

Department of Social Work
Florida Gulf Coast University

MSW Foundation Field Placement
Learning Plan

INSTRUCTIONS

This Learning Plan is to be completed collaboratively by the field instructor and the student within the first 30 hours of the field placement and submitted to the faculty liaison for review and signature. It will be used as the basis for the final evaluation at the end of fall semester and at the end of the field placement. The plan will be revised at the beginning of the second semester. The revised version will be reviewed at the mid-semester and end of Spring semester final evaluation .

Learning activities and tasks are to be designed by the student in collaboration with the field instructor (and task supervisor as applicable). Additional learning goals, objectives, and activities that are specific to the learning requirements, interests, and maturity of the student may be added to those established in this plan, as activities are completed to the satisfaction of the field instructor and student, initial and date those activities on the learning plan form.

SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY: FIELD EDUCATION

Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. Professionals have pedagogical norms with which they connect and integrate theory and practice.¹ In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two are interrelated components of curriculum – classroom and field – are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies.²

CORE COMPETENCIES

Competency-based education is an outcome performance approach to curriculum design. Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.³ The ten core competencies are the foundation of this field learning plan and subsequent evaluation of student performance in Field Education.

¹ Shulman, L. S. (2005, Summer). Signature pedagogies in the professions, *Daedalus*, 52-59.

² Council on Social Work Education, 2005. *Educational policy and accreditation standards*.

³ Ibid.

It is important to differentiate between demonstration of competency at the generalist and concentration levels. While competencies do not change, the emphases and activities will be different depending on the level. Here are the CSWE definitions of Generalist Practice – both BSW program and first year MSW program and Advanced Practice – second year MSW program:

- Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person and environment construct. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice. Generalist practitioners incorporate diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of content on professional practice. BSW practice incorporates all of the core competencies.
- Advanced practitioners refine and advance the quality of social work practice and that of the larger social work profession. They synthesize and apply a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills. In areas of specialization, advanced practitioners assess, intervene, and evaluate to promote human and social well-being. To do so they suit each action to the circumstances at hand, using the discrimination learned theory experience and self-improvement. Advanced practice incorporates all of the core competencies augmented by knowledge and practice behaviors specific to a concentration.⁴

The tasks, activities, and strategies to demonstrate competency will vary from placement to placement. In collaboration between the student and the field instructor, a learning plan will be developed that is specific to this student and this agency. It is not necessary to have a separate task, activity, or strategies for each practice behavior that is linked to each competency. The learning plan is a living document and may be altered, added to, or deleted from during the course of each semester. The student and field instructor are expected to review and update it as necessary and initial those items that have been successfully completed.

The learning plan must be completed within the first 30 hours of placement for Fall Semester. It is then submitted to the faculty liaison who will make a copy for the Field Education Coordinator. The Fall Semester and Final Evaluation Forms are formatted to correspond to the Learning Plan.

If you have questions please contact Dr. Felke at tfelke@fgcu.edu or 239-590-7841.

⁴ Council on Social Work Education (2008). *Educational policy and accreditation standards*, 7-8.