

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY
Department of Graduate Social Work

SWG 598: Concentration Year Practice, First Semester
Learning Agreement 2017

Overview and Instructions

The Learning Agreement is designed to facilitate the collaborative development of a plan for student learning in the Field Practicum. The Learning Agreement promotes a conversation between the Student and the Field Instructor with the aim that they will formulate a plan together to identify practice competencies relevant to professional goals, opportunities available to develop these competencies, and a sequence that supports the learning process.

Competencies are defined as measurable practice behaviors comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. This focus on core practice competencies is at the center of a move toward competency-based assessment, an approach to the measurement of outcome performance adopted by the Council on Social Work Education in 2008. The West Chester University MSW Program systematically integrates competency-based assessment into each course to provide students the opportunity to develop and demonstrate certain core competencies through measurable practice behaviors.

The Field Instructor is expected to design and assign appropriate social work practice activities (examples of which are included in this Agreement) that allow the Student the opportunity to develop and demonstrate the expected practice behaviors. Assessment of practice competencies occurs both at mid-semester and at the end of the semester.

Core Competencies

2.1.1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly:

- AP1: Develop, manage, and maintain professional relationships with individuals and families from strengths-based, human rights and social justice perspectives;
- AP2: Enhance professional strengths and work to overcome limitations and challenges through a commitment to lifelong professional development.

2.1.2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice:

- AP3: Identify and use knowledge of relationship dynamics, including power differentials in work with individuals and families to support recovery and enhance resiliency;
- AP4: Apply ethical reasoning to address dilemmas when working with individuals and families.

2.1.3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments:

- AP5: Evaluate, select, and implement appropriate multi-dimensional, research-informed, strengths-based assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies with individuals and families;
- AP6: Communicate professional decisions and outcomes to the individual and/or family system and to other professionals in effective written and oral format.

2.1.4: Engage diversity and difference in practice:

- AP7: Identify a range of engagement, assessment, and intervention strategies for individuals and families from diverse backgrounds;
- AP8: Engage diversity and difference in practice to enhance inclusive, critical evaluation of assessment, intervention and evaluation strategies for individuals and families.

2.1.5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice:

- AP9: Use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma on individual and family systems to guide assessment, planning, and intervention;
- AP10: Implement change strategies when necessary to advance social and economic justice for individuals and families in their communities.

2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research:

- AP11: Evaluate, select, and utilize research-informed practices in assessment and intervention with individuals, and families;
- AP12: Participate in the generation of new social work practice knowledge through research and practice; and
- AP13: Use research methodology to evaluate practice effectiveness and/or outcomes.

2.1.7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment:

- AP14: Synthesize and differentially apply theories of human behavior to guide assessment, intervention plans, and evaluation of work with individuals and families.

2.1.8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social services:

- AP15: Communicate to stakeholders the implication of policies and policy change in the lives of individuals and families in their communities;
- AP16: Develop plans to advance social change in collaboration with administrators, consumers, community partners and/or legislators to affect policies and practices that advance social and economic well-being of individuals and families.

2.1.9: Respond to contexts that shape practices:

- AP17: Assess the quality of individuals' and families' interactions within their social contexts;
- AP18: Work collaboratively with others to affect systemic change that is sustainable and enhances social and economic well-being of individuals and families.

2.1.10 (a)-(d): Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities:

2.1.10(a): Engagement

AP19: Establish a collaboratively based process that encourages individuals and families to be partners in the establishment of goals and expected outcomes.

2.1.10(b): Assessment

AP20: Use research-informed and collaborative assessment strategies to arrive at an understanding of individual and/or family strengths, limitations, and mutually agreed upon intervention goals and objectives;

AP21: Assess individuals' and families' readiness for change;

AP22: Assess individuals' and families' coping strategies to enhance resiliency and support recovery in the face of life situations and events.

2.1.10(c): Intervention

AP23: Critically evaluate, select, and implement appropriate best practices and research informed interventions that enhance individuals' and/or families' resiliency and support recovery.

AP24: Demonstrate the use of appropriate practices for a range of presenting concerns including trauma-informed interventions that enhance an individual's and/or family's resiliency, recovery, and capacity building.

AP25: Facilitate transitions to other services and/or endings of present services by collaboratively assessing progress toward mutually agreed upon outcomes.

2.1.10(d): Evaluation

AP26: Use research knowledge and skills, and practice experiences to continuously improve assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies with individuals and families that enhance resiliency, support recovery and build capacity.

Field Instructors are expected to actively engage in a process of guidance, observation and feedback on the Student's development of these practice competencies. This process is fundamental not only to the Student's professional development but also to a valid process of evaluation. In cases where a Task Instructor is involved in the assignment of routine tasks, *ad hoc* supervision, and mentoring, the Task Instructor should contribute their independent assessment to the Field Instructor who will incorporate this supplementary information into the comprehensive final evaluation for each semester.

Components of the Learning Agreement

The development of a learning agreement of this type requires communication about the expectations, orientations, strengths and challenges that both the Student and the Field Instructor bring to the relationship. The Learning Agreement is organized into four related components:

1. *Professional Self-Reflection:* To foster a dialog about expectations, orientation, strengths and challenges, students must write a Professional Self-Reflection and include it in this Learning Agreement. This assignment is designed to encourage students to begin the career-long process of reflective practice.
2. *Expected Practice Opportunities:* Together the Student and Field Instructor are to discuss the types of practice opportunities available to the student and devise a sequence and schedule of anticipated activities that will support the development and demonstration of practice competencies.
3. *Practice Vignette:* Given the types of practice opportunities at this field placement, the Student is to envision a practice vignette in which s/he will be able to demonstrate at least two practice behaviors.
4. *Supervision Expectations:* The Affiliation Agreement between WCU and the placement agency/organization *requires that the Field Instructor provide at least one hour per week of uninterrupted supervision.* Together, the Student and Field Instructor are to develop a schedule for how and when this will occur, and to establish expectations for the use of supervisory time and preparation for supervision. Where a Task Supervisor is also going to be working with, overseeing, and/or evaluating the student, a specific plan must also be included in Section III of this Learning Agreement.
5. *Signatures:* The signatures of the Student and Field Instructor, and, where applicable, the Task Supervisor, affirm that the Learning Agreement reflects the expectations of each participant for the current semester. [Please note: Negotiating these expectations is not always easy, but is important. If any of the participants are uncomfortable with the document as written so far, we encourage the Field Instructor and/or the Student to contact the Field Liaison for additional guidance and support.]
6. *Field Instructors are expected to actively engage in a process of guidance, observation and feedback on the Student's development of these practice competencies.* This process is fundamental not only to the Student's professional development but also to a valid process of evaluation. In cases where a Task Instructor is involved in the assignment of routine tasks, *ad hoc* supervision, and mentoring, the Task Instructor should contribute their independent assessment to the Field Instructor who will incorporate this supplementary information into the comprehensive final evaluation for each semester.

I. Professional Self-Reflection (to be completed by the Student in a separate document and attached to this Learning Agreement.)

Social work practice is grounded in the notion that human relationships are key to the maintenance and promotion of dignity, wellness and social justice. Social workers, therefore, must always be aware of the role they play in these relationships by acknowledging their own “selves.” This assignment is designed to encourage students to begin the career-long process of professional self-reflection.

In 3 to 5 double-spaced pages, explore your professional “self” as it relates to the human relationships that you will build at your field placement this year with your Field Instructor, your clients and with other professionals. Students in the Concentration Year should specifically reflect on how their previous experiences in the field (field placements, employment, volunteer opportunities) have informed this self-assessment.

- a. Identify and reflect on the strengths that you bring to the social work profession in terms of your knowledge, skills and values. Describe an experience in your previous work when you were able to draw on your strengths to support your work with a client or client systems.
- b. Identify and reflect on the professional challenges you have encountered in your previous field work. How did you address these challenges? Given your current placement, how do you anticipate these challenges, or others, impacting your work?
- c. Each of us has a unique style of communicating and learning. Understanding these differences and communicating about them in professional settings, especially in social work settings, is vital to the development of collaborative working relationships.

Describe the ways of communication and learning with which you are most familiar (e.g. verbal, auditory, kinesthetic). Describe your own communicating and learning style(s). How comfortable will you be in practice situations where other’s styles of communication are significantly different from yours? Can you imagine a scenario where this might occur, including how you would respond?

- d. What do you most hope to learn from of this Field Practicum experience?
- e. Describe how your previous experiences in school and work settings prepared you for working in the social work field
- f. How do your answers to the previous questions help articulate your reasons for pursuing a Master’s degree in social work? Where do you see yourself in five years?

II. Learning Agreement

(To be completed by Student in consultation with the Field Instructor)

In the "Objectives" provide **anticipated dates of completion**. It is essential that you review your learning agreement with your supervisor(s) during weekly supervision to discuss and review your progress in meeting the goals and objectives. Having an **anticipated date of completion** allows you, with the support of your supervisor, to be accountable for your learning and make sure you are receiving advanced level of social work practice opportunities.

Student: _____
Placement: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Field Instructor: _____
Field Instructor Contact Info: _____
Student Weekly Hours: _____

Learning Goals

GOAL 1: _____
Objective 1: _____
Objective 2: _____
Objective 3: _____

Evaluation: _____

GOAL 2: _____
Objective 1: _____
Objective 2: _____
Objective 3: _____

Evaluation: _____

GOAL 3: _____
Objective 1: _____
Objective 2: _____
Objective 3: _____

Evaluation: _____

GOAL 4: _____
Objective 1: _____
Objective 2: _____
Objective 3: _____

Evaluation: _____

GOAL 5: _____
Objective 1: _____
Objective 2: _____
Objective 3: _____

Evaluation: _____

GOAL 6: _____

Objective 1: _____

Objective 2: _____

Objective 3: _____

Evaluation: _____

III. Supervision Expectations

1. What day(s) and time(s) will you meet with your Field Instructor (MSW supervisor) for supervision?
2. Where will supervision occur?
3. Please provide a description of your Field Instructor's supervision approach. For example, you may include the following information in the description.
 - a. Expected preparations for supervision (e.g., agenda, list of client concerns, list of training questions)
 - b. How does your F.I. plan to address administrative topics
 - c. How does your F.I. plan to address educational / training topics
 - d. How does your F.I. address supportive needs
4. Will you also be working with a Task Supervisor?
5. If so, what is the specific arrangement between you, your Task Supervisor and your MSW Field Instructor for regular communication, supervision and evaluation?

IV. Signatures

(please fill in the appropriate names below and then circulate a hard copy for signatures)

Name of Student:

Name of Field Instructor (MSW Supervisor):

Name of Task Supervisor (where applicable):

Name of Field Liaison:

Field Placement Site & Program:

This signature indicates that the attached Learning Agreement reflects my understanding of expectations for the current semester.

Student signature Date

Field Instructor signature Date

Task Supervisor (where applicable) signature Date

Field Liaison signature Date

**SWG 598: Learning Agreement
Grading Rubric**

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Reflection on professional strengths and challenges relative to the use of self in Field Practicum	Demonstrates <u>keen</u> ability to reflect on the relationship between professional strengths and challenges and the use of professional self at this specific field placement	Demonstrates ability to reflect on the relationship between professional strengths and challenges and the use of professional self at this specific field placement	Demonstrates <u>limited</u> ability to reflect on the relationship between professional strengths and challenges and the use of professional self at this specific field placement
Selection of learning goals, objectives, and practice opportunities.	Demonstrates a <u>logically</u> negotiated plan given strengths and challenges of student as well as opportunities available at field placement	Demonstrates a <u>reasonably</u> negotiated plan given strengths and challenges of student as well as opportunities available at field placement	Demonstrates an <u>unreasonably</u> negotiated plan given strengths and challenges of student as well as opportunities available at field placement
Plan for use of supervision	Demonstrates a <u>robust</u> plan for weekly supervision, including types of anticipated activities	Demonstrates a plan for weekly supervision, including types of anticipated activities	Demonstrates a <u>limited</u> plan for weekly supervision and does <u>not</u> include types of anticipated activities
Presentation of Learning Agreement	Demonstrates <u>full</u> adherence to professional expectations for timeliness, completeness and thoroughness .	Demonstrates <u>general</u> adherence to professional expectations for timeliness, completeness and thoroughness .	Demonstrates <u>limited</u> adherence to professional expectations for timeliness, completeness and thoroughness .