School of Social Work

Internship Syllabus

Minnesota State University Moorhead

SW 469: Internship

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Mission Statement of the Social Work Department

Consistent with the mission of this upper Midwest teaching university, and the Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (2008) of the Council on Social Work Education, the MSUM School of Social Work educates competent entry-level social work professionals with the core knowledge, values, and skills necessary to engage in ethical and empowerment-based generalist practice with all people in a dynamic and diverse society. Graduates are prepared to promote planned change and advance social and economic justice, and human rights, locally, nationally, and globally.

CURRICULAR CONTEXT

The MSUM Social Work program defines generalist practice as the critical application of an eclectic knowledge base, professional values, and a wide range of culturally competent skills to a planned change process at any system level. All of the social work courses use the generalist practice intervention model as the basis for social work on all levels: individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations. SW 469 Internship occurs after all the core social work courses have been taken by students. It is a block placement where students spend 480 hours in a social work or human services setting under agency and departmental supervision. Planning for internship begins at least two semesters prior to internship.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

The School of Social Work believes that its faculty members are committed to creating a student-centered class environment that promotes a community of learning and encourages honest dialogue, critical thinking, and respect for diversity in culture, values, and opinions. The School’s faculty members employ a variety of teaching strategies to meet the various learning styles and needs of students which include, but are not limited to: lecture presentations, class discussions, writing assignments, lab experiences, videos, constructive interaction with guest speakers, simulations, role plays, and various additional formal and informal class activities and processes. Synthesis, integration, and application of knowledge and skills garnered from the various readings, lecture, discussions, and interactive exercises constitute significant learning opportunities for students.

It is the School’s belief that cultivating an environment of caring for our students means we will “honor their humanity, hold them in high esteem, expect high performance from them, and use strategies to fulfill their expectations” (Gay, G. (2000). Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice. New York: Teachers College Press, p. 46). The School also believes that students come to class with knowledge and experience that, if shared, can enhance the learning process of everyone, including the instructors. To engage and challenge each individual, it is necessary to know students as people, so therefore instructors acknowledge that each individual comes to class with their own set of abilities, motivations, attitudes, goals, and cultural backgrounds. Getting to know these various facets of our students allow us to excel as instructors because we utilize and capitalize on students’ knowledge, skills, talents, and resources to make the classroom more interesting, dynamic, applicable, and personal.

PROGRAM GOALS

With a liberal arts foundation, MSUM SSW graduates are prepared for entry-level professional social work practice. Further, graduates are prepared to continue their formal education in social work or other graduate discipline. Thus, MSUM SSW graduates will be prepared to:

1. Engage in evidence-based, entry-level social work practice with individual, families, groups, organizations, and communities within local, national, and global multicultural societies [EP2.1.1, EP2.1.3, EP2.1.6, EP2.1.8, and EP2.1.10];

2. Practice within the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession [EP2.1.2 and EP2.1.3];

3. Influence social policies in order to alleviate poverty, oppression, and social and economic injustice as well as advocate for human rights [EP2.1.3, EP2.1.4, EP2.1.5, EP2.1.6, and EP2.1.8];

4. Identify and affect the bio-psycho-social, spiritual, and cultural functioning of people [EP2.1.7, and EP2.1.9]; and

5. Evidence practice from a culturally-sensitive perspective that recognizes and appreciates diverse cultures, particularly those that differ from one’s own [EP 2.1.4].

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Internship is a 12-credit field practicum that is designed to provide social work students a practice experience in a social work or human services related agency with professional supervision. Guided by the education policies and accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the SSW is committed to baccalaureate social work education and recognizes that quality field experiences are integral to superior professional social work education. Field education at the MSUM SSW involves the active collaboration of three parties: (1) students; (2) field instructors; and (3) SSW field liaisons. While students have a vested interest in carefully planning and executing this final educational step where they apply the vast knowledge they have acquired, and hone the many skills they have practiced in the classroom, equally committed to field education are the field instructors who directly mentor students who will become licensable, entry-level generalist practitioners. This course builds on and assists in the integration of all coursework required for the social work major as well as the broader liberal arts perspective. Internship gives the students the opportunity to practice and integrate the social work knowledge, values and skills obtained in the classroom in an agency setting. Prerequisites for internship include all the major social work course requirements to include all required prerequisites in related areas, with a “C-” or better in these courses prior to taking SW 469: Internship; completion and documentation of the 90 hours Human Service Experience requirement; an MSUM GPA of 2.5 or better; and consent.

SW 469 Internship is solidly anchored in the social work program’s mission and program competencies. At the successful completion of internship, students are ready for entry-level generalist social work practice. Internship reinforces identification with social work values and ethics by holding students accountable to the NASW Code of Ethics. Internship fosters integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge in a practice setting by giving students the opportunity to do direct micro or macro practice in an agency setting. Internship promotes development of professional competence through supervision and professional guidance of students by their field instructors. The BSW field education/internship prepares students for generalist practice by providing competency-based education in which students will be evaluated on their achievement of the following core competencies:

PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

1. (EPAS 2.1.1). Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly;

2. (EPAS 2.1.2) Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice;

3. (EPAS 2.1.3) Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professionaljudgments;

4. (EPAS 2.1.4) Engage diversity and difference in practice;

5. (EPAS 2.1.5) Advance human rights and social and economic justice;

6. (EPAS 2.1.6) Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research;

7. (EPAS 2.1.7) Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment;

8. (EPAS 2.1.8) Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being andto deliver effective social work services;

9. (EPAS 2.1.9) Respond to contexts that shape practice;

10. (EPAS 2.1.10) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups,organizations and communities;

PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

The following 41 practice behaviors provide an operationalized description of the core

competencies. Each program competency will be evaluated by rating the resulting practice behaviors associated with it.

Competency 1 (EPAS 2.1.1): Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

PB 1. (2.1.1.1) Advocate for client access to the services of social work;

PB 2. (2.1.1.2) Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;

PB 3. (2.1.1.3) Attend to professional roles and boundaries;

PB 4. (2.1.1.4) Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;

PB 5. (2.1.1.5) Engage in career-long learning;

PB 6. (2.1.1.6) Use supervision and consultation;

Competency 2 (EPAS 2.1.2): Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

PB 7. (2.1.2.1) Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;

PB 8. (2.1.2.2) Make ethical decisions by applying standards of NASW Code of Ethics;

PB 9. (2.1.2.3) Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts;

PB 10. (2.1.2.4) Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions;

Competency 3 (EPAS 2.1.3): Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

PB 11. (2.1.3.1) Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;

PB 12. (2.1.3.2) Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation;

PB 13. (2.1.3.3) Demonstrated effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues;

Competency 4 (EPAS 2.1.4): Engage diversity and difference in practice.

PB 14. (2.1.4.1) Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;

PB15. (2.1.4.2) Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;

PB 16. (2.1.4.3) Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences;

PB 17. (2.1.4.4) View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants;

Competency 5 (EPAS 2.1.5): Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

PB 18. (2.1.5.1) Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;

PB 19. (2.1.5.2) Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice;

PB 20. (2.1.5.3) Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice;

Competency 6 (EPAS 2.1.6): Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

PB 26.

PB 21. (2.1.6.1) Use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry;

PB 22. (2.1.6.2) Use research evidence to inform practice;

Competency 7 (EPAS 2.1.7): Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

PB 23. (2.1.7.1) Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention, and evaluation;

PB 24. (2.1.7.2) Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment;

Competency 8 (EPAS 2.1.8): Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

PB 25. (2.1.8.1) Analyze. Formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social wellbeing;

PB 26. (2.1.8.2) Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action; Competency 9 (EPAS 2.1.9): Respond to contexts that shape practice.

PB 27. (2.1.9.1) Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services;

PB 28. (2.1.9.2) Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services;

Competency 10 (EPAS 2.1.10): Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

PB 29. (2.1.10.1) Substantively and effectively prepare for action with individuals, familes, groups, organizations, and communities;

PB 30. (2.1.10.2) Use empathy and other interpersonal skills;

PB 31. (2.1.10.3) Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes;

PB 32. (2.1.10.4) Collect, organize and interpret client data;

PB 33. (2.1.10.5) Assess client strengths and limtiations;

PB 34. (2.1.10.6) Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives;

PB 35. (2.1.10.7) Select appropriate intervention strategies;

PB 36. (2.1.10.8) Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;

PB 37. (2.1.10.9) Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;

PB 38. (2.1.10.10) Help clients resolve problems;

PB 39. (2.1.10.11) Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients;

PB 40. (2.1.10.12) Facilitate transitions and endings;

PB 41. (2.1.10.13) Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1) Internship Commitment

Each student intern will complete a minimum of 480 hours in an internship placement setting over one semester. Most students put in 32-hour weeks in four days and take off the day that Senior Seminar is offered. It is mandatory to attend Senior Seminar, but the 32 hour week can be flexibly negotiated between the student and the field instructor in order to best meet the needs of the agency. Regardless of the total hours put in during the semester, the internship must last the duration of the academic semester.

2) Agency Policies and Procedures

Each student intern is required to follow the policies and procedures of the internship agency in which they are placed. If for some reason a student feels he/she cannot comply with an agency policy, the situation must be discussed immediately with the field coordinator/liaison and/or the field instructor.

3) Agency Analysis Paper

The Agency Analysis Paper is an in-depth analysis of the organizational purpose, structure, and roles of the placement agency. This paper is due to the student’s field liaison on the fourth Friday of the semester. Failure to receive a passing score or complete this assignment will result in a failed Final grade. The paper should be typed, double-spaced. Unsatisfactory papers may be returned to the student to be redone. Since the paper is due only four weeks after internship begins, the student will want to start gathering data by reading policy manuals and interviewing agency staff soon after internship begins. This is a 5-8 page paper.

4) Internship Workbook:

Students are required to complete an Internship Workbook designed to connect student’s practice tasks (specific to their internship placement) to appropriate program practice behaviors/core competencies. The workbook is a guide that drives the evaluation process in order to assure a basic level of competency for social work knowledge, values, and skills. This workbook will also serve as a journal which provides the student an opportunity to reflect on significant internship experiences and connect those experiences to theory, ethics/ethical dilemmas, and evidence-based practice. The workbook may be presented to the field liaison at the first site visit for review and feedback. The workbook will be turned in with all the final course requirements and must be completed in its entirety to be accepted for a passing grade. Failure to do so will result in a Failed final grade.

 5) Policy Advocacy Field Project

The Policy Advocacy Project requires students to independently apply social policy skills in their internship placement setting. This project is due to the student’s field liaison on the twelfth Friday of the semester. Failure to receive a passing score or complete this assignment will result in a failed Final grade. The paper should be typed, double-spaced. Unsatisfactory papers may be returned to the student to be redone. Since the paper requires multiple processes, the student will want to begin formulating their policy analysis soon after internship begins. This is a 5-8 page paper.

6) Agency Site Visits

Two agency site visits by the student’s field liaison will occur during the semester. These meetings are arranged by the student and the field liaison, taking into consideration the field instructor’s schedule and availability. These meetings allow the field liaison, the field instructor and the student intern an opportunity to review the progress in the internship, discuss mutual expectations of internship, discuss any concerns, and identify future tasks that need to be completed. The first site visit will occur between the fourth and sixth weeks of internship. Students should be prepared to present and discuss the progress of their internship via the Internship Workbook. This first site visit is a good opportunity for any discussion of concerns and questions that either party may have regarding the internship placement. Additional internship assignments can also be discussed and explored. This meeting usually lasts 45 to 60 minutes. The second site visit will occur between the eleventh and thirteenth weeks of internship. The purpose of this meeting is to check on the progress of internship, to identify what needs to be done before the end of the semester, and to talk about disengagement and termination tasks for the intern as they prepare to leave the internship agency. This meeting usually takes half an hour to complete. This visit may be held as a phone conference call if the situation deems it appropriate. The field liaison will arrange the site visit meeting times and will coordinate with the field instructor’s schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange an alternate time for a site visit should the necessity of cancellation arise.

6) Internship Meeting

There is one internship meeting with the field coordinator during the semester the students are doing their internship. This meeting is held in conjunction with Senior Seminar. Topics covered usually include social work licensing, Minnesota and ND Merit Exam, preparations for employment, and a review of the assignments for internship. Guest speakers from the Minnesota State Board of Social Work, Clay County Social Services, MSUM Career Services, and North Dakota Department of Human Services usually present more detailed information on these topics at a separate session during Senior Seminar.

7) Evaluation

Students are placed in agencies under the supervision of experienced social services professionals. This allows students to obtain on-going feedback and formal evaluation of their social work knowledge and practice behaviors. The student intern will be formally evaluated twice during the semester, at midterm and the end of the semester. These evaluations use a Likert scales to rate the social work practice behaviors. These evaluation criteria relate directly to the ten program competencies. The Internship Workbook is designed to help guide both the student and the field instructor in their formal evaluation of the 41 practice behaviors. The student should remember that the evaluations are not grades. This is an opportunity for feedback and for students to learn a great deal about themselves as potential social workers. Students are strongly encouraged to take maximal advantage of this opportunity. Although the internship evaluations are not grades, the intern’s Pass/Fail status will be partially determined by the formal final evaluation results.

Field Instructor Evaluation

The student intern will provide the field instructor with two formal evaluation forms, each located in the Internship Workbook. The midterm evaluation will occur during the eighth week of the semester and the final evaluation will occur the last week of the semester. Students will be evaluated on the ten program competencies through their successful mastery of the 41 practice behaviors of internship. Field Instructors are required to meet and discuss with the student both the mid-term and final evaluations. Upon review and discussion of the Final Summative Behavioral Performance evaluation, both parties must sign the Field Instructor Evaluation form. The Internship Workbook is designed to help guide both the field instructor and the student in their formal evaluation of the 41 practice behaviors. The student is responsible for getting this form to the field instructor on a timely basis. The student is also responsible to ensure that these written evaluations reach the field liaison at midterm and the final week of internship.The field instructor’s final evaluation becomes part of the student’s permanent file.

8) Site Description

Each student will describe the placement agency as an internship site. This is a one to two page typed description that is kept on file in the Social Work Department. There is a form on the School of Social Work website to guide the student with this required assignment. This assignment helps the student reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their placement and provides valuable information to future students who are considering this site for a placement. This assignment is due on the day that final evaluations are due, usually the Friday after the last day of internship. Students are expected to turn in this assignment to the field liaison. This feedback can be useful for the agency in evaluating its effectiveness as an internship site. However, it is optional for the student to provide the agency with a copy of the site description.

9) Other Evaluations

Each student is asked to fill out several evaluation forms at the end of internship:

1. Field Liaison evaluation
2. Field Coordinator/Internship Course evaluation
3. Field Instructor evaluation

There is also an evaluation for the field instructor to complete on the internship program and the field liaison. These evaluations are on the School of Social Work website, and can be turned in with the final evaluations and site description.

GRADING

Internship is graded on a pass/fail basis. All of the requirements must be completed on time in a satisfactory manner to obtain a passing grade. Assignments that are unsatisfactory may be returned and the student will be required to redo them. Failure to comply with agency expectations may result in a failing grade. Also, failure to complete the academic expectations may result in a failing grade. Please refer to the student handbook for information on the Formative Performance Evaluation Deficiency process and the policy and procedures for termination of a student’s internship experience.

REQUIRED TEXT

Social Work Field Manual, which is available on the MSUM Social Work Department’s web page.

Social Work Internship Workbook, available at the MSUM Bookstore

Student Expectations

Field instruction, if it is to be successful, demands the cooperation of a number of different people. Towards this end, the following delineates the major expectations of the student intern in the field education process.

1) Each student is required to follow the policies and procedures of the agency in which he/she is placed. If for some reason, compliance with agency policy is not possible, the student must discuss this immediately with the field coordinator/liaison and/or the field instructor.

2) Students must respect the confidentiality of both the client and the agency.

3) Each student will be expected to understand and facilitate, along with the field coordinator and the field instructor, the successful completion of the field practicum requirements. If the student does not understand the expectations set forth by the course structures, the field coordinator, the field liaison, and/or the field instructor, it is the student’s responsibility to clarify the situation.

4) Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Professionals take responsibility for understanding their duties and carrying these duties out.

5) Students are expected to be in attendance at the field agency on time, each day indicated by MSUM academic duty days and the field instructor, for a total of 480 hours. If the student is ill or unable to attend for another reason, he/she must notify the field instructor prior to the start of the work day. Likewise, if the student is not able to meet other course expectations, he/she must arrange an exception prior to the expectation deadline with the field coordinator or the field liaison.

6) The student is responsible for completing academic assignments on time and in a satisfactory manner and turning them into the Field Liasion.

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