, school systems, and medical settings. Students enrolled in the program spend two semesters in the practicum during their senior year while taking concurrent social work courses, and 50 hours during the spring semester of their junior year.*

PRACTICUM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ROLES

The BSW practicum involves a number of individuals, including faculty from the social work program, students, and agency-based personnel. The following pages describe the role and responsibilities of all of the people who have connection with the practicum education component of the BSW curriculum. Information contained in this section helps to clarify who will be involved in the practicum and how these various individuals work together to create a successful practicum experience.

Director of Practicum Education

The Director of Practicum Education (DPE) is responsible for the overall administration of the BSW Practicum Program. The Director of Practicum Education coordinates agencies, faculty members, students, and agency-based practicum instructors to provide the best experiences possible. The Director of Practicum Education focuses on organizing and administering practicum placements. The goal is to provide students with an in-depth practicum experience to produce, by graduation, sound generalist social work practitioners. The responsibilities for this position are outlined below.

- Evaluating and maintaining a range of host agencies which adequately meet student learning needs
- Identifying openings for students at practicum sites
- Coordinating student placements with agency openings
- Monitoring student interviews at agency and conducting follow-up confirmations of placements
- Providing agency and student information to practicum liaisons
- Training and orientation of practicum instructors
- Orienting students to practicum process and practicum responsibilities
- Providing information to BSW faculty and students about the variety, quantity, quality, and nature of practicum offerings
- Provide oversight of student time sheets, ILPs, logs, and evaluations (in conjunction with the Practicum faculty, SOWK 4998/4999)
- Providing and distributing necessary practicum placement educational materials (for example: application forms, evaluation forms, teaching/learning materials, practicum calendars, etc.) to appropriate persons
- Providing consultation to BSW faculty, practicum liaisons, students, agency-based practicum instructors, and administrators concerning a variety of issues impacting the school-agency relationship and the quality of the individual student's learning experience
- Recruiting new agencies as potential practicum sites
- Reevaluating current practicum sites and practicum instructors to ensure that both continue to meet appropriate criteria for placement
- Coordinating response to practicum challenges including securing alternative student placements and practicum instructors as necessary
- Troubleshoot any administrative or policy issues that may arise between the agency and the social work program;

- Identify new placement opportunities at sites
- Troubleshoot any issues that may arise between the student and the practicum instructor
- Active involvement with student and practicum instructor should there be any challenges or concerns
- Evaluation of agencies regarding effectiveness as BSW practicum sites
- Conduct in-person meetings with students and agency instructors at agency sites, if possible
- Completion of notes documenting practicum visits
- Maintenance of student files including learning plans, evaluations, time sheets, and practicum visit notes

Practicum Seminar Faculty for the Junior and Senior Year Practicum (SOWK 3400, SOWK 4998 and SOWK 4999)

BSW faculty members are assigned to SOWK 3400 Junior Integrative Practicum Seminar, and the SOWK 4998 and SOWK 4999 courses — Practicum I and II. Individuals assigned will facilitate the integration of practicum, which functions as the grounding component to the student's experiences in the practicum, including all logistical and paperwork components of the practicum experience.

The practicum faculty provides ongoing support and guidance, in helping the student to meet learning objectives. These tasks outlined below are not all inclusive of the seminar faculty responsibilities:

Administrative Role

- Troubleshoot any issues that may arise between the student and the practicum instructor
- Provide feedback to the Director of Practicum Education concerning any needed changes in practicum instructors or agency policies that affect student learning
- Active involvement with student and practicum instructor should there be a challenge of any type
- Maintenance of student files including learning plans, evaluations, time sheets, and practicum visit notes and submitting this information to the Director of Practicum Education at the completion of each semester.

Teaching Role

- Function as the facilitator for practicum, through a hybrid model of in-person, virtual, and asynchronous meetings and discussions
- Provide regular and ongoing contact with agency practicum instructor as needed along with Director of Practicum Education.
- The practicum faculty teaching role does not end with the student. The practicum faculty also serves in a teaching role with the practicum instructor and agency staff regarding the learning needs of students. Development of excellent practicum sites often requires ongoing education with practicum instructors and other agency staff.
- The practicum seminar faculty are responsible for creating the teaching syllabus with dates, and other information specific to the current course of SOWK 3400, SOWK 4998, and SOWK 4999.

Agency Contact Role

- Provide educational supports to the student and practicum instructor

- Identify potential problems early and initiating procedures to correct them

Practicum Instructor and Task Instructor

Practicum Instructors

Practicum instructors are professional, experienced social workers with BSW or MSW degrees as required by the Council on Social Work Education. Usually, practicum instructors are employees of the agency in which the practicum experiences take place. Practicum instructors meet with the student for at least one-hour weekly for supervision, whether or not the practicum instructor is an employee of the agency. If the student has a task instructor, either formally assigned or informally overseeing a part of the practicum experience, the practicum instructor maintains close communication with the task instructor about the student's experience. Practicum Instructors may also be external to the assigned agency and are approved and appointed by the DPE to provide instruction to the assigned BSW student, in collaboration with the agency and BSW program.

Task Instructors

While the practicum instructor carries an important supervision and evaluation function for the student's internship, in some agencies qualified practicum instructors (BSW or MSW required) are not available. In these cases, another employee referred to as the "task instructor" may oversee the internship with close cooperation with the assigned practicum instructor who is not an employee of the agency. A task instructor is a seasoned employee who communicates closely with the practicum instructor.

Throughout the semester, the practicum instructor's primary role is teacher and facilitator of student learning. To this end the practicum and/or the task instructor performs the following tasks:

Prior to Placement

- Communicates information to the Director of Practicum Education about potential practicum openings and any information that may impact the nature or quality of the practicum
- Following receipt of the student's practicum application from the Director of Practicum Education, the practicum instructor confirms that the referral appears to be an appropriate one and responds to the student's request for scheduling an interview
- Should the practicum instructor learn information in the interview that leads her/him to question the viability of the practicum, s/he discusses the concerns with the Director of Practicum Education for immediate and appropriate action
- For the senior practicum, after the interview, the practicum instructor completes the interview confirmation form indicating whether or not the student is accepted for placement, and it is the student responsibility to forward the form to the Director of Practicum Education.

During Placement

- Provides list of tasks for student development in conjunction with the standardized Individualized Learning Plan provided by the DSC BSW program

- Serves as an advocate for the student within the agency by facilitating the student's access to productive learning experiences and other learning activities/resources (i.e., professional conferences, interagency meetings, or practicum visits to other programs);
- Provides for the student's orientation to agency policies and procedures, ethical standards, and safety procedures
- Evaluates the student's performance in the agency with regard to the specified practicum objectives and completes written mid-term and final evaluation forms highlighting student's strengths and areas for growth in Tevera by requested due dates
- Maintains close communication between practicum instructor and task instructor, in instances where task instructor is utilized, regarding student progress and learning needs
- Negotiates and plans student assignments in accordance with the practicum objectives as identified in each practicum syllabus
- Provides educational supervision, direction, and practicum instruction for each student assigned, at least one hour per week.

BSW Student Roles and Responsibilities

In order to have a successful practicum experience, students must take responsibility for their learning process and outcomes, as well as participate actively in the practicum learning opportunities. This responsibility includes the completion of required tasks prior to practicum entry. It is very important that students understand the importance of completing expectations in a timely and professional manner. Vital information including deadlines, time frames, practicum expectations, and processes are clearly communicated. All deadlines should be taken seriously -- failure to complete required tasks on time can have serious consequences. Missed deadlines could delay practicum entry and could potentially lead to failure of the practicum course. The student responsibilities include:

Prior to Placement

- Acquire professional liability insurance. Students must subscribe to an insurance plan, most often offered through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). It is advised that students begin the application process early in the spring semester of their junior year. Liability insurance must be turned into the Director of Practicum Education by the established deadline.
- Meet with Director of Practicum Education to discuss personal needs, goals, and practice setting and population interests
- Complete practicum application form correctly and submit it on time. *Late applications will be reviewed only after all other students in the cohort have been matched in an agency.*
- Convey to Director of Practicum Education any constraints or special circumstances regarding placement site
 - Participate in agency interviews as required.
- Once assigned to a specific agency, contact the practicum instructor to set up a confirmation interview and assure a goodness of fit between the student and the agency, if required
- Confirm placement with Director of Practicum Education or identify concerns immediately
- Attend the mandatory practicum orientation session offered prior to practicum entry.

During Placement

- Maintain professional and ethical behavior by adhering to agency standards, social work values, and the NASW Code of Ethics
- Maintain professionalism regarding consistency in hours, calling in when late or sick, appropriate dress for the agency, etc.
- Discussed Individualized Learning Plan with practicum instructor and practicum faculty and discuss integration of agency-specific tasks and responsibilities
- Actively participate in meeting learning objectives and carrying out the student role in the agency, and seeking out support as needed
- Monitor progress of achieving tasks and goals on ILP throughout the semester
- Arrange for weekly supervision with practicum instructor and actively participate and be prepared for these meetings
- Attend all practicum sessions and keep the faculty informed of activities in the practicum site Report potential problems early so that appropriate action can be taken
- Keep the Director of Practicum Education informed of any change of addresses and phone numbers
- Informed Practicum Faculty and/or DPE as quickly as possible of any concerns, changes, or unexpected responsibility changes within the agency

SELECTION OF AGENCIES AND PRACTICUM INSTRUCTORS

BSW Practicum Agencies Overview

The Social Work Program strives to place students in agencies where the best possible learning experiences can be found. Students are placed in agencies based on various criteria including geographic preference and location, client population interest, agency setting, and availability of practicum instructors. Students are placed within a 65-mile radius of their home or DSC for their practicum experiences.

Host Agency Criteria

Host agencies must meet the following criteria:

- Administrative policies regarding service to clients, to other agencies, and to the community should be consistent with the sound social work standards of practice appropriate to the particular type of agency.
- The agency should show stability of program and financial support. Alternatively, it may be at the cutting edge of innovative programming or practice.
- The agency should show ability to respond to the changing needs of the community.
- The agency should show capability for accommodating students.
- The agency must be endeavoring to meet progressive standards of practice.
- The agency should have formal safety policies and procedures.
- Preferably, the agency has a commitment to enter into a long-term relationship with DSC involving the training of numerous students over time.

- For junior and senior practicum experiences, the agency and DSC social work program will enter into a written contractual agreement regarding the mutual expectations for affiliation, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Council on Social Work Education accreditation standards require that host agencies provide the following:

- The agency must offer a favorable setting and atmosphere conducive for social work learning.
- The agency must provide training opportunities in general practice methods and/or in areas applicable to the DSC BSW curriculum.
- The agency must have an employee who is a qualified practicum instructor or be willing to identify a task instructor who will supervise the intern and communicate closely with a qualified practicum instructor outside the agency.
- The agency has adequate facilities including provision of office space (as available), work materials, and equipment as needed for the student.
- The agency must allow all practicum instructors time for attending practicum instructor trainings offered by the DSC BSW program.
- The agency must allow all practicum instructors time for preparation for student instruction, for regular conferences with the student, consultation with BSW faculty, and, if needed, attendance at meetings held at DSC.
- The agency agrees that no student interns accepted by the agency will be discriminated against on the basis of age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status.

Criteria for the Selection of Practicum Instructors

Practicum instructors are nominated by the agency and approved by the social work program to provide practicum instruction to students. Practicum instructors select specific student assignments and instruct students in the skills necessary to fulfill these assignments in relation to the student's course work.

Practicum instructors must have graduated from a CSWE accredited institution. Practicum instructors for BSW students should, at a minimum, have a bachelor's degree in Social Work and two years post graduate experience. Ideally, practicum instructors will have the MSW degree and a minimum of two years' experience in the practicum post-graduation. The instruction of students can be shared between various agency personnel. However, the qualified practicum instructor in coordination with the agency appointed task instructor, when necessary, assumes overall responsibility for practicum supervision of the student.

It is desirable that practicum instructors be on site and on duty when students are in practicum work. During those periods when practicum instructor availability is not possible, other qualified staff members must be available for backup or consultation to the students.

Practicum instructors are required to participate in practicum instructor orientation and training provided by the DSC social work program. All new practicum instructors must attend the practicum orientation sessions offered before any students will be assigned to the agency.

Persons nominated to be practicum instructors should be members of an agency staff who show:

- evidence of competence in the practice of social work
- concern for continuing professional development
- commitment to the teaching function of social work practicum education
- possess the interest in and have the time available for the regular instruction of students.
- Demonstrate a commitment to following the NASW Code of Ethics (2021)

Agency Safety Guidelines

Reduced budgets and clients with increasingly critical needs have resulted in increasing tensions in social work settings. Most agencies are under enormous pressure.

Social work students cannot be completely insulated from the realities of professional life, nor should they be. On the other hand, students frequently lack the experience and skills that help more seasoned practitioners assess danger and take appropriate precautions. The social work program recognizes its responsibility to help prepare students to handle potentially dangerous situations by providing students with classroom content on safety issues. Practicum Manual section entitled “Personal Safety and Risk Reduction Issues” (Appendix C) should be carefully reviewed by practicum instructors and students. The practicum instructor, task instructor, and student’s attention to safety in practicum is paramount.

The following guidelines are designed to supplement the practicum education program’s agency selection criteria. Modification of guidelines for particular students and special circumstances may be made in the student’s educational agreement with the explicit approval of the practicum liaison to the agency. Moreover, it is recognized that the implementation of these guidelines may take some time. The practicum faculty may determine that, while an agency is not currently meeting all guidelines, it is making a good faith effort to do so, and current conditions are sufficiently safe to proceed with a practicum placement.

1. A practicum agency should have a policy and/or procedure on safety covering the following matters:

- Building and office security
- Emergency procedures, including when and how to summon security or police assistance
- Staff responsibilities and procedures governing the management of violent clients
- Safety on home visits, including when, where, and under what conditions visits should or should not be made, when the student should be accompanied, and how backup is provided
- Alcohol and drug use policy formulated and posted
- Guns and other weapons policy formulated and posted
- Procedures for documentation and communicating with staff and students relative to incidents or threats of violence
- Policy for aftermath of assault and threat of assault
- Relationship with police should be established

2. The agency should review with each student the above policies as part of the student orientation to the agency and provide training on safety issues and procedures. Consideration should be given training on clinical and administrative management of violent clients and violent situations outside the agency. The agency and each of its programs should have a well-rehearsed specific plan of action in which students know exactly what to do in case of danger, from recognition of the signs of agitation to code words for signaling for help, when to call for police, clearing the building, etc. This plan of action should be rehearsed with students placed at the agency and reviewed on a regular basis.

3. Although a student has the right to refuse a dangerous assignment, a common understanding about the kinds of assignments that are appropriately safe should be reached by the student, the practicum instructor, and the practicum faculty. The following types of activities should be avoided assignments to students:

- Physical restraint of clients. Students **may not** restrain clients.
- Treatment of a client with a history of violence.
- Work in the agency at times when and/or in areas where other staff is not present.

4. The student's practicum instructor should know or be able to easily ascertain the student's location during practicum work hours and should discuss with the student any activities that require special planning with regard to safety.

5. Thorough preparation should be made for student home visits with consideration given to the following elements:

- Selection of clients and home environments that are not assessed to be dangerous to the student.
- Provision of a safe means of transportation, whether by agency vehicle, the student's car, or public transportation where such can be judged to be normally safe.
- Discussion of the neighborhood, including any potentially dangerous areas.
- Discussion of appropriate risk-reducing behaviors in the neighborhood and in the client's home.
- Clarification of the purpose and development of a specific plan for the visit.
- Discussion of what to do should the client or anyone else present a threat to the student.
- Provision of appropriate support and backup. Depending on the situation and the student's experience with home visits, this plan may range from an accompaniment by another worker or security person to immediate availability of telephone consultation. The student's practicum instructor should know when a visit is to take place and at a minimum, telephone consultation must be available.
- In some situations, the student should be given permission not to make the home visit.

6. Consideration should be given to the following features pertaining to the agency facilities:

- Adequate lighting inside and outside the agency.
- Adequate phone system for signaling emergencies.
- Arrange office furniture for an easy exit of client and worker.
- Minimize amount of unescorted traffic within the agency.

If a student is threatened or injured in any way while in placement, or involved in an incident where his/her safety is, or could be, compromised, the incident should be reported immediately to BSW Program Director, Tammy Rice (706) 272-4557 and to the Director of Practicum Education, Steven M. Cooper (706) 272-2604.

Safety information is adapted from the University of Michigan School of Social Work Practicum Instruction Manual with permission.

PRACTICUM PLACEMENT PROCESS

The Placement Process

The responsibility for approving and selecting agencies and initiating placement arrangements rests with the Director of Practicum Education. The BSW program faculty assesses the suitability of agencies as student training sites and approve those that meet the school's requirements. Only school-approved sites can be used for practicum instruction.

BSW faculty routinely gather information from approved agencies as to the number of students that can be effectively accommodated, the type and variety of practice assignments afforded, the availability of qualified supervision, and other pertinent data. Practicum staff and faculty work cooperatively with agencies to enlarge and improve opportunities for practicum placements.

Procedures for Placement of BSW Students

The Director of Practicum Education will support students in initiating the practicum placement and provide a timeline for this process. Some key information concerning BSW practicum education includes:

- Students are placed according to four major criteria - geographic needs, host agency availability, goodness of fit between the student and the host agency, and student interests and educational needs. Every effort will be taken to satisfy interest areas identified by the student, but practicum assignment predominately depends on availability of appropriate placements.
- Students submit an application for the practicum experience electronically through Tevera.
- Students **MUST** have proof of professional liability insurance prior to practicum entry.
- In-person, pre-placement agency interviews take place at the discretion of the individual agency and Director of Practicum Education.
- Assignments are made by the faculty for the best "goodness of fit."
- Student application is forwarded to the practicum instructor.
- BSW practicum assignment letter, with an Interview Confirmation Form are forwarded to the student.
- Students are expected to promptly contact their practicum instructor as instructed to plan for a discussion of start date, schedules, agency expectations, etc.

Unsuccessful Interviews and Placement Limitations

If a student does not receive an offer of placement following an agency interview, the Director of Practicum Education will make every effort to identify an alternative placement. However,

placement is not guaranteed. Students who are not accepted after good faith matches and interviews may experience a delay in beginning their practicum, may need to reapply for practicum in a later semester, or may be deemed ineligible for placement if professional readiness concerns are identified.

Agency Assignment Process for Students with Disabilities

The foregoing procedures generally apply to students with disabilities. However, students with disabilities, particularly those with physical impairments and learning disabilities, are strongly urged to contact the Director of Practicum Education to discuss special considerations and to help arrange for aids or services that students may need to negotiate the practicum. This should be done upon admission to upper division. In situations where a student is registered with the Office of Disability Support Services, the Director of Practicum Education will consult with the Coordinator of Disability Support Services as necessary to arrange appropriate accommodations in the internship.

As required by federal and state law and by Dalton State College policy, practicum placements must be accessible to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities must have the same kinds of educational opportunities—including practicum placements in particular settings—as students without disabilities. The BSW Program consults with Disability Support Services to ensure equal access to practicum opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Senior Practicum Placement Process and Timeline of Practicum Activities

Arranging the Placement

**All placements are arranged through the Director of Practicum Education only.* Students are not permitted to establish their own placement experiences or contact agencies requesting placement. Potential new practicum instructors may reach out to the Director of Practicum Education to discuss the practicum placement approval process. Any agency wishing to be a new site for senior placements should contact the Director of Practicum Education by January to allow enough time to complete the review process for an August placement. In addition, practicum instructors must attend practicum instructor trainings. Upon review of student applications, the Director of Practicum Education, with assistance from the BSW faculty, will make the best matches of students to practicum placements.

Pre-Placement Interview for Senior Practicum

Students may be asked to complete interviews with potential practicum placements. The student is responsible for contacting the agency contact to set up the visit. Students should prepare for this visit like a job interview, which requires appropriate professional attire. Students should have clear goals and learning priorities and be prepared to ask and answer specific questions about learning experiences available, clients served, skills that can be developed, type of setting (structured or unstructured), and methods of supervision, etc.

Students should also be prepared to answer questions about their background, educational and career goals, and why they might desire that particular placement. At the interview, agency personnel assess the student's level of interest and suitability for the general type of assignments they have in mind.

Practicum Orientation Meeting

A mandatory practicum orientation session is provided typically in the first week of fall semester to prepare students for fall practicum entry. Engaging in orientation is the first step in professional behaviors and expectations of the student and is mandatory.

Agency Start and Finish Dates

Students are expected to begin work in their placement agency no later than the Monday of the third week of classes during fall semester and beginning the first week of spring semester or as instructed. Students are also expected to work through Friday of the last week of classes of each term, but may continue through final exam week if more agency hours are needed. Exact start and finish dates should be made at the student's pre-placement interview and in conjunction with the practicum instructor. Any arrangements that are made beyond or in lieu of these must first be approved by the Director of Practicum Education.

Time Expectations/Requirements

Fall Semester - Students are expected to be in the practicum for a minimum of 16 hours each week for 14 weeks at their assigned agency (*this does not include class related activities or virtual work). Most students will work in the practicum two days a week. Some students and agencies have alternative hours/needs that can be accommodated. A minimum of 225 practicum hours are required for the fall semester.

Spring Semester - Students are expected to be in the practicum for a minimum of 16 hours each week for 15 weeks. A minimum of 240 hours is required for the spring experience. A total of **at least 450 practicum hours** will make for successful completion of the BSW degree.

NOTE: Practicum seminars classroom hours (SOWK 3400, SOWK 4998/4999) do not typically count as hours spent in practicum unless specifically indicated.

- Travel to and from practicum does not count.
- No homework, reading assignments, or work for **other** classes is allowed during practicum internship hours.
- Agency reading can be counted toward hours but should be limited, and up to the discretion of your practicum instructor.

BSW PRACTICUM EDUCATION POLICIES **(in alphabetical order)**

Admission Process

Practicum education is an extremely important, required part of students' education in the BSW Program. Students complete a minimum of 450 hours of practicum education in a social service organization over fall and spring semesters of the senior year. Students express their interests in various areas of social work practice and in particular geographic locations where they can travel for practicum. The Director of Practicum Education attempts to match student preferences with available placements.

Students will work under the supervision of a practicum instructor and possibly a task instructor, as well. In addition, the Director of Practicum Education provides oversight for students in practicum. Students who are being placed in a social service agency for practicum education are required to complete and “Orientation to Practicum” event.

Entrance to the senior practicum is only during fall semester and occurs in the student’s graduating year. Students are encouraged to take all or most pre-requisite BSW courses prior to the graduating year, allowing for a reduced course load of co-requisite courses with senior practicum. Co-requisite courses (required to be taken with senior practicum) are SOWK 4995 and 4996 (Integrative Senior Seminar and Advanced Integrative Seminar) and SOWK 4401 (Senior Capstone Project) in the fall semester and SOWK 4402 (Senior Capstone Project) in the spring semester.

Students should be aware that senior practicum course requirements (SOWK 4998 and 4999) include seminar (4995 and 4996) attendance and academic assignments, as well as at least 15 hours per week of unpaid work in a social service agency. Additional hours may be required for supervision, trainings, or other assignments made by the Director of Practicum Education **(for a total of up to 20 hours per week dedicated for practicum)**. In planning your program of study, students should consider that the senior year of the BSW includes an intensive workload and is equivalent to the first year of the Master of Social Work (MSW) program. Students who complete the BSW from an accredited institution such as DSC’s BSW program will be eligible to apply for advanced standing (usually **one** calendar year program of study) in participating MSW programs.

Senior practicum placement matches are completed by the Director of Practicum Education before the end of spring semester; therefore, student application deadline requirements occur early in the Spring semester.

Students who wish to enter senior practicum, must complete the following steps:

1. Complete a Senior Practicum Application and submit the form(s) in Tevera to the Director of Practicum Education by the assigned date, prior to the fall semester planned for entrance in to senior practicum. This will typically be completed during SOWK 3400 (Junior Integrative Seminar).
2. Participate in an interview with the Director of Practicum Education who will schedule the appointment upon receipt of the form.
3. Promptly contact agencies that are potential practicum sites identified by the Director of Practicum Education as directed.
4. Follow up with activities such as interviews, drug screens, criminal background checks, and immunizations that may be required by the agency.

Students are **not** guaranteed a practicum placement. The senior practicum application includes a readiness assessment, successful completion of junior and senior coursework, and recommendations from the BSW faculty. **Students who the faculty determine are not prepared for practicum may be denied a practicum placement until a later date and/or not at all. Students who are unable to complete practicum will not be able to graduate from the BSW program, as practicum is a requirement for graduation in all CSWE accredited BSW programs.**

Agency Re-Assignment Process

The Director of Practicum Education will not consider a reassignment to another agency until the student has contacted the assigned placement agency and has gone for the pre-placement/confirmation interview to determine learning needs and agency expectations. After practicum work has begun, any student seeking approval to leave the agency where s/he has been assigned must speak first with the practicum instructor and the practicum faculty and follow the other procedures outlined in the section entitled “Termination of Practicum”.

Appropriate Use of Interns

BSW student intern task assignments in the host agencies will be consistent with traditional social work practice and will not include duties that might be assigned to employees including administration of drug screens, restraint of clients, and transporting clients.

From the Council on Social Work Education: Practicum education, as articulated in the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, is clearly within the guidelines of the Department of Labor regulations for an educational internship and does not require payment. Social work practicum education meets the following stipulations:

- Practicum education is associated with an academic program at an accredited institution of higher learning.
- Practicum education is structured around a classroom or academic experience, with articulated learning objectives/competencies.
- The college or university exercises oversight over the internship program and provides educational credit.
- The practicum education experience is supervised by social work program personnel; there is an agreement between the program and the practicum site as well as a learning contract between the student and the site.
- The Social Work Practicum Education program is meant to be solely educational and provide training to prepare the professional social worker. It is not meant to supplant or replace existing employees of social work within the practicum education program site. The practicum placement is meant to provide an educational and training opportunity to the social worker and is not meant to provide any immediate advantage to the employer or the practicum site.

Change of Practicum Grade

Although final grades for the Practicum Seminar classes (SOWK 3400, SOWK 4998, and SOWK 4999) represent an integration of practicum and student engagement, and the practicum faculty have the discretion to lower a student’s final grade for: (1) failure to turn in when due: time sheets, weekly logs, Individualized Learning Plan; (2) failure to attend required practicum meetings; (4) inconsistencies in student performance between practicum placement and practicum or seminar; and (5) failure to complete the minimum of required practicum placement hours each semester. The final feedback for SOWK 4998/4999 is determined by the Practicum and Seminar Faculty, in conjunction with the DPE, as outlined in the course syllabus.

Credit for Work Experience

In accordance with the Council of Social Work Education standards, no credit can be given for life experience or previous work experience.

Disclosure of Criminal History

The social work program does not require all students to report any/all criminal history, as defined as a history of civil adjudication and/or criminal conviction(s), on their application to the BSW program. However, students are strongly encouraged to share this information with the Director of Practicum Education, as this information may impact placement decisions based on agency requirements or legal regulations.

Having a criminal record may impact a student's ability to secure a practicum placement, obtain a social work license, obtain malpractice insurance, and future employment as a social worker. Many practicum placements sites and social service employers require that students undergo a criminal background check and drug test. Traffic violations can result in disqualification for employment that requires employees to drive motor vehicles at work.

Firearms in Practicum

Firearms and other weapons are typically not permitted (except when carried by police officers) in many health and social service agencies. Students should be certain that they are not carrying weapons into a facility where weapons are prohibited. Disciplinary action could result from the failure to follow the policy of health and social service agencies regarding weapons. DSC campus regulations concerning firearms can be found in the Dalton State College Catalog. The campus carry guidelines for Dalton State **do NOT apply** to the individual practicum agencies. Should a student be removed from a practicum placement at the agency's request because of a violation of the firearms policy the student will not be able to complete the practicum placement, and this will result in a delay of graduation and/or removal from the BSW program.

Freedom of Information

Information about a student intern that a practicum instructor shares with the Director of Practicum Education may be shared with the student. Similarly, students are free, if they wish, to see any forms or notes maintained on students to assist in planning and developing placements for them and assigning them to particular placements. Additionally, a copy of the first two pages of the practicum application form is sent to the assigned practicum instructor.

Grade of Incomplete/Remaining coursework

1. Students will not be allowed to carry a grade of Incomplete or "I" for social work courses into SOWK 3400, SOWK 4556, SOWK 4996, SOWK 4998 or SOWK 4999. Thus, all "I's" must be completed by the beginning of the semester in which the student is scheduled to enter senior practicum. Failure to complete full responsibilities for course work will delay a student's entry into the practicum.
2. Students must be fully admitted to the Social Work Upper Division prior to applying for junior or senior practicum.

3. All prerequisite coursework must be completed prior to admission to the practicum. Students are encouraged to discuss their course of study with their advisor to verify eligibility for practicum work.
4. No credit for a course is granted unless minimum hours are completed and signed off by practicum instructor.
5. Final grades are not given and approval for graduation will not be granted, without all required practicum documentation submitted with **all** required signatures.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event that Dalton State College is closed due to inclement weather, practicum students are not expected to report to host agencies located in Whitfield County. However, good judgment should be used about the safety of travel to any agency. **In any case of absence, it is imperative that the student notify their practicum instructor.** This might involve negotiating with practicum instructors and task instructors the best way to contact them in case of such circumstances.

Night and Weekend Placements

Occasionally, there are some approved sites that offer evening or weekend hours, but this is extremely rare. Under no circumstance will the educational objectives of the curriculum be compromised for a non-traditional placement. The practicum instructor must be available to provide adequate supervision and instruction.

Placement Process Expectations

The Director of Practicum Education will arrange the placement opportunity for students. However, the responsibility of “being accepted” rests with the student. If there is not a match, the Director of Practicum Education will discuss feedback from interviews with the student and arrange another placement interview. If a student is not accepted by an agency after a reasonable number of “good faith” matches, an academic review can be requested to examine options.

Policy Conflicts

Should conflicts arise between agency and practicum policies, the practicum instructor and/or the student should immediately notify the practicum liaison and/or the BSW Director of Practicum Education, who will endeavor to work out a solution that is satisfactory to both the agency and the social work program. No alternative policy may be established which conflicts with the Memorandum of Understanding established between DSC and the agency.

Pre-Practicum Screens

Students should anticipate requirement by host agencies for drug screening and criminal record check. Although the DSC BSW program does not currently require these screens for practicum placement, most agencies require one or both prior to the start of practicum. In some cases, the host agencies pay for the cost of the screening, but if not, the student will be responsible for the cost.

Professional Ethics

It is understood that students will adhere to the expected standards for professional, ethical conduct and to the agency's policies and procedures as long as these are not in conflict with the NASW Code of Ethics (2021).

A salient issue for students during the practicum is confidentiality of case records and recordings. Students are expected to review their work with clients and agency records pertinent to their assignments as an important component of their preparation for work with clients and supervisory sessions with practicum instructors. However, the supervisory review of student work does not extend to anyone outside the agency, except the practicum faculty and the DPE (if needed). In short, **UNDER NO OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES** than their private review or presentation to the practicum faculty, may students remove client information, interview recordings (written, audio taped or videotaped), evaluation summaries, etc., from the agency without the explicit permission of the practicum instructor. Client consent should be obtained before any contact recording is done.

Here is a link to the NASW Code of Ethics (2021): [Code of Ethics: English \(socialworkers.org\)](https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/NASW_Code_of_Ethics)

A student's failure to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics (2021) and all expected standards for professional, legal, and ethical conduct will be considered grounds for termination of the practicum, a failing grade in the practicum, and termination of the student from the BSW program.

Professional Liability Insurance for Practicum

Prior to entering the first practicum in the fall semester, (students are required, by the University and the Board of Regents, to purchase professional liability insurance which will cover direct practice activities in the practicum during the academic year. Students must maintain active liability insurance throughout the entire course of their practicum experience. Students will not be allowed to participate in the junior or senior practicum placement without proof of professional liability insurance. DSC students obtain liability insurance through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) only. With group buying power, NASW has very reasonable insurance rates for students. NASW forms are available through the Practicum Education Office in the School of Social Work

In addition, some agencies require students to obtain health insurance coverage. Students are urged to discuss any concerns about their potential health or safety hazards in the practicum site with their practicum instructor and/or practicum liaison.

Safety Issues

The safety of students in practicum is of prime importance to the BSW Program and to practicum agencies. It is imperative that students feel safe in order to carry out their responsibilities in the practicum. If safety concerns arise for a student, it is important that the student discuss these concerns with their practicum instructor. After gathering information to assess the situation, the student still does not feel safe in order to carry out assignments, s/he is encouraged to renegotiate those assignments with the help of the practicum instructor. When appropriate, s/he should also consult the practicum faculty for assistance. Guidelines for personal safety and risk reduction are provided in Appendix C of this manual.

Junior Practicum Experiences*

The junior practicum experiences are varied and meant to introduce students to local community agencies and the work of social workers. Student will shadow social workers and/or other professionals in the agency as they engage in social work at the micro/mezzo/macro levels. Examples of tasks can include:

1. Observing home visits
2. Observing community meetings
3. Observing staff meetings/team meetings
4. Engaging with individuals, families, and groups
5. Organizing events and/or community or volunteering projects

Senior Practicum Experiences

Required: Any activities that do not include these components must be approved by Director of Practicum Education.

1. Generic practicum assignments including case management, program planning and administration, intakes, intake or follow-up phone calls, advocacy, and outreach.
2. Spring semester senior year or earlier with approval from faculty: Individual case assignments which allows student sufficient exposure to a variety of populations. This can include the opportunity to do group work.
3. Opportunity for a student to determine a treatment plan for a client, to administer the intervention, and to evaluate their practice.
4. Weekly supervision from the Practicum Instructor
5. Experiences with other social agencies in the community such as the courts, schools, health departments, etc.

Supplemental:

6. Group work
 - observation or co-lead group sessions
 - with guidance: develop, implement, plan, and lead (or co-lead) group sessions
7. Family interventions
 - observation or participation in family therapy or meetings
9. Participation in agency/organizational meetings and committees
10. Participation in community meetings, interagency meetings, committees
11. Participation in staff development seminars, intern seminars, case conferences
12. Peer group (intern) supervision

The above is to be used as a guide. Each setting has its unique requirements and learning opportunities. Depending on the agency and the intern's learning needs, the hours and experiences may be arranged differently.

Schedule (Junior Practicum)*

Students will engage in 10 hours of practicum experience per week, over a 5-week period in the spring semester of their junior year. Practicum is completed in conjunction with SOWK 3400, but hours are completed OUTSIDE of class time. The DPE will work closely with the student to help coordinate with the students' needs regarding their schedules.

Schedule (Senior Practicum)

The weekly schedule for all of the practicum is established on an individual basis with the agency in which the student is placed. Schedules are to take into account the needs of the agency, school, and individual student. Whereas most BSW students will be in the practicum two days a week, students will, from time to time, extend their clock-hours beyond the hours allocated to the practicum in order to meet professional responsibilities or obtain access to special activities. When students have been engaged more than the needed weekly clock hours, they will take compensatory time off from practicum. To assure that the time off will not disrupt the student's practicum responsibilities, changes in schedule should be arranged with the approval of the practicum instructor. Accumulation of more than 5-6 hours over the requirement should be avoided through compensatory time. All students will remain in their practicum placement sites throughout the entire semester. Of utmost importance is the need for students to be in agencies when there are maximum opportunities for interaction with other professional staff to facilitate student participation in professional decision making and collaborative work. Students should clarify agency expectations for their practicum hours at the time of the initial interview with the practicum instructor. Student practicum schedules are approved by both the practicum/task instructor and the practicum seminar faculty.

Sexual Harassment

Dalton State College is committed to providing a professional working environment that is free of sexual harassment. The sexual harassment policy extends to practicum work and can be found in DSC policy and is posted in various locations throughout the DSC campus. The DSC social work program will not condone harassment in any form and will take action against any individual agency or practicum instructor who violates this policy.

Student Continuation in the Practicum and/or with Clients Upon Graduation

Occasionally, agencies seek to employ a student with whom they have worked in the practicum. Should that situation arise while the student is still in the practicum, the student and the practicum instructor must discuss those arrangements with the Director of Practicum Education. In such instances, the director will assure that the necessary safeguards are in place to protect the integrity of the student's learning experience.

Following the end of a student's practicum, it is strongly recommended that the student not continue to provide service in the agency as a volunteer. Only in response to a request by the agency, and only in rare circumstances even then, should a student ever plan to continue to render professional services to a client to whom he/she was assigned as part of the practicum. Students and agencies are advised that the professional liability insurance acquired by the student is for student coverage and is distinctly different than coverage of a professional employee. Students are required to notify the insurance provider if they are remaining in the

agency and practicing in a volunteer or newly hired staff role and are no longer students. Under no circumstances should a student continue to work or have relationships with clients initiated during their practicum and not be under the auspice of the agency. Continuation of service to clients after the completion of the practicum, unless specifically requested to do so by the agency, will be considered a breach of professional social work ethics.

Upon completion of the official practicum the student is no longer under the auspices of the Dalton State BSW Program or the Memorandum of Understanding between the agency and the college. The BSW program has no responsibility for student activities in the agency setting if the practicum is complete.

Use of Personal Automobiles in the Practicum

Students who are in practicum do not transport clients/patients in their vehicles. Students who are in practicum may be called on to transport themselves in their vehicles for various purposes such as to visit a client or meet a practicum instructor. Students should be certain that they have liability insurance for their vehicle as required by state law and meet all state requirements for driving a vehicle.

Student Use of Social Media and Technology

Social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Second Life and various blog sites are just a few examples of new and exciting ways to connect with others and share information. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. Students are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics (2021) when using social media communication tools, whether using a personal site or agency site. Common issues that students need to understand and manage when utilizing social media include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) in our relationships with clients, colleagues and in our practice settings. Utilizing social media communication tools as a social work professional requires ongoing attention to these ethical challenges.

As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting your professional identity versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. Your **professional image**, that is, the professional self you develop that is guided by social work values and ethical standards, extends beyond the practicum agency and physical setting of an office. As social workers, we must be cognizant that the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals and that those obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication tools. As with the Hippocratic oath to “first do no harm,” it is imperative to consider how to be connected within the context of social media while protecting yourself, your practicum site, your clients, the Department of Social Work, and the profession.

While at practicum, students must refrain from checking their personal phones and devices for emails, phone calls, and text messages that are personal in nature and from conducting personal

internet browsing from agency computers. Use of social media including text messaging, tweets, Instagram, and Facebook-type postings should **never** reference information or events related to practicum placement. Work-related electronic documents that may be confidential in nature should not be downloaded or saved onto personal or home laptops, computers, or devices. Other precautions should be taken to protect the boundaries between personal and professional and to protect the safety and privacy of the client and agency as well as the privacy of the social work student.

While functioning as a student in the BSW program students are **prohibited** from having **any** social media relationship (including but not limited to text messages, Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat) with employees and clients of the practicum agency. All contact between BSW students and clients of agencies must fall within the personnel policies and ethical and legal guidelines of the individual agency. Additionally, all contact between students and employees of the agency must follow these same guidelines.

Students Working Full-Time

Working students should expect to significantly reduce or discontinue their work commitments to accommodate the demands of the senior practicum or consider completing senior course requirements in more than one year. The competing demands of practicum, academic assignments, and employment often detract from the overall learning experience of the practicum. In addition, the number of weekly practicum hours required makes working full-time extremely difficult. Under no circumstances will the number of required practicum hours be reduced.

Termination of Practicum

A student's practicum may be terminated by the student, practicum instructor, agency administrator, or Director of Practicum Education and/or Program Director for any of the following reasons:

- Level of student preparation for the practicum. Although the BSW student is in training and students are learning, it is assumed that the student has acquired the competencies expected for participation in the work- world (e.g., arriving on time, managing one's schedule and communicating it to others as appropriate, presenting and conducting oneself in a professional manner--including dress and other aspects of self- presentation as well as engaging in appropriate interpersonal interactions). Evidence to the contrary of the above expectations--given appropriate efforts by the practicum instructor and practicum faculty to assist the student in remedying these deficits--will constitute grounds for the agency's withdrawal of the practicum for that student.
- Student failure to meet the expected standards for ethical professional practice as noted above in the section "Professional Ethics" and as described in the NASW Code of Ethics (2021).
- The agency's failure to provide the expected learning experiences and/or appropriate supervision or to meet any of the other expectations identified in the Memorandum of Understanding between the agency and the College. (See Appendix E).
- Unexpected events in the life of the student or in the agency that jeopardize the quality of the students learning experience.
- Breach of professional confidentiality
- Being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances during class or practicum

- "Mismatch" between the practicum instructor and/or agency and the student. Sometimes, differences in learning or interpersonal styles emerge as the student and practicum instructor begin to work together rendering the practicum less than optimally productive for a student's learning. Such circumstances are rare, but they may generate recommendations for a change in the practicum arrangements.
- Insubordination
- Stealing
- Unprofessional involvement while engaged in practicum
- Violation of school academic dishonesty policy
- Grade average falls below 2.5
- Student misconduct as identified by USG/DSC student handbook with a client or supervisor

***Please note, students being “fired” from their practicum placements can lead to an automatic dismissal from the BSW program, upon review and approval of the entire faculty. It is not a guaranteed that another placement site will be identified.**

Any number of the circumstances cited above is not necessarily anyone's fault. In some instances, termination of the practicum reflects the fact that the practicum is highly successful in helping the student discover that social work is not what was expected and is not appropriate for that student. Sometimes, it is possible for a change to be made in the student's assignment, either to another unit of the agency or to another agency altogether. This action may necessitate extension of the student's program of study. Whatever the reasons prompting consideration of practicum termination, the student, practicum instructor, practicum faculty, and the BSW Director of Practicum Education will work as a team to resolve problems and develop appropriate solutions.

Practicum Instructor Initiated Termination

- As soon as the practicum instructor identifies issues that may place the practicum in jeopardy, it is incumbent upon the practicum instructor to discuss, as soon as possible, any such problems with the student and the practicum faculty. The BSW Director of Practicum Education should also be immediately informed.
- If issues cannot be resolved, the practicum instructor can request termination of the placement. This request should be provided in written form with the pertinent issues outlined. A written explanation is helpful in reviewing the student's needs and to assist with future planning.
- The seminar instructor will provide a written summary of the termination request (including the event(s) prompting the termination and the reasons for it) to the BSW Director of Practicum Education with a copy to the student.
- The Director of Practicum Education will activate appropriate "next-steps" with the student, for the student's placement in another setting, or with the Program Director for an academic review of the student's standing in the program.

Academic review:

If the practicum termination raises question(s) as to whether the student should continue in the BSW program or whether the student's program of study should be significantly altered, an academic review may be convened by the BSW Program Director. Request for an academic review may be

made by the student, practicum faculty, and/or Director of Practicum Education. The DPE will consult with the BSW Program Director and other BSW faculty.

Student Initiated Termination:

Some students, for various reasons, may seek approval to leave their placement agency during their practicum experience. Changing practicum sites can only be based on compelling circumstances, and these are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the Director of Practicum Education and the BSW Program Director must approve a change. This procedure often requires the student to undergo another orientation to an agency and start-up delays are inevitable. Changes in placement may result in a delay in completion of the BSW program and/or graduation. Before any decision regarding a transfer is made, students should:

- Discuss any concerns they have with their practicum instructor.
- Arrange to see the practicum seminar instructor to discuss the nature of the educational concerns and the steps already taken to address them with the practicum instructor.
- Decide with the practicum instructor and the faculty if the challenge(s) in the placement can be resolved.
- Work with the practicum instructor and Director of Practicum Education, if a transfer is recommended, to complete termination tasks and establish a time frame within which the transfer is appropriate. Alternative placement within the agency will be considered before those external to the agency.
- Meet with practicum faculty/academic advisor to discuss educational objectives and seek guidance.
- Arrange for a meeting with BSW Director and Director of Practicum Education and practicum faculty to discuss options around termination. A written explanation of the request is required.

Vacations, Holidays, Semester Breaks, and Other Absences from Senior Practicum

Time off between semesters is limited to the official break as designated by the academic calendar. If the break would be more conveniently taken at another time, due to agency scheduling needs, than that between semesters, an alternate time might be negotiated with the practicum instructor and practicum faculty. The Director of Practicum Education must be notified in advance of this change as well. Students may not, however, shorten their practicum to less than the required weeks. Students are to follow the agency holiday schedule while they are in practicum. In cases where Dalton State College is on holiday break, it is important to make arrangements with the practicum instructor for time off. In addition, students may take off for religious holidays which they observe, as well as any holidays observed by the agency, without penalty as long as the student has verified that the hour requirements of the practicum are not compromised, and appropriate communication takes place. In no way should student vacations or holidays compromise the integrity of client-worker relationships, and time off must be made up.

It is understood that occasional illness or other emergency may necessitate absence from the practicum. Students are expected to communicate with the practicum instructor and work out a plan. Compensatory time might be used in this instance. If the absence is more than one day, the practicum faculty must be notified. In no instance will arrangements be approved that result in a practicum deficit in the required total hours or the specified timespan. Students may be absent from the practicum in order to be present at a final examination class session which is often

scheduled (by DSC) at a time different from regularly scheduled class time. Students are expected to inform their practicum instructors of these dates as soon as possible and to make appropriate plans for professional responsibilities.

Occasionally, a class instructor will make special plans for an activity that is not on a regularly scheduled class day. In that case, the student and practicum instructor must communicate and establish an appropriate plan.

In all instances where a student is absent from the practicum, the agency must be notified of the absence at the earliest possible time. **Absences from the practicum are allowable only for compelling reasons. All absences must be made up, and the minimum amount of practicum hours achieved, before a grade can be earned for that term. Absences from the practicum (for illness or approved reasons) should be made up during the same week if possible and no later than the following week. All absences from the practicum should be noted on the student timesheet.**

It is anticipated that students who need to make up any extended absences from the practicum will typically be able to do so during the final week of the term, which follows the final week in practicum. However, there may be circumstances in which a student is absent for compelling reasons for such an extended period of time that the absences cannot be made up in the term in which they occurred. In such a case, if a plan is approved by the practicum instructor and the practicum faculty to make up the absences in a subsequent term, then the grade of “I” (Incomplete) will be entered by the faculty and removed once the absences are made up. **The BSW Director of Practicum Education must be notified and must approve these arrangements in advance.**

Tevera

The DSC Social Work program utilizes the TEVERA management system for completion of practicum forms, tracking practicum hours, and other practicum education tasks. Students will purchase the TEVERA system prior to placement in the practicum. The system will be utilized throughout the junior and senior practicum experiences. Purchase and use of the system is required of all students for practicum placement. Students are expected to purchase Tevera in the Spring Junior year, as part of SOWK 3400. Agency contacts are provided access to Tevera in collaboration with the DSC BSW program.

Worksite Practicum

Students interested in worksite practicum setting should submit an application to the Director of Practicum Education describing the agency and program where they work, their current position and duties, work schedule, and name and title of supervisor. The request should also include a description of the proposed practicum, assignments, practicum instructor, and placement schedule. The request should be signed by the student, and the current and proposed supervisors. All criteria for supervision and activities described for practicum experiences must be met in worksite placements. All worksite requests will be reviewed for consideration on an individual basis. Submitting this does not guarantee approval of the request. Academic credit cannot be given for previous work experience.

Students may request to have their placement located within their employing agency providing the following conditions are met:

- The agency is currently an approved practicum instruction agency or is willing to serve as such for future placements.
- The practicum site is administered in accordance with the pattern established for all students.
- The student and the Director of Practicum Education are assured that the student and the practicum instructor will have release time for academic and practicum instruction respectively.
- Practicum instruction and assignments are educationally focused rather than centered on agency services.
- The activities and assignments for practicum work are specifically related to the application of practicum seminar course objectives.
- The practicum instructor meets the criteria that are established for all other practicum instructors.
- The activities and assignments for the practicum are clearly delineated and **separate from other work assignments** in that:
 - **they consist of a set of different tasks;**
 - **they are located in a different work unit or division; and**
 - **the practicum instructor and work supervisor are different persons.**
- The responsible agency official sends the Director of Practicum Education a proposal or a letter signifying acceptance of the conditions above. In addition, a general plan shall be presented identifying the nature and quantity of the student's intended assignments.
- Each proposal that meets the above criteria will be examined on its merits. Approval of a work site placement does not affect the total number of practicum credit hours a student must earn.

APPENDIX A

Orientation

The following documents are included here for the benefit of practicum and task instructors in planning for student learning experiences.

ORIENTATION TO THE AGENCY

The BSW Program provides the student with a general orientation to the profession and to practicum education.

The agency is responsible for agency-based orientation, which typically occurs during the first week of practicum work. In general, the orientation should consist of acquainting the student with the various services offered by the agency and the range of scope of possible assignments. Planning for these assignments should begin right after the orientation period, and specific initial assignments should be identified. The student should use the orientation period to begin developing a written learning contract, the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), which will serve as a guide for the current term of practicum work experience.

The BSW Program's rationale for the agency orientation to practicum instruction is twofold. First, before the student engages with clients, agency staff, communities, etc., s/he should have some knowledge of professional roles and relationships, the ethics of the profession, and the nature of service delivery systems, as well as some acquaintance with various theories of human behavior, specific to that particular agency. Second, students are expected to gain knowledge about the range and type of specific agency services, agency structure and staff roles and responsibilities, as well as inter-agency and community relationships. A well-planned and organized orientation within the agency will not only provide information useful for student performance but will serve the agency by enhancing the potential for greater student productivity.

Agencies may wish to take different approaches to the agency orientation. One approach is to schedule various activities which could include reading reports and other agency documents, interviews with staff, and observation within the agency and at other related agencies and facilities such as court hearings, staff team meetings, or family team meetings. Observation of interaction with clients as soon as possible in the orientation will allow the student to ask related questions and understand the agency's programs and services. A somewhat richer approach is to schedule all of the above and to begin to introduce related tasks into the assignments. For example, a student who is scheduled to visit another agency may be asked to obtain information needed by the placement agency, or the students watching interaction with clients might be asked to think about how they would have handled the interaction if they had been the social worker.

SOME PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR ORIENTATION:

Internship Packet

- useful information about the agency, services, personnel, helpful terminology, organizational chart, etc.
- various readings about population, settings or other helpful “orienting” contextual information, special paperwork, forms.
- establishing hours
- protocol for absences

Agency Tour

- meet personnel, supervisory staff, secretarial staff, etc.
- facility tour and student’s space of their own-office/desk/phone/computer -formally introduce student at agency staff meeting.

Inform intern of agency policies and procedures, including informal procedures around agency facilities. Orientation should always include a review of the agency's safety procedures.

Supply student with some office supplies.

Arrange for lunch plans on the first day so student doesn’t feel isolated or alone.

Have the student “shadow” you on the first day or two (or at least for a few hours) to help acclimate them to the setting.

Give student an opportunity for client contact in the first two days.

Meet with student at the end of every day the first week or two. Have them drop by your office – but also explain long-term expectations for contact over the weeks ahead.

Meet with the student formally for supervision the first week – plan on discussing at least one case to set the tone for supervision.

Set the schedule for supervision blocks of time each week in addition to informal “chats.”

Allow for the student to take some initiative for their own learning and plans for their time, but work closely with the student in developing their ILP, which will be due in seminar class early in their learning experience.

If appropriate, help the student to develop a “project” that they could accomplish over the course of the term. Senior students will need assistance with plans for their Capstone research project. Senior students at DFCS should work from the training guide developed for new employees.

ORIENTATION ASSIGNMENT

Worksheet on Preparing to Enter the Practicum Agency

This worksheet will assist student in preparing for the semester ahead. Use of this worksheet is not required but encouraged of all students entering placement. It will help the student and the seminar instructor identify any areas that need attention early on in the practicum to help avoid future difficulties. The ultimate aim is to foster student achievement and self-efficacy in experiential learning, given the long-term developmental importance of good first starts.

1. What will be your primary duties while a student intern?
2. When and how often will you meet with your supervisor?
3. How does your supervisor want you to prepare for supervision?
4. Who will be your “back up supervisor” in the event your supervisor is not available?
5. What will be your usual schedule?
6. What are the policies and procedures regarding client confidentiality at your agency?
7. What are the policies and procedures related to client safety?
8. What risk assessments have you made regarding safety at the agency?
9. What is expected dress code at the agency?
10. What is required of you in regard to documentation?
11. What skills set do you need to practice at your agency?
12. Are you required to tell clients and other professionals that you are in the roles of BSW student intern? Please explain.
13. Identify several resources you will need to draw upon to increase your skill set, knowledge, and practice methods in serving your clients. Such resources can be journal articles, skills development, consultations, etc.
14. What kinds of orientation are you receiving at your agency? Do you need additional orientation? Please explain and describe.

APPENDIX B

Supervision

Description of Supervision

The Council on Social Work Education, the national accrediting body of undergraduate and graduate social work programs, requires a minimum of one hour of weekly supervision. The DSC BSW program expects that the practicum instructor will meet for a minimum one hour of individual supervision per week with each student.

Typically, practicum instruction of students occurs through a variety of styles and methods, including formal individual scheduled time with the practicum instructor, group or team supervision, demonstration, coaching, and team meetings. The choice of which activity best fits the student and the assignments are left to the practicum instructor. However, the pattern of instruction must be by design and minimum contact time must be established.

The student is expected to take a proactive stance in regard to the use of instructional time. This can mean formulating questions, topics, and/or agendas and any relevant written materials (such as case notes or reports or drafts) for practicum instruction conferences or meetings. Students are urged to share their weekly “Log” with their practicum instructor.

Suggestions on How to Structure a Supervisory Session

- 1. Hold the student accountable for being prepared for supervision. Students are responsible for bringing an agenda to the meeting.**
2. Be aware that the weekly “Log” is a tool for the student to use to prepare for supervision. In the log the student identifies from practice experience questions for the practicum instructor. The students should have the log and questions in hand when they attend supervision. Ask your students to use this opportunity.
3. The practicum instructor can (and should) ask the student to discuss academic assignments during supervision. Practicum instructor input and guidance in academic assignments enhances the quality of the learning experience.
4. Use supervision to regularly ask the student how she is doing, and what she is feeling about the practicum setting, her practice experiences, and about your role in her learning. Recognize that BSW students are not good at sharing problems or negative feelings (in a constructive manner) with instructors. Do not accept from the student that “everything is fine”. Facilitate her learning to identify and articulate a description of her needs and concerns.
5. Remember that although you are a facilitator of the student’s learning experience, you should play a significant and active role in ensuring that learning occurs. Practicum instructors serve in a capacity which is equivalent to classroom instructors. You are the “Instructors of Practicum Learning”.

APPENDIX C

Personal Safety and Risk Reduction Issues

The BSW program attempts to make students aware of safety issues and be better prepared to handle potentially dangerous situations. Because safety issues relate to practicum work, campus life, and many other settings, general information about risk assessment and reduction is also included in this section. This information can be used to assess environmental risk levels, to determine if a client or another individual could be dangerous, to make decisions about managing risky situations, or to protect yourself or clients.

It is very difficult to predict when dangerous behavior will occur. The factors most often considered to be predictors are: history of violent behavior, angry male clients, and abuse of drugs and/or alcohol. Aggressive behavior may be direct or indirect; determinants include fear, anger, overstress, chemical alteration, need for attention or power, and paranoia. The important variable is the intent or perceived intent of the individual who appears to be dangerous. It is important to determine whether the behavior is a characteristic adaptive style or if it is reactive to a particular or current situation. However, the best protection in a threatened or actual assault is to follow your intuition.

Problem-solving skills are also transferable to risky situations: gather data, evaluate the information, decide on a course of action based on the evaluation, implement it, evaluate the outcome and adjust accordingly. This process may occur in an instant or over a longer period. The goals of risk prevention and management strategies should be:

- protect yourself, the client, staff, and others in the environment
- help the individual gain control with the least amount of pain and guilt
- help the individual focus on the source of anger, fear, frustration, etc.
- assist the individual to express these feelings verbally rather than in actions

General Risk Reduction Guidelines

- Walk with a sense of purpose. Be aware of body language.
- Be alert to people around you. Beware of strangers who approach and speak to you. Keep at a safe distance and keep moving.
- Do not walk on side of the street where people are loitering. Walk on the outside of the sidewalk, away from possible hiding places. • Be aware of safe places such as stores, library, school, and community centers to use as refuge.
- Do not carry a purse or bag. If you must carry one, conceal it or use a shoulder bag or backpack.
- Wear sensible appropriate clothing, low heeled shoes, and no jewelry which could be snatched off or wrapped around your neck.
- Do not give money to people who ask for it.
- Assess multi-story buildings for safety. If you take the elevator, observe elevator interior before entering. If the elevator appears unsafe, wait for the next elevator or consider taking the stairs; be aware of who is in the stairwell and how far apart the exits are. If a suspicious person enters the elevator after you have entered it, exit before the door closes.

Risk Reduction Guidelines in Practicum

Students should receive a specific orientation to agency policies and procedures regarding risk management. **If the practicum instructor does not provide this orientation, students must ask for it.** Students should also learn about the agency's informal methods for assessing and handling risk situations. Each situation is different, but the guidelines that follow may generally apply in the management of potentially dangerous situations.

- Appreciate realistic limitations. Be reasonable about what is and is not possible. Know when to stay and leave. (A sound preventive approach is to avoid seeing clients with reputations for unprovoked assaults or those in acute paranoid psychotic distress in an empty office without backup staff or security available).
- Keep your work area as safe as possible, keeping it clear of items which could be harmful to anyone involved in a physical intervention. For example, keep objects which can be used as weapons (ashtrays, sharp objects, or a hot cup of coffee) away from clients.
- Where possible, alert staff members that assistance may be needed before entering the crisis situation. • Act calmly. Keep the scream out of your voice. An emotional or aggressive response to a distraught individual is likely to reinforce that person's aggression. Remember, clients and others who are violent are often reacting to feelings of helplessness and loss of control. Therefore, you need to be in control of the situation.
- Take a non-threatening posture to avoid appearing confrontational but take a protected posture as well. This usually means standing at a safe distance away from sudden lunges, punches, and kicks. Avoid a "stare down" by periodically breaking eye contact.
- Don't walk away from the individual who is escalating. Acknowledge the individual's feelings and attempt to talk him/her down. Encouraging the individual to sit down may sufficiently delay or divert the possibility of attack. Usually a one-to-one situation with available staff at a distance works well. The most appropriate staff member to be with the individual is the one who has the best rapport with him/her, not necessarily the staff with the most authority or rank.
- Observe the progress of the aggression and the stages of escalation. Identify those actions on your part which serve to calm and those which serve to inflame the individual, and act accordingly.
- Avoid sudden movements or the issuance of strident commands, as these may only inflame the individual. Whenever possible, allow the individual to make behavioral choices. Directives or alternatives should be stated concretely and in terms of actions which can be performed immediately. Depending on the cognitive abilities of the individual, limit-setting may take two forms:
 - Direct: state clearly and specifically the required or prohibited behavior.
 - Indirect: allow the individual to choose between two acceptable behavioral alternatives.

What to do if you are attacked or seriously threatened during practicum

- Follow agency procedures to manage the immediate situation and to report the incident informally.
- Get any needed medical care and debrief with your practicum instructor. • Immediately notify the Director of Practicum Education, or BSW program director).
- Recognize that a physical attack or threatening behavior is frightening and that you may respond emotionally to the stress. Seek help to resolve the crisis responses.

APPENDIX D

Ethics

CODE OF ETHICS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

All students receive a copy of the updated NASW Code of Ethics (2021) in their junior year and are expected to keep and reference this throughout the senior practicum.

Please refer to the NASW website for the most current iteration of the Code of Ethics: [Code of Ethics: English \(socialworkers.org\)](https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code_of_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics_English.aspx)

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: Service

Ethical Principle: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: Importance of Human Relationships

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: Integrity

Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: Competence

Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

APPENDIX E
Template for
Memorandum of Understanding

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING AFFILIATION OF STUDENTS FOR SOCIAL
WORK PRACTICUM**

This is a Memorandum of Understanding on the part of _____ hereinafter referred to as “Facility” and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia on behalf of the Dalton State College School of Social Work, hereinafter referred to as “College.”

A. PURPOSE:

- 1 The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to guide and direct the parties respecting their affiliation and working relationship, inclusive of anticipated future arrangements and agreements in furtherance thereof, to provide high quality practicum learning experience for students in the College’s School of Social Work, while at the same time enhancing the resources available to the Facility for the providing of services to its clients/consumers.
- 2 Neither party intends for this Memorandum to alter in any way their respective legal rights or their legal obligations to one another, to the students and faculty assigned to the Facility, or as to any third party.

B. GENERAL UNDERSTANDING:

- 1 The courses of instruction (i.e. social work practicum) to be provided will be of such content and cover such periods of time as may from time to time be mutually agreed upon by the College and the Facility. The starting and ending date for each program shall be agreed upon at least one month before the program commences.
- 2 The number of students designated for participation in a practicum education program will be mutually determined by agreement of the parties and may at any time be altered by mutual agreement. All student participants must be mutually acceptable to both parties and either party may withdraw any student from a program based upon perceived lack of competency on the part of the student, the student’s failure to comply with the rules and policies of the Facility or the College, or for any other reason if either party reasonably believes that it is not in the best interest of the program for the student to continue.
- 3 There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, disability, or veteran status in either the selection of students for participation in the program, or as to any aspect of the practicum training; provided, however, that with respect to disability, the disability must not be such as would, even with reasonable accommodation, in and of itself preclude a student’s effective participation in the program.

C. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1 The Facility will retain responsibility for the services to clients/consumers and will maintain administrative and professional supervision of all service activities provided by students insofar as their presence and program assignments affect the operation of the Facility and its services, direct and indirect, to clients/consumers.
- 2 The Facility will provide adequate practice for participating students in accordance with the practice objectives developed through cooperative planning by the college's departmental faculty and the Facility's staff.
- 3 The Facility will use its best efforts to make conference space and classrooms available as may be necessary for teaching and planning activities in connection with practicum training programs.
- 4 Facility staff shall, upon request, assist the College in the evaluation of the learning and performance of participating students.
- 5 The Facility shall provide for orientation of both College faculty and participating students to the facilities, philosophies, rules, and regulations and policies of the Facility.
- 6 Subject to the Facility's overall supervisory responsibility for client/consumer services, it may, but is not obligated to, permit appropriately licensed faculty members to provide such services at the Facility as may be necessary for teaching purposes.
- 7 All medical or health care (emergency or otherwise) that a student or College faculty member receives at the Facility will be at the expense of the individual involved.
- 8 The Facility shall do or cause to be done the following:
 - a. Provide an experienced practicum instructor(s) for BSW student who shall have responsibility for the practicum related educational program of the student, including delivery and evaluation of the educational program. It is recommended that educational instruction be separated from administrative supervision, and that records of educational instruction not be included with administrative records.
 - b. Provide administrative support for the identification and provision of education opportunities for the student. These educational opportunities shall be incorporated into the Practicum Learning Plan. The Practicum Learning Plan shall be drawn up at the beginning of each academic term in a conference including the designated facility practicum Instructor, the practicum liaison, and the student. This plan must be approved by the practicum liaison. Educational opportunities will normally evolve from the work station of the student. However, it is expected that during the period of practicum instruction additional opportunities will be needed to fulfill the various objectives of the Practicum Learning Plan. The facility agrees to work with the College in arranging these additional opportunities for the student.

- c. Permit the student to utilize time in the work week for educational purposes in fulfillment of educational objectives identified in the student's Practicum Learning Plan and agreed to by the facility practicum instructor of the student.
- d. Permit the facility practicum instructor to set aside designated time each week for instruction of the student for educational purposes, and to attend meetings/training sessions for practicum instructors.

D. COLLEGE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1 The College will use its best efforts to see that students selected for participation in the practicum training program are prepared for effective participation in the direct practice phase of their overall education. The College will retain ultimate responsibility for the education of its students.
- 2 Prior to the commencement of a practicum training program, the College will, upon request, provide responsible Facility officials with such student records as will adequately disclose the prior education and related experiences of prospective student participants.
- 3 The College will use its best efforts to see that the practicum training programs at the Facility are conducted in such a manner as to enhance client/consumer services. Only those students who have satisfactorily completed the prerequisite didactic portion of their curriculum will be selected for participation in a program.
- 4 The College will not assign any faculty member to the Facility in connection with the operation of the program who is not appropriately qualified.
- 5 The College will require all participating faculty and students to show proof of liability insurance in an amount satisfactory to the College and the Facility. Upon request, evidence of such insurance will be provided.
- 6 The College will encourage student compliance with the Facility's rules, regulations, and procedures, and use its best efforts to keep students informed as to the same and any changes therein. Specifically, the College will keep each participating student apprised of his or her responsibility:
 - a. To follow the administrative policies, standards, and practices of the Facility when the student is in the Facility.
 - b. To report to the Facility on time and to follow all established regulations during the regularly scheduled operating hours of the Facility.
 - c. To conform to the standards and practices established by the College while training at the Facility.
 - d. To keep in confidence all medical and health/mental health information pertaining to particular clients/consumers.

7 If required by the Facility, the College will require each participating student to furnish proof of a current physical examination, the results of which shall, upon request, be made available to the Facility. The parties may agree to have such examination performed by the Facility.

E. MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1 The parties will work together to maintain an environment of quality practicum learning experiences and quality client/consumer services. At the instance of either party, a meeting or conference will be promptly held between College and Facility representatives to resolve any problems or develop any improvements in the operation of the contemplated training program.

2 Unless sooner canceled, or provided below the term of this affiliation for training shall be for 12 months, commencing on _____ and ending on _____. This working relationship and affiliation may be renewed by mutual written consent of the parties. It also may be canceled at any time by either party upon not less than thirty (30) days written notice in advance of the next training experience.

(ADDITIONAL SIGNATURE PAGE)