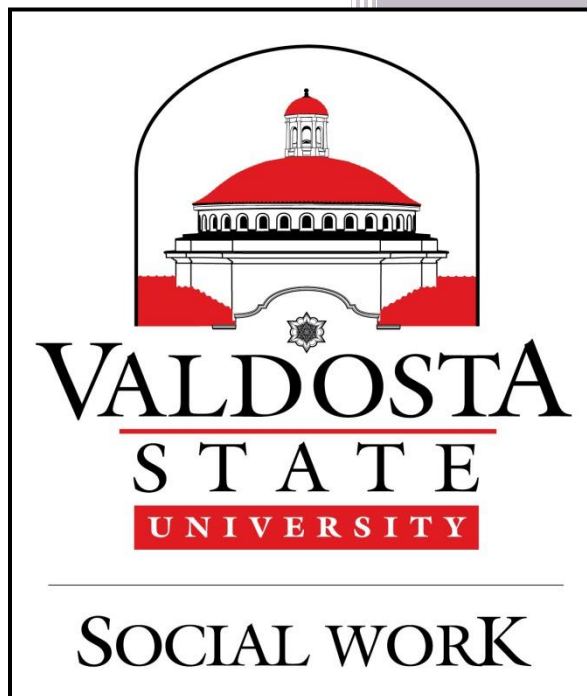


# MSW Field Handbook



Social Work Program  
Department of Human Services  
Valdosta State University  
Valdosta, GA 31698  
Revised 8/8/2021

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SECTION I: MISSION, GOALS AND PROGRAM COMPETENCIES .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Valdosta State University Institutional Mission Statement .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>MSW Program’s Mission Statement.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>MSW Program Goals .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>MSW Program Competencies .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF FIELD PRACTICUM .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Overall Purpose.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>I. Generalist Practicum.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Hours Required for Generalist Practicum: .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Face-to-Face (On-Campus) Cohort.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Web Hybrid and Part-Time On-Campus Cohort.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>II. Specialized/Concentration Practicum .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>HOURS REQUIRED FOR SPECIALIZED/CONCENTRATION PRACTICUM: .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Full-time Students.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Part-time Students (Web Based/Three-Year) .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>SECTION III: APPLYING FOR YOUR PRACTICUM.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Applying for Generalist Practicum .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Applying for Specialized/Concentration Placement.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>SECTION IV: FIELD INSTRUCTION ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Director Of Field Instruction/Office of Field Instruction .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Field Instructors: .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Faculty Liaison (Or Generalist Practicum Seminar Instructor):.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Student.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<b>SECTION V: PRACTICUM POLICIES .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SECTION VI: WORK-SITE FOR PRACTICUM.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>SECTION VII: STUDENT RECORDING.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>SECTION VIII: OTHER IMPORTANT MSW POLICIES.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<i>CRITERIA FOR NONACADEMIC TERMINATION OF MSW STUDENTS.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics .....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>VSU’s Non-Discrimination Policy.....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Sexual Misconduct and Title IX .....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Access Statement.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE MSW GENERALIST PRACTICUM.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<i>Mid-Term Evaluation Form .....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Final Grade Form .....</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Student Log.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Generalist Practicum Learning Plan Worksheet/Semester Evaluation .....</i>	<i>50</i>
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE MSW ADVANCED PRACTICUM .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<i>Mid-Term Evaluation Form .....</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Final Grade Form .....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Student Log.....</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Advanced Practicum Learning Plan Worksheet/Semester Evaluation.....</i>	<i>61</i>

## **SECTION I: MISSION, GOALS AND PROGRAM COMPETENCIES**

The Valdosta State University (VSU) Master of Social Work Program (MSW) is the result of the collaborative efforts of area social workers who work to ameliorate the area's social problems, social work faculty members, and numerous other professionals and citizens who represent both the university and the region. The grass roots' nature of the MSW Program has been apparent since the doors of the school first opened in 1995, and the deep level of community support and involvement has been ongoing. The MSW Program is not only a vital part of the campus, community, and region, but the program also has had a significant impact on the social fabric of the community. Likewise, dramatic changes in the community context have had equally significant effects on the MSW Program. It is our belief that both the program and the community have enriched one another. Presented below is the mission statement, goals and program competencies of the MSW Program at Valdosta State University.

### **Valdosta State University Institutional Mission Statement**

The VSU mission consists of three interrelated parts:

**Organization and Mission:** As a comprehensive institution of the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University (VSU) is a welcoming, aware, and vibrant community founded on and dedicated to serving our communities' rich and diverse heritages. Through excellence in teaching, basic and applied research, and service, VSU provides rigorous programs and opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region.

*Student Mission:* To provide a diverse student population with an inspired education, a safe learning environment, a nurturing community, and a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.

*University Mission:* To operate the university with a focus toward human, environmental, and financial sustainability while increasing value to our local, regional, national, and international stakeholders. To expand opportunities for our students, employees, and varied community members by promoting social justice and service learning.

*Regional Mission:* To provide our region and our home with the resources and support necessary to develop and sustain a higher quality of living, greater economic and community development, and inspired innovation that nurtures and respects our diverse population and beautiful environment while promoting academic outreach, public and private entrepreneurship, and collaboration with all regional entities. Valdosta State University fulfills its mission by focusing on inclusion in all aspects of the educational experience.

[Approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, August 20, 2014.]

### **MSW Program's Mission Statement**

The mission of the Social Work Program is to promote a diverse and accepting learning community and professional culture that includes students, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders at local, regional, state, national and international levels. Via teaching, scholarship, service, advocacy and leadership we strive to improve individual well-being and social welfare with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of populations that are oppressed,

vulnerable, and living in poverty; advance social and environmental justice; advocate for human rights; and promote respect for human differences. Further, through field and other educational experiences, we prepare advanced generalist practitioners who engage in ethical and culturally sensitive practice that is informed by theory, research, and practice wisdom. Through supervision, consultation, and professional collaboration, these practitioners learn to critically evaluate, shape, and be shaped by the social work practice environment.

In comparing the Mission Statement of the Social Work Program with the Mission Statement of the Social Work Profession, the Department has incorporated the major themes of the profession into its mission statement. In promoting the person-in-environment framework, the Social Work Program promotes a dual focus on improving individual well-being as well as improving the well-being of the overall community defined broadly as the local, regional, state, national, and global context of social work practice. The Social Work Program likewise embraces the goal of enhancing the quality of life for all people, but with particular emphasis given to the oppressed, vulnerable, those living in poverty, those who are denied basic human rights, and those that lack access to social and environmental justice. The Social Work Program aims to create an educational program that provides advanced generalist practitioners with the knowledge, skills, values and cognitions/attitudes needed to practice in ethical and culturally sensitive ways with all people.

### **MSW Program Goals**

The seven goals of the Social Work Program are:

1. To prepare students to engage in informed, systematic, and self-directed advanced generalist practice at multiple levels.
2. To create a unique learning environment in which students are able to identify with the profession and learn to assume professional leadership roles in which they can begin to shape their professional environment.
3. To prepare students for practice at increasing levels of complexity, using specialized theories and practice methods that enable students to maintain attention to balanced practice.
4. To prepare students to practice with respect and with the knowledge, values, and skills that are appropriate for the range of human differences in order to implement effective intervention strategies.
5. To develop and strengthen ongoing collaboration with helping systems in the community and region to facilitate the advancement of social work knowledge, skills, and values, and the promotion of policies and services that match the ideals of social justice.
6. To provide support and professional development to human service practitioners within the region as well as to contribute to the advancement of the profession through the generation of social work knowledge through scholarship, service, teaching, professional affiliations, and opportunities for life-long learning.
7. To seek an increasingly diverse group of applicants who wish to pursue the field of social work and to create a creative, diverse learning environment in which students value human differences and learn to practice within the values and ethics of the profession.

The curriculum of the Social Work Program is designed in two key phases in accordance with the 2015 EPAS Guidelines of CSWE. The first phase is offered as generalist practice that provides a strong foundation for student knowledge, values, skills, and a holistic look at the scope of the social work profession. In this phase, students are exposed to a beginning level of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive-affective processes through their educational classes and through their experiences in generalist field practicum. In describing students' first year in the MSW Program, the terms "generalist" and "foundation" will be used interchangeably in the MSW Field Handbook. The second key phase of the MSW curriculum is labeled as the specialized practice or concentration year practice in which students are exposed to and expected to demonstrate advanced knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive-affective processes in both their educational classes and in their specialized field practicum. In describing students' second or advanced year in the MSW Program, the terms "specialized" and "concentration" will be used interchangeably in the MSW Field Handbook.

### **MSW Program Competencies**

In line with the standards and policies of CSWE, we identified 9 generalist curriculum competencies and advanced practice in the specialized competencies that addressed the community, profession, the MSW Program, and program renewal. In articulating our 9 competencies, we no longer propose that students can master the generalist competencies by the end of their first year. Rather, we propose that the generalist competencies continue to play a part in the students' work during their specialized year, although we contend that students must meet the generalist competencies in more advanced ways through the demonstration of more advanced skills. During students' specialized year, all 9 program competencies must be met. The program competencies are as follows:

#### Generalist

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

#### Specialized or Concentration

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior at An Advanced Level
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice at an Advanced Level
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice Concerns at an Advanced Level
4. Engage in Advanced Forms of Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Advanced Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level

8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level

## **SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF FIELD PRACTICUM**

### **Overall Purpose**

Since the beginning of the social work profession in the late 1800's, social work education has included academic class work as well as actual practice experience in social service agencies. Field education is the signature pedagogy of Social Work. The attempt to forge a strong link between theory and practice remains a cornerstone of social work professional education. Through the Field Practicum, graduate students are provided with significant integrative experiences in preparation for their professional careers. The supervised practice experience or practicum is referred to in many different ways including “field instruction,” “supervision,” “placement” or “internship.” The MSW Field Instruction Handbook outlines the structure of student practicum experiences at Valdosta State University. This manual includes instructions, information, policies, procedures, and applications that students need in order to progress through this phase of the social work program. Please read the material carefully.

Practicum courses are restricted to students enrolled in the Master of Social Work program and the students must have completed the application process for the practicum they are entering and must have met the program specified criteria for admission into field practicum.

### **I. Generalist Practicum**

The Generalist Practicum provides students with experience and field instruction in generalist social work practice. Students are offered an opportunity to experience a wide range of social work roles and functions (e.g., advocate, broker, resource developer, teacher, and counselor) as well as a range of vulnerable client populations. The Field Director assigns students to the generalist practicum. The Generalist Practicum is carried out concurrently with class work during two semesters for 460 practicum hours total. Students spend 16 hours a week in placement in addition to enrollment in their academic classes. Students are enrolled in a practicum seminar that accompanies each practicum. This seminar is an integral part of the overall practicum experience and allows students an opportunity to integrate field and academic experiences. Practicum Seminar is conducted both face to face and in an online web-hybrid option. All students begin Generalist Practicum mid-September and will continue throughout the Spring Semester. The number of sections available for students are dependent on the number of students entering field. Academic advisors assist students in developing their Program of Study. The Field Director and academic advisors will determine and announce when students should apply for practicum/practicum seminar.

**\*\*Note to Part-Time/Web Based Students of the MSW Program Only:** Students complete the foundation year **during their first and second years.** Students complete the Generalist Practicum/practicum seminar during the second year in the program. Students thus complete most of their foundation classroom courses during their first year, giving them a lighter academic load to facilitate completion of the practicum/practicum seminar. In mid-September students begin practicum/practicum seminar. Students must complete all generalist requirements by the end of their second year.

## Hours Required for Generalist Practicum:

### Face-to-Face (On-Campus) Cohort

Students are required to complete a total of 460 Generalist Practicum Hours over Fall and Spring semesters of their first year. The table below shows the associated courses and activities.

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>Fall Semester SOWK 6800</b>	<b>Spring Semester SOWK 6900</b>
Practicum Seminar	2 hrs/week X 10 weeks = 20 hours	2 hrs/week X 10 weeks = 20 hours
Agency Placement	16 hrs/week X 10weeks = 160 hours	16 hrs/week X 15weeks = 240 hours
Integrated Assignments	10 hours	10 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>190 hours</b>	<b>270 hours</b>

**Total Required Generalist Practicum Hours = 460 hours**

### Web Hybrid and Part-Time On-Campus Cohort

Students are required to complete a total of 460 Generalist Practicum Hours over Fall and Spring semesters of their second year. The table below shows the associated courses and activities.

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>Fall Semester SOWK 6800</b>	<b>Spring Semester SOWK 6900</b>
Practicum Seminar	2 hrs/Weekend Session X 5 Weekend Sessions = 10 hours	2 hrs/Weekend Session X 5 Weekend Sessions = 10 hours
Online Discussions and Assignments	10 hours	10 hours
Agency Placement	16 hrs/week X 10 weeks = 160 hours	16 hrs/week X 15 weeks = 240 hours
Integrated Assignments	10 hours	10 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>190 hours</b>	<b>270 hours</b>

**Total Required Generalist Practicum Hours = 460 hours**

## II. Specialized/Concentration Practicum

The second segment of the practicum is conceptualized as a Concentration practicum in which students focus on the integration of theory and practice skills in Advanced Generalist Practice. Concentration practicum consists of two consecutive semesters during your final year of the MSW, which means that students are placed in the same agency for both fall and spring semester. Students begin Concentration practicum during the first week of classes in August. In order to proceed into the Concentration Practicum students must meet grade requirements. As stated in Policy #7 on Page 23 of this handbook:

Grade of Incomplete/Academic Probation: Students will not be allowed to carry a grade of Incomplete or "I" for social work courses into their Practicum. Thus, any "I" must be completed by the beginning of the semester in which the student is scheduled to enter practicum. Failure to complete full responsibilities for coursework will delay a student's entry into Practicum. Additionally, students may not enter Practicum when they are on Academic Probation-which means the students overall GPA is less than 2.5.

### Hours Required for Specialized/Concentration Practicum:

A total of 540 hours are needed to complete the Specialized/Concentration year practicum for ALL cohorts.

ACTIVITY	Fall Semester SOWK 7611	Spring Semester SOWK 7612
Agency Placement	18 hrs/week over <b>15 weeks</b> = 270 hours	18 hrs/week over <b>15 weeks</b> = 270 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>270 hours</b>	<b>270 hours</b>

**Total Required Generalist Practicum Hours = 540 hours**

**Full-time Students:** Students spend 18 hours each week in placement in addition to their academic classes each semester. All Concentration Practica begin in the Fall Semester and continue throughout Spring Semester.

**Part-time Students (Web Based/Three-Year):** The Concentration Practicum sequence begins Fall Semester of the third year and follows the same structure of 18 hours a week for two consecutive semesters. The Concentration Practicum is carried out CONCURRENTLY with academic classes for the entire year.

**Part-time Students (Four-Year):** Students complete most of their concentration classroom courses during their third year, giving them a lighter academic load to facilitate completion of Practicum. The Concentration Practicum sequence begins Fall Semester of their fourth year and follows the same structure of 18 hours a week for two consecutive semesters.



## SECTION III: APPLYING FOR YOUR PRACTICUM

### Applying for Generalist Practicum

- Full-time students must complete a Generalist Practicum Application by the beginning of fall semester. Part-time/Web Based students must complete the Practicum Application by midterm of the semester prior to the beginning of practicum (Spring of their first year of the MSW). Applications are available from the Field Director and will be in the InPlace Portal from Fall 2021.
- Full-time students will be assigned a Generalist Practicum site during their First Semester in the M.S.W. Program. Part-time/Web Based students are assigned during the semester prior to their first Generalist Practicum (Spring of their first year of the MSW).
- Students may not engage in direct contact (by telephone or in person) with agencies or field instructors PRIOR to being assigned to a practicum.
- For all students in placement, a “goodness of fit” is extremely important between the student and the agency. In the event that an agency placement interview raises serious questions from either the student’s or the agency’s perspective, the student will be given an additional agency referral. When a placement is confirmed, students must **notify the Field Director**.
- The Office of Field Instruction will provide instructions for contacting the assigned agency. Students must attend a confirmation interview with the Field Instructor in the agency. The Office of Field Instruction will assist students in setting up interviews.
- All students must obtain professional liability insurance before entering practicum (FYI: In order to obtain professional liability insurance, students must first become a student member of National Association of Social Workers "NASW". Applications for membership are available online at <https://www.socialworkers.org/nasw/join>). Full-time students must apply for professional liability insurance at the beginning of fall semester in the program. Part-time/Web Based students must apply for liability insurance by midterm of the semester preceding their entry into Generalist Practicum. Insurance forms are available online at <https://naswassurance.org/>. Before entering the field, students must present a copy of their professional liability insurance form to the Director of Field Instruction.
- Students will enroll and attend a Generalist Practicum and Seminar I and II sequence (SOWK 6800 and SOWK 6900). This means the student will do the Generalist Placement (3 hours) and a seminar class (1 hour) taught by Social Work Program faculty members, concurrently. The practicum and seminar will begin during the first semester of the Generalist Practicum and continue during the second semester with the same faculty member and seminar group.

**IMPORTANT:** Students must have proof of professional liability insurance before they will be allowed to enter the field. Failure to have such insurance will delay a student’s entry into practicum. This is a Valdosta State University policy.

## Generalist Practicum Field Instructor

1. Students will be assigned to Generalist Practicum agencies. The Office of Field Instruction will send the Field Instructor a copy of the student's Generalist Practicum Application and resume. The student will be instructed to contact the Field Instructor regarding a Confirmation Interview to determine the appropriateness of the placement.
2. Depending on the outcome of the interview, the Field Instructor may accept or not accept the student for placement. It is appropriate for the Field Instructor to let the student know of the outcome at the time of the interview, or if preferred, contact the Field Director (229) 249-4864 who will convey the decision to the student. At the time of the interview, it is helpful to discuss hour expectations, times at which the student must be in practicum, any prerequisite information required for starting at the agency, etc., in order to assess the feasibility of the placement. It is also helpful to determine the exact start-up date for the student to begin the practicum.
3. Each student will be assigned to a Practicum Seminar Instructor as well as a seminar group. The students will remain with that Practicum Seminar Instructor/group for the entire Generalist Practicum Sequence. The Practicum Seminar Instructor will act as your Faculty Liaison and will assist you with any issues that arise regarding the placement. Assignments for each course are presented in the syllabi. The first semester of practicum is guided by the SOWK 6800 Syllabus, and the second semester of practicum is guided by the SOWK 6900 Syllabus.
4. The Field Director and Faculty Liaisons will work with the Field Instructor and student to construct possible learning tasks related to the Curriculum that are appropriate for Generalist Students prior to the actual placement. Frequently during the Confirmation Interview, other areas of student interest emerge, and additional assignments are discussed. A formal Learning Plan should be constructed and signed off on by the Field Instructor, Student, and Practicum Seminar Leader by the third week of the semester. A copy of a blank Learning Plan is included as an Appendix. This plan will be discussed with the Practicum Seminar Instructor early in the semester to educationally direct the student's activities in the agency.
5. Each semester the Field Instructor will be asked to complete a Semester Evaluation for Generalist Practicum that involves rating the student's performance on the Learning Plan Worksheet. This section of the worksheet is used to evaluate the student's progress in meeting the program competencies and course outcomes. There are specific instructions for completing this section, which are printed at the top of the worksheet. In addition, the Field Instructor will complete a Mid-Term Grade Form and a Final Grade Form each semester recommending the student's overall performance. The Faculty Liaison will convert the evaluation into a Letter Grade using the grade form and averages. The Field Instructor, the student, and the Practicum Seminar Instructor will sign off on the Learning Plan Worksheet, Mid-Term Grade Form and Final Grade Form. Contact the Field Director or your Practicum Seminar Instructor with any questions or concerns about the placement.

6. Practicum Seminar Instructors will be asked to conduct at least 2 visits to the placement agency during the Generalist Practicum sequence. For sites that are geographically distant (more than 2 hours away) instructors have the option of conducting one of the visits via telephone conference call or distance learning. For all sites, regular contact by telephone and e-mail are essential for educational monitoring. At the beginning of each practicum, practicum seminar instructors will secure the e-mail addresses of students enrolled in their practicum and will construct an e-mail listserv of all foundation students and field instructors in order to communicate regularly with practicum participants.
7. To ensure educational monitoring, field instructors will be required to attend field instructional training meetings. Additionally, as field instructors generally are on campus for these meetings, meetings can be arranged among the field instructors, practicum seminar instructors and students should problems or concerns arise in a particular placement.

### **Applying for Specialized/Concentration Placement**

1. Orientation for all students applying for Concentration Practicum will be held in January of each year. Specific instructions for applying for Concentration Placements will be explained at that time. Students applying for concentration practicum must have completed Foundation coursework.
2. Complete a brief résumé of your educational experience, work/volunteer experience, and any previous practicum experiences. The résumé will accompany your Practicum Application. Also, complete the Summary of Diversity of Generalist Practicum Experiences included in your application. Your field instructor and practicum seminar instructor will also sign this form. All students will also need to complete the Authorization of Release and Acknowledge of Risk forms in the Field Handbook.
3. Students are encouraged to talk with the Director of Field Instruction regarding information about agencies.
4. Once a student has decided on his or her choices of a Concentration Practicum site, students will identify their first, second and third choice of practicum sites. This information is to be identified on the Concentration Practicum Application in the appropriate space. Once the application is complete, it must be turned into the Field Office. Attach your current résumé to the application.
5. The Director of Field Instruction and faculty will meet to consider Concentration Applications and make placement site recommendations.
6. You will receive a memorandum from the Director of Field Instruction regarding your recommended practicum site. During the summer, you will also receive a memorandum notifying you of your Faculty Liaison. Faculty liaisons will also be notified.

7. Instructions for setting up placement interviews, which will occur during the remainder of Spring Semester, will be included in the memo.
8. You will advise Director of Field of the outcome of the placement interview. If the recommended practicum site is **not** confirmed, you will advise the Director of Field Instruction and request another recommended site.
9. It is expected that students present themselves professionally and communicate clearly during placement interviews. It is likewise expected that students demonstrate the social and interviewing skills necessary to be able to secure a placement through the interview process. No more than (3) agency assignments will be given to a student in order to secure a placement.

**Note:** A student must first decline a placement before the field education faculty will work on a new placement. There is no guarantee that an appropriate new placement will be available. This process may delay practicum start date, require students to make up lost hours, and affect the program of study sequence.

10. When placements are confirmed, the student will notify the Field Office.
11. Advance standing students who begin the MSW Program during the Summer Semester will go through a brief placement process during the months of May and June, which will be an abbreviated form of the regular placement process. Students will submit a Concentration Practicum Application, and a brief resume. Completed applications will be turned in to the Field Office.

The Director of Field Instruction will assign students to placement based on their selection of preferred placement sites and placement availability.

### **Specialized Practicum Field Instructor**

1. Meet with student early in the semester to discuss student's Learning Plan Worksheets for Semester One (SOWK 7611) and Semester Two (SOWK 7612). This plan will define student agency expectations for the semesters and will define actual student tasks and assignments. The student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison must sign both Learning Plan Worksheets. It will be helpful for both you and the student to review the Course Syllabus together as well as to look at the program competencies, which are specified in both the Syllabus and in the Semester Evaluation Section of the Learning Plan Worksheet. Think through the types of assignments that will facilitate the student meeting these broad goals reflecting Advanced Generalist Practice. The Faculty Liaison will assist in this process.
2. The Semester Evaluation Section of the Learning Plan Worksheet is a working document that should guide you and the student throughout the semester. This section attempts to operationalize the Program Competencies in a concrete manner and allows you and the student to work jointly to evaluate the student's progress throughout the semester as the student meets each objective through his or her work in your agency.

3. A Mid-Term and Final Grade Form will be provided by the Field Director and available via the InPlace Portal from Fall 2021. Field Instructors will be asked to complete both Grade Forms each semester. (The Mid-Term Grade Form is particularly important because of the student's need for performance feedback early in the practicum. Any problems, concerns or marginal performance noted can be identified on the Corrective Action Plan found in the Field Handbook. The grading process for all Practica is specified under Practicum Policies, Number 6. Please read this material carefully. Grade Forms may be given to the Liaison or mailed directly to the Liaison or the Field Office.
4. Please call your Faculty Liaison with concerns or questions that arise during the semester.
5. The exact format of student presentation of materials in supervision is left to the discretion of the field instructor; however, students will be required to complete four process recordings throughout the year. The due dates for these recordings can be found in the Concentration Field Academic Calendar and the Concentration Syllabi. The decision to require additional Triadic Process Recordings is left to the discretion of the field instructor and/or faculty liaison. In addition, students will be required to complete student logs and turn them in monthly. The due dates for these student logs are negotiated with Faculty Liaison and Field Instructor. The Process Recordings and the Student Logs will be a part of the evaluation process and must be turned in to the faculty liaison and field instructor. Also included in the Handbook are Student Journals and Case Studies. The decision to use these methods is left to the discretion of the field instructor/faculty liaison.
6. During the student's final semester, the field instructor and the student will be asked to evaluate the practicum experience using the packet of Evaluation Forms included in the Evaluation Section of the Field Handbook.

## **SECTION IV: FIELD INSTRUCTION ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Field Instruction program requires different functions of the Director of Field Instruction, Field Instructor (agency staff), Task Supervisor (agency staff), Faculty Liaison, Educational Advisor, and student. Thus, personnel from the VSU Field Education Program and designated personnel from community partner agencies will support your learning during your practicum.

**Director Of Field Instruction/Office of Field Instruction:** The Office of Field Instruction, and specifically the Director of Field Instruction, is responsible for the total field instruction program of the Social Work Program. This includes:

1. Evaluation and maintenance of a bank of agency resources to meet student-learning needs;
2. Orientation and training of Field Instructors, students, and Faculty Liaisons; Orientation and training for field instructors is offered two to three times per year. Mandatory Field meetings occur throughout the year for orientation purposes. Faculty Liaisons are oriented yearly.
3. Maintenance of legal documents necessary for Agency-University affiliations;
4. Provision of information to Educational Advisors and students about the variety, quantity, quality and nature of practicum offerings;
5. Provision and distribution of necessary field placement educational materials (for example application forms, informational resources, syllabi, evaluation forms, teaching/learning materials, practicum calendars, etc.) to appropriate persons;
6. Development and implementation of professional continuing education activities for Field Instructors;
7. Provision of consultation to Faculty Liaisons, Educational Advisors, students, Field Instructors and administrators concerning a variety of issues impacting the Social Work Program-Agency relationships and the quality of the individual student's learning experience; and
8. Provision of information to VSU's administration concerning liaison assignments and matters impacting the field instruction program.

### **Field Instructors:**

A. **Planning role:** The Field Instructor carries an important planning function for each student's internship. In some agencies, some or all of these activities may be carried out by the agency's administrator or a coordinator of social work student placements. These planning functions include:

1. Communicating information to the Faculty Liaison or Director of Field Instruction about potential practicum openings as well as any information that may affect the nature or quality of the practicum.
2. Following receipt of the student's Practicum Application from the Liaison, the Field Instructor confirms that the referral appears to be an appropriate one and responds to the student's request for scheduling a Placement Confirmation Conference.
3. Should the Field Instructor learn information in the Confirmation Conference that leads her/him to question the viability of the planned practicum, s/he is responsible for

discussion of the issues with the Faculty Liaison or Director of Field Instruction and take immediate appropriate action.

**B. Teaching Role:** Throughout all field placements, the Field Instructor's primary role is that of teacher and facilitator of student learning. To this end, the Field Instructor:

1. Provides for the student's orientation to the agency's policies and procedures, ethical standards and safety precautions;
2. Negotiates and plans student assignments in accordance with the Practicum Competencies as identified in each practicum syllabus;
3. Provides educational supervision/field instruction for each student for at least one hour per week;
4. 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 (for example, student participation in activities outside the agency such as professional conferences, relevant library work or field visits to other programs) during the practicum;
5. Evaluates the student's performance in the agency with regard to the specified Practicum Competencies; and evaluates samples of the student's learning including process recordings, journals, etc.
6. In the final practicum, serves as the primary educational resource.

**Educational Advisor:** During both the Generalist and Specialized Practicum, the Advisor may be called upon as a student advocate and/or as a consultant to the Liaison or Agency Field Instructor concerning the student's progress and learning in the practicum. The Educational Advisor plays a pivotal role by helping the student assimilate and evaluate field placement information related to development of an appropriate Practicum Application.

**Faculty Liaison (Or Generalist Practicum Seminar Instructor):**

**A. Planning role:** The Faculty Liaison carries an active role in the planning and placement processes for the Concentration practicum. Planning for the practicum is carried out in the following ways:

1. Initially, the Faculty Liaison provides information to the Director of Field Instruction to help develop a database that includes descriptions of agency placement opportunities;
2. At appropriate times, the Faculty Liaison provides the Director of Field Instruction with information about the number, nature, and quality of practicum experiences available in her/his assigned agencies;
3. During the advising phase of the placement process, the Faculty Liaison may be called upon to provide information to students clarifying the kinds of settings that support specific practice interests, etc.;

## B. Teaching Role:

1. Throughout the internship, the Faculty Liaison provides learning experiences (including Process Recordings and journals) and participates in the evaluation of the learning outcomes. It is expected that the Faculty Liaison will make regularly scheduled visits to the agency during each semester of the field experience for the purpose of developing an appropriate Learning Contract between the student, agency and University; monitoring the progress of the student; providing educational supports to the student and Field Instructor; troubleshooting any administrative or policy issues that may arise between the agency and University; receiving input from agencies about curriculum and practicum policy and content; identifying agency needs for consultation or training; planning for future practica and evaluating the student's learning outcomes related to the Practicum Competencies.

**Generalist Practicum:** Practicum Seminar Instructors will conduct at least 1-2 visits per semester to each placement agency during the Generalist Practicum sequence. For sites that are geographically distant (more than 2 hours away) instructors have the option of conducting one of the visits via telephone conference calling or distance learning. For all sites, regular contacts by telephone and e-mail are important so that educational monitoring can occur. At the beginning of each practicum, instructors will secure the e-mail addresses of students enrolled in their practicum and will construct an e-mail listserv of all foundation students and field instructors in order to communicate regularly with practicum participants. To further insure educational monitoring, field instructors will be required to attend field instructional training meetings or view the recorded field instructor training. Additionally, as field instructors generally are on campus for these meetings, meetings can be arranged among the field instructors, practicum seminar instructors and students. Should problems or concerns arise in a particular placement, additional site visits may be scheduled to address problems in a timely manner.

**Concentration Practicum:** Faculty Liaisons are assigned each semester to all agencies in which concentration students are placed. As with the Generalist Practicum Seminar Instructors, it is recommended that Faculty Liaisons conduct on-site visits on at least 1-2 occasions during the two semesters of concentration practicum. If practicum sites are geographically distant (further than 2 hours from Valdosta), Liaisons have the option of conducting one of the visits via telephone conference calling or distance learning. If possible, on-site visits are preferable for Concentration Practicum. Accessibility as needed, either by telephone, e-mail, or meetings that occur during times in which field instructors are on campus for field training meetings, are essential in order to monitor the educational activities. At the beginning of each practicum, instructors will secure the e-mail addresses of students and field instructors involved in their assigned practicum sites, in order to construct an e-mail listserv to facilitate communication with all participants. Should problems or concerns arise in a particular placement, additional site visits may be scheduled to address problems in a timely manner.



2. The Faculty Liaison is responsible for assigning the academic grade for every practicum student according to the specifications of the practicum syllabi and grading criteria. Field Instructors will recommend both a Mid-Term grade and a Final semester grade. Grade forms are included in a subsequent section of this handbook. Grading should be discussed with the Field Instructor and student in the Evaluation Conference at the end of each semester. The Faculty Liaison carries responsibility for interpreting the application of the grading criteria to the specific situation being evaluated. The Faculty Liaison may not assign a grade without reviewing the student's performance (assignments and evaluation materials are specified with each practicum syllabus), learning plan, process recordings, and without discussion/consultation with the Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor, if applicable.
3. On behalf of the MSW Program and University, the Faculty Liaison carries responsibility for a decision to terminate or suspend a student's practicum experience and for guiding the process (with the Agency or within the University) that facilitates a sound decision. When it appears that termination of a student's placement may be an eventual outcome, the Faculty Liaison is expected to consult with the Director of Field Instruction, and when appropriate, with the Director of the Department as quickly as possible. Informed by consultation with the Faculty Liaison, the Director of Field Instruction is responsible for termination of an affiliation.
4. The Faculty Liaison assists the Director of Field Instruction in the orientation and training of Field Instructors, identification and evaluation of new practicum sites, revisions of policies and procedures, proposing and evaluating revisions in the practicum competencies to the MSW Curriculum Committee and revisions and development of teaching materials for the practicum.
5. Faculty serving as Liaisons for an agency may be asked by the agency staff to provide an agency service or may identify a service — consultation, training, research —that could be rendered to the agency by the University. The service may be one that could be performed by the faculty member serving as Faculty Liaison or by another faculty member. Such services provided by faculty of the Social Work Program to agencies actively involved with field instruction are routinely provided as a courtesy without additional compensation to the faculty member. Under any circumstances in which compensation is provided (beyond reimbursement for expenses not covered by the Social Work Program) the faculty member is required to advise the Department Head of Human Services and the Director of Field Instruction in writing prior to finalizing an agreement with the agency. This is to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made to remove any conflict of interest. Following the delivery of a service to a field instruction agency (whether as a courtesy or for compensation) the faculty member providing the service will provide a brief written report to the Department Head of Human Services and the Director of Field Instruction that describes the type of service rendered, the date of delivery, and compensation and/or expense reimbursement received.

**Student:** Practicum courses are restricted to students enrolled in the Master of Social Work program and to those who have completed the application process. To plan for the practicum, the student is responsible for completing the Practicum Application, to be accompanied by a current résumé.

The student is responsible for follow through on utilization of practica information sources provided by the School — for example: discussions with Faculty Liaisons who are assigned to specific practicum sites, contact with former or current students placed in agencies of interest and information available through the Office of Field Instruction. The student is responsible for conveying sufficient information to her/his Advisor and the Field Office about personal needs, goals, interests, constraints and or special circumstances regarding placement site. Once assigned to a specific agency, a student is responsible for arranging and participating in an interview with the Field Instructor to assure a goodness of fit between the student and the agency. In the event that the interview raises serious questions in a student's mind about the viability of the placement, s/he is responsible for immediately raising those issues with the Faculty Liaison and the Director of Field Instruction. Throughout the practicum, the student is held accountable to all School and agency policies. Most importantly, the student is responsible for her/his own learning.

**FIELD COMMITTEE:** Social Work faculty will convene a field committee comprised of all faculty members to make field related decisions in relation to students. Often students request special accommodations or changes in their field practica. In order to insure fairness and subjectivity the field committee will meet to address these special circumstances.

## **SECTION V: PRACTICUM POLICIES**

1. **Professional Ethics:** It is understood that students will adhere to the expected standards for professional, ethical conduct and to the practicum agency's policies and procedures as long as these are not in conflict with the NASW Code of Ethics. The NASW Code of Ethics can be accessed at <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code> and the Code of Ethics for Licensed Clinical Social Workers in the State of Georgia can be accessed at [http://rules.sos.state.ga.us/cgi-bin/page.cgi?g=GEORGIA\\_COMPOSITE\\_BOARD\\_OF\\_PROFESSIONAL\\_COUNSELORS\\_SOCIAL\\_WORKERS\\_AND\\_MARRIAGE\\_AND\\_FAMILY\\_THERAPISTS/CODE\\_OF\\_ETHICS/index.html&d=1](http://rules.sos.state.ga.us/cgi-bin/page.cgi?g=GEORGIA_COMPOSITE_BOARD_OF_PROFESSIONAL_COUNSELORS_SOCIAL_WORKERS_AND_MARRIAGE_AND_FAMILY_THERAPISTS/CODE_OF_ETHICS/index.html&d=1). These materials delineate the expected standards for professional conduct. A salient issue for students during the practicum is that of confidentiality of case records and recordings.

Students are expected to review their work with clients (tapes, written materials) and agency records pertinent to their assignments as an important component of their preparation for work with clients and supervisory sessions with Field Instructors. However, the supervisory review of student work does not extend to anyone outside the agency, EXCEPT the Faculty Liaison. In short, UNDER NO OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES than their private review or presentation to the Faculty Liaison, may students remove client information, interview recordings (written, audio taped or

videotaped), evaluation summaries, etc., from the agency without the explicit permission of the Field Instructor.

*A student's failure to adhere to the expected standards for professional, ethical conduct will be considered grounds for termination of practicum, a failing grade in practicum, and withdrawal of the student from the MSW program.*

- 2. Professional Liability and Health Insurance:** Prior to the beginning of the practicum, students are required to provide evidence that they have purchased liability insurance that provides appropriate coverage of any claims that might be entered against them in the discharge of their professional responsibilities during their student internship. NASW provides a reasonably priced policy for student members; application forms for NASW membership and Professional Liability Insurance through NASW are available online at <http://www.naswinsurancetrust.org/>. Some agencies require the higher amount of insurance; when applying for a field site, be certain to check.

**-Work Site Students Only:** Please note that if you are requesting or received approval for practicum work site placement you must provide proof of liability coverage from your employing agency and apply for NASW liability insurance.

-VSU student fees provide for student treatment at the University Health Services on campus. Students who are in field placements are advised to make sure their health coverage will provide for any injuries, accidents, or illness that may be incurred in the practicum site.

-The VSU-SW Memorandum of Understanding specifies that health and liability insurance coverage rest with the student, not with the agency. In addition to obtaining health coverage, students are urged to discuss any concerns about their potential health or safety hazards in the practicum site with their Advisor and/or Liaison.

- 3. Field Schedule:** Students may not set their own academic field schedule. The academic field calendar is located in the MSW Field Handbook and designates both start and end dates for practicum. If a student needs to begin practicum late or to significantly alter their weekly hours this request must be approved by the Director of Field Instruction, their assigned Field Liaison, as well as their Field Instructor. Otherwise, the weekly schedule for all of the practica 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, the Department, and individual student. Students will, from time to time, extend their clock-hours beyond the hours allocated to the concentration 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 may take "compensatory" time off from their practicum. To assure that the time off will not disrupt the student's practicum responsibilities; this should be arranged with the approval of the Field Instructor. All students will remain in their field placement sites throughout the entire semester; i.e., "compensatory time" may not be used to shorten the length of the

practicum. Students may not complete any practicum experience prior to the end of a semester!

**Night and Weekend Placements (Non-Traditional Placements):** There are few sites that offer all evening and/or weekend hours. Very few offer any evening or weekend hours at all. Under no circumstance will the educational competencies of the curriculum be compromised for a non-traditional placement. The field instructor must be available on-site for at least 8 hours per week for foundation students and 12 hours per week for concentration students. The field office cannot guarantee that a student will have evening and/or weekend hours as part of their field placements. The majority of available agencies provide client services during the typical workweek of Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. 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 must present availability and clarify agency expectations for their practicum hours at the time of the initial interview with the agency. Student and agency must come to a workable agreement in the best interest of both the agency and the student's educational needs.

The clock hour requirements for the MSW practica include any integrative seminars in conjunction with concentration practica, individual meetings with Faculty Liaisons, and a range of learning experiences that may be agreed upon by the Student and Field Instructor outside the agency (e.g., conferences, workshops, library work, processing of practice experience, preparations for supervision, etc.) In short, the clock hours are allocated for meeting the practicum competencies in the most efficient way possible. **Clock hours do not include travel time to and from the agency.**

In addition to working out schedules with Field Instructors, it is required that students keep those who may need to contact them during the placement (e.g. agency personnel and appropriate faculty and Social Work Program staff) informed of their schedules and contact numbers.

4. **Termination of Practicum:** A student's practicum may be terminated by the student, Field Instructor, an agency administrator, or Faculty Liaison for any of the following reasons:
  - a. **Level of student preparation for the practicum.** For the Generalist Practicum, 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). In addition, for the Concentration Practicum, it is expected that the student has acquired the necessary knowledge for "entry level" professional practice (reflected in competencies for BSW curriculum and Foundation curriculum of MSW programs) prior to the

beginning of the Concentration Practicum. For either practica, evidence to the contrary of the above expectations—given appropriate efforts by the Field Instructor and Liaison to assist the student to remedy these deficits—will constitute grounds for the agency’s withdrawal of the practicum for the student and for the initiation of an Academic Review of the student’s standing in the MSW program and course of study.

- b. **Student failure to meet the expected standards for ethical professional practice** as noted above in Item 1, Professional Ethics.
- c. **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 University. (See Memorandum of Understanding).
- d. **Unexpected events in the life of the student or in the agency** that jeopardize the quality of the student’s learning experience.
- e. **“Mismatch” between the Field Instructor and/or agency and the student.** Sometimes, differences in learning or interpersonal styles emerge as the student and Field 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.
- f. **Requests for practicum termination or substantive changes that relate to job offers or job changes will not be considered as a sufficient reason for termination of an academic practicum.** Both Foundation (SOWK 6600 and SOWK 6700) and Concentration (SOWK 7611 and SOWK 7612) Practicum consists of two consecutive academic courses. This means that the student must be placed in one agency (i.e. location, settings, field instructor, etc.) for two academic semesters.

**In addition, students are asked to consider carefully their financial needs prior to placement, to speak with the Field Director about financial concerns, to recognize that acceptance of an internship offer constitutes a commitment to the agency, and to make job changes prior to the beginning of a practicum sequence. Students working full-time should expect to significantly reduce or discontinue their work commitments to accommodate the demands of the two required practica. The competing demands of practicum, academic classes, and full-time employment tend to detract from the overall learning experience of field education. Therefore, it is imperative that students adjust their schedules in order to focus on their field learning experiences.**

- g. **Termination of practicum by student.** Students may not terminate a practicum without formal, **PRIOR** approval of their faculty liaison or field instructor and the Director of Field Instruction. Since all practicum placements are conducted under

the auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding between the practicum agency and the university, termination of an agreed-upon practicum involves dissolving an existing agreement between the agency and university personnel. A student cannot implement this decision.

Students who are experiencing practicum problems that they believe are sufficiently severe as to cause them to consider terminating the practicum **MUST** discuss their concerns with their field instructor or their faculty liaison and the Director of Field Education so that appropriate problem-solving steps may be initiated.

If a student terminates a practicum without prior approval or knowledge of the faculty liaison or field director, the student may not be placed in another practicum until fall of the following academic year. Additionally, a Field Staffing with the Student Development Committee or a Special Advisement will be convened by the Director of Field Education because of the policy violation. Students may be assigned to repeat practicum hours or may be given additional learning competencies depending on the recommendations by the Special Advisement Committee.

- h. **Termination of student by agency or Director of Field Instruction.** Students who are terminated by the agency or Director of Field Instruction based on student failure to meet the expected standards for ethical professional practice may not be placed in another practicum until fall of the following academic year. Additionally, the Director of Field Instruction will convene a Field Staffing or a Special Advisement due to the policy violation. Students may be assigned to repeat practicum hours or may be given additional learning competencies, depending on recommendations by the Special Advisement Committee.

Students who are experiencing practicum problems they believe to be sufficiently severe as to cause them to consider terminating the practicum **MUST** discuss their concerns with their field instructor or their faculty liaison, and the Director of Field Education so that appropriate problem-solving steps may be developed.

Any of the circumstances cited above are 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 her/him.

Sometimes, it is possible for a change to be made in the student's assignment, either to another unit of the same agency or to another agency altogether. This action may necessitate extension of the student's practicum and academic program. Such a change can delay completion of the student's practicum sequence.

**Procedure for Practicum Termination:** Whatever the reasons prompting consideration of practicum termination, the student, Field Instructor, Faculty Liaison and Educational Advisor will work as a team to resolve problems and generate appropriate solutions. Since it is most likely that the student and/or Field Instructor will be the first to confront issues that may place the practicum in jeopardy, it is incumbent upon each of them to identify (as soon as possible) any such problems with the Faculty Liaison. Upon notification that the placement may be in jeopardy, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Liaison to:

- i. Apprise the Field Instructor, student, Educational Advisor, Director of Field Instruction and Director of the Social Work Program;
- ii. Convene the above-identified participants in a review and decision-making conference;
- iii. Facilitate open and constructive communication among all parties;
- iv. Provide a written summary of the termination decision (including the event(s) prompting the termination and the reasons for the termination) to the Director of Field Instruction and the Director;
- v. Activate appropriate “next-steps” with the student, either with the Office of Field Instruction for the student’s placement in another setting or with the Director of the Program for an Academic Review/ Special Advisement of the Student’s standing in the MSW Program.

**Suspending the Practicum:** The Field Liaison, Field Instructor or Director of Field can suspend the practicum until the above steps are completed and a final decision on termination is reached. Students are not allowed to suspend their practicum.

**Academic Review:** If the practicum termination raises question(s) as to whether the student should continue in the MSW program or whether the student’s Program of Study should be significantly altered, an Academic Review may be convened by the Director of the Program. Request for an Academic Review may be made by the student, Faculty Liaison, and/or Educational Advisor.

5. **Academic Review/Special Advisement Process:** An academic review process will be held when a student is terminated from practicum, is accused of academic misconduct, or at any other time when academic status or conduct is in question. The student's advisor, liaison, classroom instructor, or Field Director may request an academic review. The process is as follows:

- 1) The request may be made to the Director of the Social Work Program in verbal or written form.
- 2) The Director then notifies the faculty of the proceedings.
- 3) The faculty may present their recommendations in writing to the Director regarding who should attend the meeting and any other concerns.

- 4) The Director will set a time for the review and determine who should be present and any other concerns.
  - 5) All participants are notified. The student will be notified by the Educational Advisor and must respond to the Advisor within two working days.
  - 6) Academic Review/Special Advising are mandatory and students are required to attend at the appointed time.
  - 7) The Advisor and student must meet prior to the advisement meeting in order to discuss the student's situation in detail.
  - 8) The student is informed in writing of the reason(s) for a called meeting and may choose to invite an advocate to the meeting.
  - 9) A meeting is held during which all participants are able to present their views.
  - 10) A final decision will be made by the Director based on the feedback and recommendations by the participants.
6. **Practicum Performance Evaluation:** Students enrolled in all Practicum courses will be given a Mid-Term evaluation and a Final Grade to be issued at the end of each semester. Grades will be recommended by the Field Instructor and will be issued by the Faculty Liaison or practicum seminar instructor. Faculty Liaison/practicum seminar instructor will have final discretion on assigning the final grade. Copies of both the Mid-Term Form and Final Grade Forms can be found in the Evaluation Section of the Field Handbook. For the Mid-Term evaluation, field instructors and students will meet together to evaluate the student's practicum performance. If the student is performing in a satisfactory way, the field instructor will complete the Mid-Term Grade Form, will provide feedback to the faculty liaison, and will forward the form to the liaison or to the Field Office.

If the student is performing in a marginal or unsatisfactory way, a conference should be scheduled with the Field Instructor, the student and the faculty liaison in attendance. This conference is particularly important in providing timely feedback to the student regarding any areas of marginal or unsatisfactory practicum performance. The focus of the conference is development of a corrective action plan designed to decrease or resolve the student's problems in practicum (refer to Corrective Action Plan policy and procedures). It is anticipated that problems should lessen or be resolved by the end of the academic semester. Should the student's practicum problems increase or worsen, the faculty liaison should contact the field director to engage in further problem solving. Possible problem-solving strategies include a referral for Academic Review/Special Advisement (procedures that are outlined in the Student Handbook.)

7. **Grade of Incomplete/Academic Probation:** Students will not be allowed to carry a grade of Incomplete or "I" for social work courses into their Practicum. Thus, any "I" must be completed by the beginning of the semester in which the student is scheduled to enter practicum. Failure to complete full responsibilities for coursework will delay a student's entry into Practicum and could alter practicum sequence. Additionally, students may not enter Practicum when they are on Academic Probation (an overall GPA of less than 2.5). If a student is requesting an "I" for field they will need to fill out the Field Placement Extension Request Form.



8. **Practicum Grade:** A student who receives a C or below on **any** of the following Competencies listed below automatically will receive a C or below in practicum, and a Student Development Plan (SDP) will be required:

**Generalist Practicum 6800/6900**

- Competency 1 Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Competency 6 Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

If a student receives a C or below on 2 out of the 9 Competencies for Generalist Practicum, the student will automatically receive a C or below for the course and a Student Development Plan (SDP) will be required.

**Specialized/Concentration Practicum 7611/7612**

- Competency 1 Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior at an Advanced Level
- Competency 6 Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level
- Competency 7 Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities at an Advanced Level
- Competency 8 Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities at an Advanced Level

If a student receives a C or below on 4 out of 9 Competencies for Specialized/Concentration Practicum, the student will automatically receive a C or below for the course and a Student Development Plan (SDP) will be required.

All competencies will be graded based on the average of the semester evaluation/outcomes. A student will be assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F depending on the average. If a student makes a D in practicum/seminar, the student must repeat the course and a Student Development Plan will be activated. Students who receive a C, D, or F also receive deficiency points. Because of the emphasis on practicum performance in the social work program, a grade of “F” in practicum courses equals 4 deficiency points and will result in permanent dismissal from the program. Please see Student Handbook for explanation of deficiency points.

9. **Vacations, Holidays, Semester Breaks, Other Absences from The Practicum:** Students are generally permitted to take a semester break between two consecutive semesters in the practicum up to a limit of 2 weeks when semester breaks are two weeks or longer. Students are expected to continue their practicum during Winter Break! Most agencies do not operate according to the VSU academic calendar, client needs continue, and often escalate, at holiday times. The Field Instructor must approve any student plans, as coverage for caseloads must be arranged to ensure continuity of care according to your placement setting. If the break would be more conveniently taken at another time than that between semesters, an alternate time can be negotiated with the Agency Field Instructor; the Faculty Liaison should be notified of this change. Students may not shorten their practicum.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving are observed by Valdosta State University and students are expected to be absent from practicum on those days. In addition, students may take any holidays observed by the agency without penalty **as long as** the student has verified that the clock-hour requirements of the practicum are not compromised.

It is understood that occasional illness or other emergencies may necessitate absence from the practicum. Students are expected to work out these arrangements with the Field Instructor; this can usually be accomplished by using compensatory time that most students accrue through working extra hours (e.g., for evening hours or meetings).

If the absence is more than a few days, the Faculty Liaison should be notified. In no instance will arrangements be approved that result in a practicum deficit in the required total clock hours or the specified time-span. In addition to their regularly scheduled class sessions, students may be absent from practicum in order to register and to be present at a Final Examination class session, which is often scheduled (by the University) at a time different from the regularly scheduled class time. Students are expected to inform their Field Instructors of these dates as soon as possible and to make appropriate plans for their 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 Field Instructor must assess whether the student can be absent from practicum at that time, and appropriate plans must be made by the student for professional attention to agency responsibilities.

- 10. Student Continuation in the Agency and/or With Clients of The Agency After the End of the Placement:** Occasionally, agencies seek to employ a student with whom they have worked with in practicum. Should that situation arise while the student is still in the practicum, the student and the Field Instructor must bring that to the attention of the Social Work Program by discussing those arrangements with the Faculty Liaison and Director of Field Education. In such instances, the Faculty Liaison will assure that the necessary safeguards are in place to protect the integrity of the learning experience of the student. Should the point of employment occur after the termination of the practicum, no special arrangements would need to be made.

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 plan to continue to render professional services to a client to whom he/she was assigned as part of the practicum.

- 11. Student Continuation of Practice Initiated During the Practicum But Not Continued Under the Auspices of the Agency:** Continuation of service to clients of the agency after the completion of practicum, unless specifically requested to do so by the agency, will be considered a breach of professional social work ethics.

12. **Safety:** The safety of students in practicum is of prime importance to the Social Work Program and to field agencies as recognized in the Authorization for Release of Records and Information and Acknowledgement of Risk forms that the Field Director completes with students prior to starting the Field Placement. It is imperative that students feel safe in order to carry out their responsibilities in the field. If safety concerns arise for a student, it is important that the student discuss these safety concerns with their Field Instructor. If, after gathering information to realistically assess the situation and to learn how to provide appropriate protection, 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 Field Instructor. When appropriate, s/he should also consult the Faculty Liaison for assistance.

13. **Sexual Misconduct and Title IX:** Sexual Misconduct and Title IX policies are presented later in this handbook. The following policies apply to situations in which harassment occurs at a practicum site.

If Sexual Misconduct or Discrimination occurs at the Practicum Site:

- a. Student will consult with the field instructor/supervisor, faculty liaison, or advisor. If the allegation is made against the field instructor, the student will bring the situation to the attention of the field liaison. Those involved will engage in problem-solving to determine how to best resolve the situation. If, however, it is felt that no resolution can be effected:
- b. Field Liaison or Advisor notifies the Director of Field Instruction, and Social Work Program Director, and Chair of the Department of Human Services.
- c. To the extent possible, information dealing with a complaint of sexual misconduct and discrimination will be handled by the Office of Social Equity. In the event of any conflict between this policy and institutional policy on the subject of sexual harassment and /or discrimination, the institutional policy shall be applied.
- d. A more detailed plan of action will be outlined to resolve the situation at the practicum site. If resolution is impossible, a change in practicum assignment may be necessary.

14. **Student Use of Automobiles:** Social work practice often requires that students drive to facilities outside the location of the agency. Some agencies provide reimbursement for student use of their own cars and insurance coverage for that activity in carrying out an agency assignment. Some agencies have their own fleet of automobiles for which the student may qualify as a driver if they are to have assignments requiring home visits or other trips requiring the use of an automobile. Many other agencies do not have these resources available. These issues should be clarified in the Confirmation Interview with the agency prior to the beginning of the practicum. In any event, students cannot be required to transport clients in their automobiles; if they choose to do so, they should ensure that their insurance carrier will cover them or that the agency has provided for their insurance coverage in case of an automobile accident. Otherwise, students do so at their own risk.

15. **Students on Agency Stipends:** Some of the practicum policies (especially those related to vacation and other leave time) may be altered for students who are receiving a stipend from the agency.
16. **Policy Conflicts:** Should conflicts arise between agency and Social Work Program Practicum Policies, the Field Instructor and/or the student should immediately notify the Faculty Liaison who will endeavor to work out a solution that is satisfactory to both the agency and the Social Work Program. No alternative arrangements may be made that conflicts with the Memorandum of Understanding established between the University and the agency.
17. **Students Working Full Time:** Students working full-time should expect to significantly reduce or discontinue their work commitments to accommodate to the demands of the two required practica. The competing demands of practicum, academic classes and full-time employment tend to detract from the overall learning experience of the field practicum. Therefore, it is imperative that students adjust their schedules in order to focus on their field learning experience.
18. **Student Employment:** It is important that social work students correctly represent the nature of their legal or professional status in their employment settings. If you are a VSU MSW student who is employed at a VSU MSW Program approved worksite practicum governed by a VSU MSW Program Memorandum of Understanding and under contract with the VSU MSW Program, then you are practicing as a social work student intern under the licensure and supervision of VSU MSW Program faculty and staff as well as appropriately licensed agency staff. If you are hired by an agency as a “social work intern” but that agency is not under contract with the VSU MSW Program, then you are not practicing under the auspices of the VSU MSW Program. This means that although some agencies hire students in an “intern” position, neither the agency nor you may assert, suggest, or imply that you are employed under a VSU MSW Program contract that includes the supervision and oversight provided by the VSU MSW program. In order to comply with federal, state, and contractual mandates, agencies not under contract with the VSU MSW Program that employ social work students in “intern” or other social work practice positions need to provide supervision and oversight by social work professionals with licensure and professional insurance coverage appropriate to the level of work the social work student is asked to perform. Social work students hired by such agencies should inquire about the agency’s provision to provide licensed supervision and professional liability coverage.
19. **Placement Process:** The Office of Field Instruction will provide detailed information to students about the placement process. Once students are assigned to a placement agency, however, it is expected that students will demonstrate the necessary social and interviewing skills in order to negotiate a finalized placement with an agency. The Field Office will provide no more than two (2) referrals for agency assignment to an individual student. Failure on a student’s part to secure a placement site will preclude entry into Practicum.

**Note:** A student must first decline a placement before the field education faculty will work on a new placement. There is no guarantee that an appropriate new placement will be available. This process may delay practicum start date, require students to make up lost hours, and affect the program of study sequence.

The responsibility for approving and selecting agencies and initiating placement arrangements rests with the Field Education Office. **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO CONTACT AGENCIES WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE FIELD OFFICE FACULTY.** Field education faculty assesses the suitability of agencies as student training sites and approves those that meet the Social Work Program's requirements. Only Social Work Program - approved sites will be used for field education.

20. **Academic Dishonesty:** Policies regarding academic honesty and plagiarism extend to student field practicum representations of interaction with clients, field instructors, and agency staff. Students who fabricate interactions or required attendance will receive an "F" in the practicum course. Please refer to policies specified in the *VSU Graduate Catalog*, *Social Work Program Student Handbook*, *the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers* and *the VSU Student Code of Conduct*.

### **Procedures, Guidelines and Criteria for Approval of Field Instruction Agencies**

The Social Work Program accepts requests from agency staff and faculty to consider new agencies as potential field instruction sites. The process of approving new agencies, training field instructors, and monitoring is quite time consuming for faculty. Therefore, the following procedures for responding to these inquiries have evolved from administrative and faculty decisions over the years.

1. The Field Director will receive all requests for approval of practicum agencies.
2. The first criterion considered is whether the agency is in a geographic location currently utilized by the Social Work Program and where a faculty liaison is already assigned.
3. A decision as to whether the learning experiences provided by that agency are appropriate, are needed, and are not a duplication of experiences will be decided.
4. If the agency and potential field instructor(s) meet the Social Work Program criteria, as judged from the information received, the Director of Field Instruction or designated faculty member will make a site visit for evaluating the agency and complete an "Evaluation of Field Practicum Site."
5. If the agency and potential field instructor(s) are positively evaluated and approval is recommended, then the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Affiliation of Students for Social Work Practicum will be processed through the agency and the University. A signed copy is returned to the agency. These contracts are renewed regularly.
6. A decision to discontinue the approval process at any of the above steps, the agency will be notified by the Director of Field Instruction.
7. Information concerning the new agency will be shared with faculty and students.

### **Guidelines for Agencies:**

1. The services provided are recognized in the community as having a credible social services function and the agency is legally established with financial support. Licensing by the state, where indicated, is completed, and membership in a national standard-setting body appropriate to its function is desirable.
2. The administration and staff should be qualified by education and experience, and have an understanding of professional social work education and its goals. The Memorandum of Understanding between the University and agency and must be completed so that the commitment and responsibilities of the various persons associated with field instruction are understood. The agency's governing body should be aware of and approve staff involvement with students and social work education.
3. The social service program should have employed staff to assure program continuity without total reliance upon students.
4. The activities provided in the program should be such as to make available a sufficient volume of service experiences and a variety of these services appropriate to the learning needs of the students to be assigned. Opportunities for learning and agency practice should include a range of client population groups extending across gender, age, race,

socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, social problems, etc.; and social work functions must be appropriate for student learning.

5. The program and its administration must operate in accord with the philosophy and goals of the social work profession and Valdosta State University.
6. In partnership with the Social Work Program, the agency administration identifies staff members who may qualify to be field instructors and jointly participates with the Department in their selection. Field instructors must provide sufficient time for teaching students. This includes participating in conferences with students (for at least one clock hour per week) and faculty, monitoring the activities of the student, and occasional meetings necessary for the continued development of the field instruction program.
7. The agency should provide students with suitable desks, telephone access, supplies, support services such as secretarial time and miscellaneous expenses incurred in providing agency services. Specifically, transportation costs associated with agency business should be reimbursed.
8. In a few situations the social services program has the quantity and quality of learning experiences available but does not have the staff to nominate for Field Instructor. If this agency service is unique and not available to students elsewhere and there are faculty resources available to fulfill the field instruction function, temporary approval for a practicum site assignment for specifically qualified students may be requested. Upon the advice of the Director of Field Instruction, approval in these situations is provided to the sites. In such cases, the agency administration will assign a staff member as a task supervisor to insure that monitoring of the student's work is in accord with the agency program policies. Faculty assigned to the Field Instruction role in an agency program must be provided appropriate space and resources for the successful completion of the instructional responsibility.
9. Under certain circumstances, students will be assigned to the Off-Site Supervision Group. This group is comprised of qualified MSW faculty/adjuncts who will provide 1 hour of formal supervision to students who do not have an on-site MSW Field Instructor. Group and individual sessions are scheduled as needed to fulfill the supervision requirements.

Students are assigned to a field instruction site only with the authorization of agency staff, Faculty Liaison and Director of Field Instruction.

### **Criteria for Selecting Field Instructors**

The selection of social workers as field instructors is generally based on the nomination of a staff member by the agency administrator or by the volunteering of a qualified individual with the approval of his/her supervisor or administrator. These individuals must hold a MSW or a Doctoral Degree in Social Work and should have at least two years of post-Master's degree experience. It is preferred that these individuals are certified by the Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW), maintain current Social Work license (LMSW or LCSW), or have other regional or national recognition of their qualifications for practice in reference to their area of

specialty. Evidence of the nominee's interest in keeping abreast of practice developments is indicated by the individual's participation in professional workshops and seminars. The Office of Field Instruction is provided with a resume of the proposed Field Instructor's education and experience.

In a few situations, a social services program has the quantity and quality of learning experiences available but does not have the staff to nominate for Field Instructor. If the agency services are unique and not available to students elsewhere and there are additional resources available to fulfill the field instruction function, temporary approval for a practicum site may be considered by the Director of Field Instruction.

It is preferred that foundation and concentration placements are supervised by an individual who has both a MSW degree as well as practice experience. However, the issue is problematic in rural areas that this program serves in which there is an under-supply of qualified social workers. Each circumstance will be considered on its own merits. If the Director of Field Instruction and the agency can locate an MSW (e.g., another agency staff member, member of the board of directors, or an agency consultant—individuals who are familiar with the caseload and organization of the agency), this individual's appointment as field instructor will be considered. In such cases, an experienced staff member will be asked to serve as a Task Supervisor to monitor the student's performance of agency policies and daily responsibilities. In rare instances, faculty members may be asked to serve as field instructors to ensure educational monitoring of a placement. In all cases, the issue of appropriate placement monitoring is a predominant concern of the Field Director. (See #9 under Guidelines for Agencies).

Field Instructors should plan time involvement that includes the following:

1. A placement Confirmation Conference with the student(s) assigned;
2. An orientation of the student (s) accepted to the agency that familiarizes the student with agency working practices, policies, safety issues, and procedures;
3. A minimum of one hour for regular (weekly) educationally focused field instruction supervision sessions with the student (s);
4. Preparation of the mid-term and semester evaluation and final grade from to be completed at the end of the practicum semester (both foundation and concentration placements);
5. Conferences with the Faculty Liaison and the student to plan and evaluate student progress;
6. Attendance at orientation workshops and other Field Instruction meetings as planned by the Department;

**Additional meetings that might arise in the course of a student's practicum experience**



### **Criteria for Field Instructors**

The agency administrator generally bases the selection of social workers as Field Instructors on the nomination of a staff member. Nominees must hold the MSW or Doctoral degree in Social Work and should have at least two years of post-Master's degree experience. It is preferred that they be eligible for the Academy of Certified Social Workers, be licensed or have other regional or national recognition of their qualifications for practice in reference their specialty. Evidence of the nominee's interest in keeping abreast of practice development should be indicated by participation in workshops and seminars designed to enrich in breadth and depth. Prior to confirmation of the Agency-School affiliation, the Office of Field Instruction should be provided a resume of the proposed Field Instructor's education and experience.

### **Time for Field Instruction Activities:**

Field Instructors should plan on a time involvement that includes:

1. A placement Confirmation Conference with the student(s) assigned;
2. An orientation of the student(s) accepted to the agency and covers agency working practices, policies, safety issues and procedures;
3. Approximately 1 to 1 1/2 hours for a regular (weekly) field instruction session with the student. It is likely that more time will be needed during the initial portion of the placement;
4. Conferences with the Faculty Liaison and student to plan and evaluate student progress; and
5. Attend orientation workshops and other optional Field Instruction meetings as planned by the Department.

## **SECTION VI: WORK-SITE FOR PRACTICUM**

### **Procedures For Evaluation of Work-Site for Practicum**

Under special circumstances, and after careful evaluation, the Director of Field Education grants approval for a student to complete MSW practicum requirements as an employee of an organization.

1. Review the Work Site Policies and Procedures.
2. Once the Policies have been read carefully and the student feels that all parties could comply, then the student needs to complete the Work Site Application.
3. Because of the time required for evaluation of the application for a work-site practicum, this application and the student's educational advisor approved, written rationale must be submitted one semester in advance of the upcoming practicum.

**PLEASE RETURN APPLICATIONS VIA EMAIL TO:  
mswfield@valdosta.edu**

4. The Office of Field Instruction will review this application and contact your employer (identified as immediate supervisor in the attached material) to initiate exploration of the requested practicum. Subsequently, a faculty work-site visit with designated administrators will be conducted and, then, a decision will be made by the Director of Field Instruction concerning your application.
5. If your employer is supportive of this approved application and practicum proposal, the employer will then be asked to sign a contract, which commits the organization to provision of specified learning experiences for the practicum, including professional social work supervision/field instruction.

## **Work-Site Practicum Policies**

Use of a student's employment as a practicum site is an **exception** rather than a standard placement option. Whenever possible, placement at non-employment agencies is preferable. Work site placements, however, have enabled many students to complete their education while remaining employed in their home communities. The role of the Office of Field Instruction is to make a determination of whether a student's specific agency of employment meets the standards set by the Social Work Program for a practicum placement site. If a site is approved, the Office of Field Instruction is responsible for managing this site through a contractual agreement between the school and the agency. A faculty liaison will be assigned to the agency to ensure that the student's educational competencies are met through the practicum.

When such placements are executed successfully, students are able to acquire new knowledge and skills. Without careful supervision and monitoring, however, students may not acquire the additional skills and meet the competencies outlined in the curriculum. Therefore, the approval process and the development of appropriate work-site placements are crucial. Such placement development requires the involvement of the student/employee, job supervisor and agency administrator, potential field instructor, the potential field liaison and the Director of Field Instruction. This extra level of group involvement is essential to the development of a sound work-site placement, particularly when the agency has had no previous involvement as a training agency with the school. In such situations, the agency may not be aware of the Social Work Program's mission, competencies, curriculum and expectations.

Whenever possible, the planning for the practicum should occur in a group. A closer type of placement monitoring is necessary to ensure that student competencies are being met and that the student as a learner is clearly differentiated from the student as an employee. Therefore, it is expected that faculty liaison involvement in worksite placements will be more intensive than in non-work-site placements in order to ensure that the student's educational role is protected, supported, and carried out throughout the semesters in practicum. An increased number of telephone calls or agency visits may reflect this intensive level of involvement. The liaison must ensure that each practicum is structured to meet the fundamentally different learning competencies represented in the practica syllabi.

If placement at a work-site is considered, the following series of conditions must be met:

- 1. The student-employee's assignments must enable the student to meet the learning competencies, which are defined in the practicum syllabus.**

The curriculum of the Social Work Program specifies educational competencies to be met for each practica. Depending on which year of practica the student is entering, the work-site agencies must provide opportunities for the employee-student to meet either Foundation level competencies or Concentration level competencies. With a Work Site Application for a work-site placement, the student and the employer must review all relevant program competencies and course outcomes and must determine if they can be met within the agency. If there is agreement between the student, supervisor, and agency administrator, the student may fill out the Work Site Application for MSW Practicum and send the Application to the Office of Field Instruction.

- 2. The Social Work Program must be assured that the student's educational experience is valued by the agency and that the agency is willing to make programmatic accommodations to the student's learning needs.**

An appropriate learning environment must be created within the agency. The student's educational program will demand time on the part of both student and agency. The student must be released from agency responsibilities in order to fulfill educational requirements. Structural arrangements must be made so that the student will be able to differentiate times during which the student is filling the role of learner from times in which the student is fulfilling the role of employee. Students must be willing to assist staff colleagues in understanding the transition they must make between the staff and student roles. Some students find that work-site placements require work weeks that are substantially longer than 40 hours in order to complete both work tasks and to meet educational competencies. Likewise, students may find it necessary to extend the length of their work-site placements in order for educational requirements to be met.

- 3. The student must be assigned a qualified, MSW Field Instructor who meets the requirements of the Social Work Program as specified in the manual.**

Clear separation of the student's learner and employee roles is best accomplished if the Field Instructor and the supervisor are two different individuals. It is the policy of the school that these two roles be separated in work-site placements. Exceptions to this policy may only be made only with the approval of the Director of Field Instruction. The Field Instructor needs to be housed in proximity to the student.

- 4. The practicum must be educationally driven and must afford students the opportunity to fully meet all learning competencies specified in the practica syllabi. Thus, work-site placements must be educationally sound for the student.**

The scope of the agency services must be sufficiently broad as to meet all of the student's educational competencies. The student and the student's employer should review educational competencies prior to making a request for a Work-Site Placement. The evaluator will also review these competencies at the time of the agency visit. **The Director of Field or Title IV-E Director makes the final determination regarding the educational soundness of the work-site placement.** Appeal regarding this decision may be made to the Director of the Social Work Department.

- 5. All work-site placement requests will be evaluated and approved by the Director of Field or the Title IV-E Director.**
- 6. The Work Site Application specifying how the placement is to be structured is submitted by the student to the Office of Field Instruction before the work-site placement visit has occurred.**

The Field Instructor, Student, Student's Direct Supervisor and Student's Agency Administrator must sign the application.

- 7. Once a Work Site Application has been turned in, a work site visit will be held to determine approval and educational soundness.**

The Field Instructor, Student, Student's Direct Supervisor and Student's Agency Administrator should be present at the initial visit.

- 8. Students will be responsible for demonstrating that learning competencies and time requirements have been met through entries in their student logs.**
- 9. Once work-site approval of an agency is given, students must apply for Concentration Practicum when they are ready to begin their practicum and indicate on their application that prior work-site approval is obtained.**

## **SECTION VII: STUDENT RECORDING**

### **Student Journals**

One extremely helpful way of maintaining a record of the student's activities is through student journaling. This is a record of intellectual, behavioral, and attitudinal experiences and is reflected in the Journal Form. Content of the journal reflects analysis of significant learning experiences and the student's thoughts/feelings/ reactions to the experiences. It is not intended to be a work log.

The Practicum Seminar Instructor, Faculty Liaison or Field Instructor will determine the number of journals that will be used as class assignments. The student will be responsible for turning in the journals to both their seminar instructor and field instructor for feedback. The decision to require additional journals is left to the discretion of the field instructor and/or faculty liaison.

### **Student Logs**

The student log is enclosed for the purpose of providing a work log of practicum hours and experiences in order to assist students in documenting their time spent in practicum. Students should maintain their logs in order to document their practicum hours and field instructors should sign logs weekly.

### **Triadic Process Recordings**

The Practicum Seminar Instructor, Faculty Liaison or Field Instructor will determine the number of Triadic Process Recordings that will be used as class assignments. The student will be responsible for turning in the Triadic Process Recordings to both their seminar instructor and field instructor for feedback. The decision to require additional Triadic Process Recordings is left to the discretion of the field instructor and/or faculty liaison.

### **Case Study**

The Practicum Seminar Instructor, Faculty Liaison or Field Instructor will determine the number of Case Studies that will be used as class assignments. The student will be responsible for turning in the Case Studies to both their seminar instructor and field instructor for feedback. The decision to require additional Case Studies is left to the discretion of the field instructor and/or faculty liaison.

**NOTE:** Policies regarding honesty and plagiarism extend to student field practicum representations of interaction with clients, field instructors, and agency staff. Students who fabricate coursework, interactions or required attendance will receive an "F" in the course. Student violations of academic honesty and plagiarism policies likewise represent violations of the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. A student who commits such a violation will be referred for Special Academic Advising. Please refer to policies specified in the VSU Graduate Catalog, the MSW Student Handbook, and Field Handbook.

## SECTION VIII: OTHER IMPORTANT MSW POLICIES

### MSW Student Code of Conduct

The MSW Program is a professional educational program. As such, students must adhere to all standards, conduct, values, and ethics of the profession that they have selected. The following professional and behavioral expectations are based on a number of documents including: 1) *NASW Code of Ethics* (2017), 2) *Educational Policy and Standards (EPAS)* of the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), 3) *Student Handbook* of the Social Work Program, 4) *Field Handbook*, 5) VSU Student Code of Conduct, and 5) *Georgia Laws* regulating the practice of social work by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage & Family Therapists. The following student expectations are addressed explicitly by the *NASW Code of Ethics* as well as other referenced standards.

1. Social work students are expected to uphold and advance the values, ethics, and mission of the profession of Social Work (Sect. 5.01, *NASW Code of Ethics*, *Student Handbook*, *Field Handbook*).
2. Social work students are expected to treat fellow students, faculty and staff with respect, honesty, courtesy, and fairness (2.01A, *NASW Code of Ethics*) and avoid unwarranted criticism (2.01B).
3. Social work students should not practice, conduct, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination (4.02B, *NASW Code of Ethics*) and respect and honor human similarities and differences (*EPAS*).
4. Social work students should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, deception, or plagiarism (Section 4.04, *NASW Code of Ethics*, *Student Handbook*, Policy on Academic Misconduct, *Field Handbook*, VSU Code of Student Conduct).
5. Social work students whose personal problems, psychosocial stress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental disorders interfere with their ability to meet the program's expectations and standards are expected to take immediate corrective action to ensure that these problems are managed. The issue that is labeled as "fitness to practice" is a key part of professional conduct and behavior that specifically is addressed in Section 4.05 of the *NASW Code of Ethics* (also, *Student Handbook* and *Field Handbook*, MSW Criteria for Non-Academic Termination).
6. Social work students should not allow their private conduct to interfere with their ability to meet the program's expectations (*Section 4.03*, *NASW Code of Ethics*).
7. Social work students engaged in research are expected to abide by all guidelines developed for the protection of subjects (Section 5.02; Policies of the VSU Institutional Review Board for Research on Human Subjects (<http://www.valdosta.edu/grants>)).
8. Social work students are expected to continue to work on areas of professional growth that are identified in a Student Development Plan. The student is obligated to follow through on all recommendations for corrective action specified by a faculty member, advisor or the faculty as a whole (*Student Handbook* and *Field Handbook*).
9. Reasonable accommodation Requests: Students in need of reasonable modification of the instructional context for all classes in the MSW Program must register with the Access Center on the VSU Campus. If modifications are needed in a particular class, students are expected to communicate directly with the classroom instructor. This communication should occur at the beginning of the academic semester. If the modifications require the assistance of personnel, equipment, or materials beyond those normally provided by instructor(s) or academic unit, the student must contact the Access Office (<http://www.valdosta.edu/access>) in regard to this request or call the office at (229)245-2498.

## STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

**I have attended the MSW Student Orientation and I have read and listened to a discussion of expected student conduct and behavior for graduate students in the MSW Program. I have also read the Professional Standards of Conduct expected of MSW Students. I am indicating my agreement with the following expectations:**

*(Please initial each statement)*

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that by enrolling in the Valdosta State University Master of Social Work Program, I agree to abide by all academic policies of the Social Work Program and Valdosta State University in order to graduate in good academic standing.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that as an MSW graduate student I agree to abide by the standards, conduct, values, and ethics of the social work profession.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that although I have been admitted to the Master of Social Work Program, if my professional development, personal conduct, or performance are not deemed satisfactory by my instructors who are members of the social work profession, the faculty has both the right and the responsibility to reconsider my suitability for the social work profession.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of MSW Student**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



## **CRITERIA FOR NONACADEMIC TERMINATION OF MSW STUDENTS**

*Students in the Social Work Program are bound by the rules of the larger University as stated in the University Student Handbook. In addition, a student's enrollment in the MSW Program may be terminated for the following reasons:*

1. Violation of the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) (2017) or the Code of Ethics of the State of Georgia Composite Board. Students are responsible for being familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics. Content from the Code is infused throughout the curriculum. The Code of Ethics can be found on the National Association of Social Workers Website. Any questions or concerns about the Code should be discussed with advisors or classroom instructors.
2. Presenting oneself in such a way as to be rejected by *two* different agencies for practicum placement.
3. A pattern of complaints indicating that the student is unable to engage faculty members, student peers, field instructors, or clients in such a way as to form a professional, helpful, and/or collegial relationship (e.g., being unable or unwilling to demonstrate nonjudgmental attitudes; unable or unwilling to allow for client self-determination; unable to follow faculty, field instructor, or agency directives; unable to work collegially with peers).
4. A pattern of complaints that indicates the student is unable to work within the Social Work Program, Valdosta State University, or field agency policies and procedures when such policies and procedures are not in violation of professional social work values and/or codes of ethics (e.g., failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct; personal integrity or emotional stability in the classroom or practicum; inability to engage in a supervisory relationship with assigned field instructor; inability to follow supervisory guidance, directives, or instructions; inability to follow faculty directives or instructions; inappropriate, disrespectful or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff either at the university or in practicum; inability to communicate effectively with faculty, staff, field instructors, or peers).
5. A pattern of complaints that indicates the student's behavior does not reflect a standard of objectivity suitable to the profession. (e.g., failure to maintain professional boundaries with faculty, peers, and/or clients; over-identification with clients or other behaviors with clients that are carried out for personal gain).
6. Engaging in behavior that renders the student ineligible for licensing in the State of Georgia, for membership in the National Association of Social Workers, or for certification by the National Association of Social Workers.
7. Failure to meet the professional standards of conduct and behavior that are outlined in the MSW Student Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct must be signed by all MSW students before they begin classes in the MSW Program.
8. A student's failure to make changes in conduct and/or behavior that are mandated in a Student Development Plan (SDP). The SDP is a formal, signed document that is developed by the faculty during a Student Staffing or an Academic Advising/Special Advising Meeting in which corrective action on the part of a student is required. A student's failure to complete all requirements of the SDP within the required time frame may result in a student's termination from the MSW Program.

## **National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics**

*Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2017 NASW Delegate Assembly*

The NASW *Code of Ethics* is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This *Code* includes four sections. The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values. The second section, "Purpose of the NASW *Code of Ethics*," provides an overview of the *Code's* main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice. The third section, "Ethical Principles," presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values, that inform social work practice. The final section, "Ethical Standards," includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication.

Expected standards of behavior are outlined in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (August 2017) available at <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English> and this information is infused into all graduate classes. The demands of professional practice require that social workers treat others respectfully, and social workers must monitor their own behavior so they can use their knowledge, psychological, and emotional resources to help others in distress.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they are knowledgeable of and comporting themselves in a manner consistent the most current version of the NASW Code of Ethics. Ignorance of the Code does not excuse unethical behavior, especially egregious, major violations of the Code. Students also must be aware that they must exhibit comportment that is consistent with the guidelines of the Georgia Professional Licensing Boards, all policies of Valdosta State University, and existing laws.

### **State of Georgia Chapter 135–7 Code of Ethics**

Office of the Secretary of State by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers & Marriage & Family Therapists which regulates the practice of clinical social work in the state <http://sos.ga.gov/index.php/licensing/plb/43/policies4>

### **VSU's Non-Discrimination Policy**

Valdosta State University is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, working and studying, and prohibits any member of the faculty, staff, administration, or student body from discriminating against any other member of the University community because of that person's race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, disabled status, or status as a disabled veteran. For more information on VSU's Non-Discrimination Policy

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/non-discrimination.pdf>

## **Sexual Misconduct and Title IX**

Valdosta State University is committed to ensuring a safe learning environment that supports the dignity of all members of the Valdosta State University community. Valdosta State University (VSU) does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. The University prohibits specific forms of behavior that violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Valdosta State University will not tolerate sexual misconduct, which is prohibited, and which includes, but is not limited to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and stalking. See VSU's Policy on Sexual Misconduct: <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/social-equity/documents/sexual-misconduct-and-title-ix-policy.pdf>

Any person including faculty, staff, students, or visitors may report what they believe to be an act of discrimination or harassment to the Office of Social Equity as soon as possible after the alleged incident(s). Students wishing to file complaints concerning sexual misconducting such as harassment or discrimination should contact: Office of Social Equity, 1208 N. Patterson St., Valdosta, GA 31698, Phone: (229) 333-5463.

**Access Statement:** Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farbar Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit VSU's Access Office or email: [access@valdosta.edu](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

The administration of Valdosta State University diligently monitors the weather in Valdosta, South Georgia and the region. Notices of cancellations, closures and delays in opening will be sent to the VSU communities through VSU email, posts on the VSU website, press releases to news outlets and social media. In case of severe or inclement weather please monitor the VSU website and news sources for information regarding schedule changes.

The MSW program is aware that we have students coming to class from throughout the state, in the evenings and on weekends. If you have difficulty driving to class because of weather and VSU has not closed, you must communicate directly with your instructors to make arrangements.

**Always make decisions which ensure your personal safety**

## Generalist Practicum Guide and Forms

### Overview of the MSW Generalist Practicum

- The Valdosta State Social Work Program aims to create an educational program that provides advanced generalist practitioners with the knowledge, skills, values, and cognitions/attitudes needed to practice in ethical and culturally sensitive ways with all people.
- The generalist practicum provides students with an orientation to the practicum agency and social work practice as well as the integration of classroom material and practicum experiences.

### Internship Timeline and Hours for the Generalist Practicum

Semester	Hours per Week	Associated Course
Fall (Start in September)	16 hours X 10 weeks	SOWK 6800 and Seminar
Spring (Resume in January)	16 hours X 15weeks	SOWK 6900 and Seminar

The internship agency and students will agree on a schedule that will meet the needs of the agency. Students generally take classes from 5:00 pm to 7:45 pm on Monday to Thursday.

### Administration of the Practicum

- The practicum is a collaborative undertaking between VSU MSW Program and the placement agency.
- Therefore, designated agency staff and VSU faculty will work together to support MSW students with the practicum, and these are:
  1. Director of Field Instruction (VSU Social Work Faculty leading the Field Education Program. Also known as the Field Director)
  2. Field Instructor (MSW Supervisor on site at the agency or at an external site for agencies without an MSW on staff- VSU will arrange for the external MSW supervisor as needed)
  3. Task Supervisor (Non-MSW Supervisor on site at the agency)
  4. Faculty Liaison (VSU Field Faculty member that works with the student and Field Instructor to complete practicum evaluations, site visits and to help with any issues that arise regarding the placement)
- Field Instructors/Task Supervisors should plan time involvement that includes:
  - a. Attendance at orientation workshops and other Field Instruction meetings as planned by the VSU Social Work Program.
  - b. An orientation of the student (s) accepted to the agency that familiarizes the student with agency working practices, policies, safety issues, and procedures.
  - c. Regular educationally focused field instruction supervision sessions with the student (s). Field Instructors with an MSW should commit to 1-hour weekly supervision meetings with the MSW Intern.

Field education is the signature social work pedagogy, and it is through field experiences that social work students develop the competencies to be successful practitioners as they integrate

field and classroom curriculum. The Field Instructor or Task Supervisor is critical in making the field and classroom connections happen.

### **Examples of Specific Tasks for Student Interns:**

- Orientation to the agency e.g., education on agency policies and procedures, types of services provided, information or identification of client needs that require social work intervention
- Developing and managing working relationships with clients e.g., opportunities for students to observe other staff interacting with clients, supervision from an experienced worker in the agency to assist students to determine how they can develop an effective working relationship with a variety of client systems. *The social work program will also provide weekly supervision to the students.*
- Interviewing experiences e.g., observing, planning, and conducting interviews for intake or assessment purposes. *Students will be required to do process recordings in their field seminar at VSU to provide the field instructor with data to aid students in further developing interviewing skills.*
- Recording experiences e.g., writing case summaries or other methods of record keeping in the agency
- Macro social work tasks e.g., observation/participation in staff meetings, grant writing
- Resource/referral management such as developing a resource directory of services available for clients; telephone contacts with other agencies providing support services to clients; participation in interprofessional or interagency meetings to advocate for clients.
- Evaluation of practice and agency programs – this can include evaluating client progress and effectiveness of interventions; data collection and analysis; becoming familiar with procedures for agency program evaluation; and developing a system for program evaluation, such as evaluation of service use by clients.
- Groupwork - observation and participation in groups such as client groups, staff meetings, meetings to discuss client progress with other professionals.
- Participation in assignments that facilitate understanding of the community, the field agency's role in the community, and unmet community needs.

How this practicum will be connected to the VSU MSW Classes:

Students are enrolled in the Generalist Practicum and Seminar I and II sequence (SOWK 6800 and SOWK 6900) while completing their field placement. The practicum will build on the foundation courses that the student is taking, concurrently, and it affords the student an opportunity to integrate what they learn in their courses to real life settings. Specific foundation courses that will inform the students' interventions include:

**SOWK 6301** - In this course students learn basic practice skills and theories for working with clients including ethics.

**SOWK 6303** – Students learn interviewing skills and practice to improve their body language, tone, facial expressions and verbal/non-verbal responses using role plays.

**SOWK 6004** – Students learn about groupwork and how to lead different types of groups.

**SOWK 6202** – Diversity and populations at risk are discussed in this class so that students develop a deeper understanding of people at risk for poverty, discrimination, and oppression. This increases their awareness of diversity in practice.

**SOWK 6400** – The course teaches students on social welfare policies and programs, including Medicaid and Medicare to increase awareness of how social policy impacts clients, agencies, communities, and social service delivery systems. Students become aware of how policy affects and guides practice and the importance of advocacy.

**SOWK 6500** – Students will learn how to evaluate their practice by completing a Single Subject Research Design research project with a client/consumer from the practicum site.

### **Evaluation of Student**

Students will receive a grade for the practicum. The Field Faculty Liaison will determine the grade based on the work performed at the placement and feedback from the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor. The Field Instructor/Task Supervisor will assist with student evaluation by:

1. Assisting the student with finalizing their Learning Plan Worksheet (on page 8). The learning plan will be developed in the Field Seminar with the help of the Faculty Liaison but will require the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor's approval and signature.
2. Providing a summary of the student's strengths and areas of improvement by completing the Mid-Term Grade Form (page 5) at mid-term, and the Final Grade Form (page 6) at the end of the semester.
3. Rating the student's Learning Plan Worksheet at the end of the semester.
4. Meeting with the Faculty Liaison for a virtual or in-person site visit at least once a semester to discuss the student's progress

If at any time the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor experiences difficulties working with the student, the supervisor is encouraged to discuss with the student, and if the situation does not change inform the Faculty Liaison or Field Director.

In sum, the field learning experiences provide opportunity for students to integrate social work theories and methods in addressing real life issues in supervised practice settings to enhance mastery of Council on Social Work Education competencies and the development of a sense of professional identity.

# Mid-Term Evaluation Form

SOWK Course: 6800 6900 7611 7612

**Social Work Program  
Department of Human Services  
Converse Hall  
Valdosta State University  
1500 N. Patterson St.  
Valdosta, GA 31698**

## FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Field Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's strengths:**

**Specific behaviors that need development:**

**Specific Recommendations:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## FACULTY LIAISON

**Additional Comments:**

**Student Development Plan Initiated**  Yes  No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Final Grade Form

SOWK Course: 6800 6900 7611 7612

**Social Work Program  
Department of Human Services  
Converse Hall  
Valdosta State University  
1500 N. Patterson St.  
Valdosta, GA 31698**

## FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Field Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Instructor's Summary of Student's Performance (Please use reverse side if more room is necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## STUDENT'S RESPONSE:

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Student Log

Social Work Program • Valdosta State University • Valdosta, Georgia 31698

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Field Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Liaison:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date Month/Day</b>	<b>Nature of Activity</b>	<b>Program Competency</b>	<b>Approximate Amount of Time (hours) on Activity</b>

**Field Instructor Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Generalist Practicum Learning Plan Worksheet/Semester Evaluation

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Course Student is enrolled in (choose one):

SOWK 6800

SOWK 6900

The Council on Social Work Education's 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards identified nine competencies that social work students are expected to demonstrate mastery of. The 9 Practicum Competencies listed in the table below will be the focus of the Generalist Practicum. Students must demonstrate skill in all nine competencies.

The student's level of performance of each competency will be rated by the Field Instructor.

An average will be calculated for each competency or course outcome by the Faculty Liaison. A student will be assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F depending on the average.

- If a student makes a D or F in a practicum course the student must repeat the course and a Student Development Plan will be activated.
- Students who receive a C, D, or F also receive deficiency points. Please see Student Handbook for explanation of deficiency points.
- If a student receives a C on 2 out of the 9 Foundation Competencies, the student will automatically receive a C for the course and a Student Development Plan will be required.
- A student who receives a C or below on **any** of the following competencies listed here will automatically receive a C or below in practicum and a Student Development Plan (SDP) will be required:

**Foundation Practicum 6800/6900**

Comp 1 Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Comp 6 Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities

Student performance will be rated according to the following scale:

- 1 – Unsatisfactory (did not meet expectations)
- 2 – Marginal performance
- 3 – Satisfactory performance (met expectations)
- 4 – Above average performance
- 5 – Outstanding performance (consistently exceeded expectations)
- 0-- Not Applicable

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/ Outcomes</b> (Was task performed and how well?)
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior			<p>_____ Understand and apply ethical decision-making models by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics relevant laws and regulations, ethical conduct of research (SOWK 6500- Citi program) and additional code of ethics as appropriate to the practicum setting.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate professional comportment in behavior, appearance in oral, written, and electronic communication including social media practices using technologically, ethically, and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.</p> <p>_____ Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior utilizing reflection, and self-regulation to manage personal values and professionalism in practice and classroom settings.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice			<p>_____ Communicate understanding of diversity and difference and recognize the extent to which a culture's structure and values impact life experiences.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate respect, knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the range of human differences applying self-regulation and self-awareness to manage the influence of personal biases and values with clients and constituencies.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 3: Advance human rights, social, economic and environmental justice			<p>_____ Identify and understand social economic and environmental justice in order to advocate and engage in practices to advance human rights at the individual, and systems levels.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/ Outcomes</b> (Was task performed and how well?)
Competency 4: Engage in Practice Informed Research and Research Informed Practice			<p>___ Apply critical thinking to use research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy and service delivery</p> <p>___ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice			<p>___ Identify social policies at the local, state and federal level that impacts the delivery of access to social services.</p> <p>___ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities			<p>___ Apply knowledge of human behavior and social environment, person in environment and other theoretical frameworks using beginning interviewing skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.</p> <p><b>*Utilize Likert Scale to rate students with 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)</b></p> <p>___ Rapport Building</p> <p>___ Empathy</p> <p>___ Reflection (Content/Feelings)</p> <p>___ Attending behaviors</p> <p>___ Effective Questioning (Open/ Ended)</p> <p>___ Paraphrasing</p> <p>___ Reframing</p> <p>___ Confronting/Noting a discrepancy</p> <p>___ Appropriate Self-Disclosure</p> <p>___ Interpreting</p> <p>___ Information Giving</p> <p>___ Summarizing</p> <p>___ Enlisting Cooperation</p> <p>___ Structure of Interview</p> <p>___ Respond to complex problems and situations independently.</p> <p>___ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/Outcomes</b> (Was task performed and how well?)
Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities			<p>_____ Using the strengths perspective, practice without discrimination, collecting and organizing data and applying critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.</p> <p>_____ Develop and select mutually agreed upon appropriate intervention goals and objectives based on assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges of clients and constituencies.</p> <p>_____ Collect, organize, and interpret client data.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities			<p>_____ Utilize supervision, consultation and interdisciplinary team collaboration as appropriate to achieve practice outcomes.</p> <p>_____ Understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidenced based interventions to achieve client and constituent's goals.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities			<p>_____ Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation and critically analyze, monitor and evaluate interventions and program processes and outcomes.</p> <p>_____ Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.</p> <p>_____ Apply knowledge of human behavior and social environment, person in environment and other theoretical frameworks when evaluating diverse clients and constituencies.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>

**Learning Plan Sign Off:**

**Semester Evaluation Sign Off:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Task Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Task Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Advanced Practicum Guide and Forms

### Overview of the MSW Advanced Practicum

- The Valdosta State Social Work Program aims to create an educational program that provides advanced generalist practitioners with the knowledge, skills, values, and cognitions/attitudes needed to practice in ethical and culturally sensitive ways with all people.
- The advanced practicum provides students with an orientation to the practicum agency and social work practice as well as the integration of classroom material and practicum experiences.

### Internship Dates and Hours for the Generalist Practicum

Semester	Hours per Week	Associated Course
Fall (First day of classes)	16 hours X 15 weeks	SOWK 7611 SOWK 7610*
Spring (First day of classes)	16 hours X 15weeks	SOWK 7612

\*SOWK 7610 is the Practicum Seminar for Advanced Standing Students ONLY

**Please Note:** Web Hybrid & On Campus Students -No practicum seminar  
All Cohorts will receive Offsite Supervision as needed

### Administration of the Practicum

- The practicum is a collaborative undertaking between VSU MSW Program and the placement agency.
- Therefore, designated agency staff and VSU faculty will work together to support MSW students with the practicum, and these are:
  1. Director of Field Instruction (VSU Social Work Faculty leading the Field Education Program. Also known as the Field Director)
  2. Field Instructor (MSW Supervisor on site at the agency or at an external site for agencies without an MSW on staff- VSU will arrange for the external MSW supervisor as needed)
  3. Task Supervisor (Non-MSW Supervisor on site at the agency)
  4. Faculty Liaison (VSU Field Faculty member that works with the student and Field Instructor to complete practicum evaluations, site visits and to help with any issues that arise regarding the placement)
- Field Instructors/Task Supervisors should plan time involvement that includes:
  - a. Attendance at orientation workshops and other Field Instruction meetings as planned by the VSU Social Work Program.
  - b. An orientation of the student (s) accepted to the agency that familiarizes the student with agency working practices, policies, safety issues, and procedures.
  - c. Regular educationally focused field instruction supervision sessions with the student (s). Field Instructors with an MSW should commit to 1-hour weekly supervision meetings with the MSW Intern.

Field education is the signature social work pedagogy, and it is through field experiences that social work students develop the competencies to be successful practitioners as they integrate

field and classroom curriculum. The Field Instructor or Task Supervisor is critical in making the field and classroom connections happen.

### **Examples of Specific Tasks for Student Interns:**

- Orientation to the agency e.g., education on agency policies and procedures, types of services provided, information or identification of client needs that require social work intervention
- Developing and managing working relationships with clients e.g., opportunities for students to observe other staff interacting with clients, supervision from an experienced worker in the agency to assist students to determine how they can develop an effective working relationship with a variety of client systems. *The social work program will also provide weekly supervision to the students.*
- Interviewing experiences e.g., observing, planning, and conducting interviews for intake or assessment purposes. *Students will be required to do process recordings in their field seminar at VSU to provide the field instructor with data to aid students in further developing interviewing skills.*
- Recording experiences e.g., writing case summaries or other methods of record keeping in the agency
- Macro social work tasks e.g., observation/participation in staff meetings, grant writing
- Resource/referral management such as developing a resource directory of services available for clients; telephone contacts with other agencies providing support services to clients; participation in interprofessional or interagency meetings to advocate for clients.
- Evaluation of practice and agency programs – this can include evaluating client progress and effectiveness of interventions; data collection and analysis; becoming familiar with procedures for agency program evaluation; and developing a system for program evaluation, such as evaluation of service use by clients.
- Groupwork - observation and participation in groups such as client groups, staff meetings, meetings to discuss client progress with other professionals.
- Participation in assignments that facilitate understanding of the community, the field agency's role in the community, and unmet community needs.

### **How this practicum will be connected to the VSU MSW Classes**

Students take SOWK 7611/7612 while doing their advanced practicum. Both practicums build on all foundation and advanced practice courses and affords the student an opportunity to integrate advanced theories of human behavior, and practice models while practicing in a specific social work setting, preparing them to step into the practice world after graduation.

Since Field is our signature pedagogy, below are examples of how the Advanced Practicums are linked to other advanced specialist courses.

- **SOWK 7300:** Skills papers document and provide feedback on a specific advanced practice skill that students utilized with a client in their field practicum. Field provides the opportunity for the student to practice the advanced skills and/or identify why a specific skill may or may not be used with specific client populations.



- **SOWK 7310:** In-depth knowledge of short-term/time-limited approaches to practice. Students will practice these skills with clients in the field. Assignments (e.g., skills papers, case studies, biopsychosocial) assist students in having a thorough picture of a client's problem and focus the treatment.
- **SOWK 7320:** Students learn management and skills of organizational structure and the social work roles within their agency. Ethics and best practices of management are applied and evaluated at the field practicum site.
- **SOWK 7400:** Students complete a research-based Compendium project on a population of which a student is interested to examine policies that impact well-being and/or service delivery through historical, state or international comparative policy analysis lenses. Students develop and/or implement an advocacy action plan.
- **SOWK 7500:** Program Evaluation project is completed within the field site agency.
- **SOWK 7810:** Case studies assist students in identifying symptoms clients are experiencing and how to construct a thorough and accurate mental health diagnosis. Knowing of DSM 5 disorders assists students in making appropriate referrals and providing appropriate services to clients in their field practicum sites.
- **SOWK Electives:** each elective is focused on a specific population or individual, family, group, organization, or community need.

### **Evaluation of Student**

Students will receive a grade for the practicum. The Field Faculty Liaison will determine the grade based on the work performed at the placement and feedback from the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor. The Field Instructor/Task Supervisor will assist with student evaluation by:

1. Assisting the student with finalizing their Learning Plan Worksheet (on page 8). The learning plan will be developed in the Field Seminar with the help of the Faculty Liaison but will require the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor's approval and signature.
2. Providing a summary of the student's strengths and areas of improvement by completing the Mid-Term Grade Form (page 5) at mid-term, and the Final Grade Form (page 6) at the end of the semester.
3. Rating the student's Learning Plan Worksheet at the end of the semester.
4. Meeting with the Faculty Liaison for a virtual or in-person site visit at least once a semester to discuss the student's progress

If at any time the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor experiences difficulties working with the student, the supervisor is encouraged to discussion with the student, Faculty Liaison and Field Director.

In sum, the field learning experiences provide opportunity for students to integrate social work theories and methods in addressing real life issues in supervised practice settings to enhance mastery of Council on Social Work Education competencies and the development of a sense of professional identity.

# Mid-Term Evaluation Form

SOWK Course: 6800 6900 7611 7612

**Social Work Program  
Department of Human Services  
Converse Hall  
Valdosta State University  
1500 N. Patterson St.  
Valdosta, GA 31698**

## FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Field Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's strengths:**

**Specific behaviors that need development:**

**Specific Recommendations:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## FACULTY LIAISON

**Additional Comments:**

**Student Development Plan Initiated**  Yes  No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Final Grade Form

SOWK Course: 6800 6900 7611 7612

**Social Work Program  
Department of Human Services  
Converse Hall  
Valdosta State University  
1500 N. Patterson St.  
Valdosta, GA 31698**

## FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Field Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Instructor's Summary of Student's Performance (Please use reverse side if more room is necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## STUDENT'S RESPONSE:

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Student Log

Social Work Program • Valdosta State University • Valdosta, Georgia 31698

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Field Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Liaison:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date Month/Day</b>	<b>Nature of Activity</b>	<b>Program Competency</b>	<b>Approximate Amount of Time (hours) on Activity</b>

**Field Instructor Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Advanced Practicum Learning Plan Worksheet/Semester Evaluation

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Course Student is enrolled in (choose one):

SOWK 7611

SOWK 7612

The Council on Social Work Education's 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards identified nine competencies that social work students are expected to demonstrate mastery of. The 9 Practicum Competencies listed in the table below will be the focus of the Advanced Practicum. Students must demonstrate skill in all nine competencies.

The student's level of performance of each competency will be rated by the Field Instructor.

An average will be calculated for each competency or course outcome by the Faculty Liaison. A student will be assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F depending on the average.

- If a student makes a D or F in a practicum course the student must repeat the course and a Student Development Plan will be activated.
- Students who receive a C, D, or F also receive deficiency points. Please see Student Handbook for explanation of deficiency points.
- If a student receives a C on 4 out of the 9 Foundation Competencies, the student will automatically receive a C for the course and a Student Development Plan will be required.
- A student who receives a C or below on **any** of the following competencies listed here will automatically receive a C or below in practicum and a Student Development Plan (SDP) will be required:

### Concentration Practicum 7611/7612

Comp 1 Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior at an Advanced Level

Comp 6 Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities at an Advanced Level

Comp 7 Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities at an Advanced Level

Comp 8 Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities at an Advanced Level

Student performance will be rated according to the following scale:

- 1 – Unsatisfactory (did not meet expectations)
- 2 – Marginal performance
- 3 – Satisfactory performance (met expectations)
- 4 – Above average performance
- 5 – Outstanding performance (consistently exceeded expectations)
- 0-- Not Applicable

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/ Outcomes</b>
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior at an Advanced Level			<p>_____ Understand and apply ethical decision-making models by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics relevant laws and regulations, ethical conduct of research (SOWK 6500-Citi program) and additional code of ethics as appropriate to the practicum setting.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate professional comportment in behavior, appearance in oral, written, and electronic communication including social media practices using technologically, ethically, and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.</p> <p>_____ Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior utilizing reflection, and self-regulation to manage personal values and professionalism in practice and classroom settings.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate the elements of leadership and the ability to shape the professional environment.</p> <p>_____ Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics relevant laws and regulations, ethical conduct of research and additional code of ethics as appropriate to the practicum setting.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/ Outcomes</b> (Was task performed and how well?)
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice at an Advanced Level			<p>_____ Communicate understanding of diversity and difference and recognize the extent to which a culture's structure and values impact life experiences.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate respect, knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the range of human differences applying self-regulation and self-awareness to manage the influence of personal biases and values with clients and constituencies.</p> <p>_____ Practice without discrimination and identify the behavior of clients and constituencies that reflects client's issues of human diversity.</p> <p>_____ Respond to the effects of human diversity on all aspects of multilevel social work practice.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 3: Advance human rights, social, economic and environmental justice at an Advanced Level			<p>_____ Identify and understand social economic and environmental justice in order to advocate and engage in practices to advance human rights at the individual, and systems levels.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate interventions using culturally and ethically sensitive social work theory and methods with persons of differing economic status, ethnic background, gender or individuals who are differently challenged, as well as individuals who have been subject to oppression or social/economic injustice.</p> <p>_____ Understand and challenge mechanisms of oppression and discrimination applying strategies of advocacy and social change to advance justice.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/ Outcomes</b> (Was task performed and how well?)
Competency 4: Engage in Practice Informed Research and Research Informed Practice at an Advanced Level			<p>_____Apply critical thinking to use research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy and service delivery</p> <p>_____Identify, select, and evaluate strategies for maintaining and enhancing psychosocial functioning and work in collaboration to assess and improve intervention effectiveness.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice at an Advanced Level			<p>_____Identify social policies at the local, state and federal level that impacts the delivery of access to social services.</p> <p>_____Demonstrate the ability to analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities at an Advanced Level			<p>_____Apply knowledge of human behavior and social environment, person in environment and other theoretical frameworks using beginning interviewing skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.</p> <p><b>*Utilize Likert Scale to rate students with 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)</b></p> <p>_____Rapport Building</p> <p>_____Empathy</p> <p>_____Reflection (Content/Feelings)</p> <p>_____Attending behaviors</p> <p>_____Effective Questioning (Open/ Ended)</p> <p>_____Paraphrasing</p> <p>_____Reframing</p>



			<p>___ Confronting/Noting a discrepancy</p> <p>___ Appropriate Self-Disclosure</p> <p>___ Interpreting</p> <p>___ Information Giving</p> <p>___ Summarizing</p> <p>___ Enlisting Cooperation</p> <p>___ Structure of Interview</p> <p>___ Respond to complex problems and situations independently.</p> <p>___ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
<p>Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities at an Advanced Level</p>			<p>___ Using the strengths perspective, practice without discrimination, collecting and organizing data and applying critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.</p> <p>___ Develop and select mutually agreed upon appropriate intervention goals and objectives based on assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges of clients and constituencies.</p> <p>___ Collect, organize, and interpret client data.</p> <p>___ Make effective use of assessment tools and protocols to analyze and intervene in organizations, programs, and communities.</p> <p>___ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>

<b>Competency</b> (as indicated on syllabus)	<b>Practice Behaviors</b> (What is the Midpoint/Satisfactory)	<b>Learning Tasks/assignments</b> (What practicum tasks will I carry out?)	<b>Semester Evaluation Section/Outcomes</b> (Was task performed and how well?)
Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities at an Advanced Level			<p>_____ Utilize supervision, consultation and interdisciplinary team collaboration as appropriate to achieve practice outcomes.</p> <p>_____ Understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidenced based interventions to achieve client and constituent's goals.</p> <p>_____ Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with on behalf of clients and constituents and facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed upon goals.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate an increasing ability to engage in informed and systematic self-direct practice.</p> <p>_____ Demonstrate a variety of intervention skills from multiple treatment models and utilize these skills increasingly independent self-directed practice.</p> <p>_____ Average (To be completed by Faculty Liaison)</p>
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level			<p>_____ Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation and critically analyze, monitor and evaluate interventions and program processes and outcomes.</p> <p>_____ Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.</p> <p>_____ Apply knowledge of human behavior and social environment, person in environment and other theoretical frameworks when evaluating diverse clients and constituencies.</p>

