

# **CAL STATE LA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

## **MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK GUIDELINES FOR INTERNSHIP**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the School of Social Work guides our program goals and objectives. The mission statement reads as follows:

*The MSW Program at California State University, Los Angeles educates students to assume leadership roles in professional practice. Our advanced urban generalist graduates analyze, intervene, evaluate and advocate with diverse, underserved and oppressed clients and communities.*

### **Advanced Urban Generalist Practice**

The advanced urban generalist is a practitioner who understands the context of urban and inner city social work practice and the complex social issues that impact individuals, families, groups and communities. With the understanding, the advanced urban generalist, skilled in cross-cultural practice, engages in the strength-based social work practice within the array of target systems across the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Emphasizing diversity, community, and justice, the advanced urban generalist systematically develops and designs assessment-based interventions across diverse urban populations, communities, and constituencies to empower poor, vulnerable, under-served and oppressed populations in urban areas.

### **Overview of Expectation for Fieldwork**

The fieldwork sequence plays an integral role in the total curriculum for Master of Social Work students. The experience offers an opportunity for students to integrate and apply theoretical knowledge and social work practice and intervention skills in a community agency setting under the supervision of a qualified Field Instructor.

It is the fieldwork learning experience that allows the student to integrate classroom theory and knowledge and practice skills in developing professional competence and identity. This application includes social work theory in real-life practice situations, skill building, and upholding professional standards of social work ethics and values, under the professional supervision of qualified social workers in their role of field instructors. The fieldwork experience is designed to provide new and challenging experiences to the student and to maximize learning and practice opportunities.

**Emphasis in the Foundation Year** is placed upon developing the groundwork of appropriate social work practice skills and knowledge, which may include:

- developing relationships
- acquiring interviewing skills
- mastering beginning psychosocial assessment
- making diagnostic assessments
- developing intervention skills
- direct practice interventions

Entry level to the profession of social work is considered to be generalist practice. Generalist social work practitioners work with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations in a variety of social work and host settings. The generalist practitioner views clients and client systems from a strengths perspective in order to recognize, support and build upon the capabilities of all human beings. They use a professional problem solving process to engage, assess, broker services, advocate, counsel, educate, and organize with and on behalf of client and client systems.

**During the Advanced Year** - students are expected to develop an increased insight and depth of understanding of agency and client systems and social work practice skills and are exposed to a diversity of experiences. The goal of the second year field placement is to build on the first year experience to help students develop advanced and more focused social work skills—including clinical interventions with diverse populations effective treatment strategies on a micro/macro level where appropriate. Students may select a placement site that offers a more macro or more micro focused practice experience where they will further their skills in administrative activities, including organizational development, program planning and program evaluation.

The fieldwork experience is tailored to the individual students' needs in an ongoing assessment process between the student, Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison. During the beginning weeks of the fall semester, the student and Field Instructor will develop a Learning Agreement. This Learning Agreement will specify learning needs for the student, the experiences and activities in which the student will participate to meet these learning needs, and specify time lines for their accomplishment.

The Learning Agreement includes activities and experiences relating to nine core competencies identified by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the accrediting body for schools of social work in the United States. The competency areas are:

**Competency 1:** Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

**Competency 2:** Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

**Competency 3:** Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

**Competency 4:** Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

**Competency 5:** Engage in Policy Practice

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

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

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

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

Field Instructors receive a copy of the Graduate Fieldwork Manual and all additional documents used in the program. The Graduate Fieldwork Manual details the policies and procedures that guide the operation of the fieldwork sequence, including eligibility for fieldwork, sequencing, expectations and performance requirements.

## **Overview of Learning Expectations**

It is expected that students will be exposed to a variety of experiences, tasks and activities spanning a range of complexity during the field placement. All students will receive exposure to the full range of social work practice intervention activities. The continuum of activities is listed on the Learning Agreement form to assist in the development of a comprehensive field experience. All agencies are expected to provide the broadest range of diversity in case assignments made to students.

Students will most likely have opportunities to be involved in long-term intervention activities due to the schedule of fieldwork (16 hours/week in the first year; 20 hours/week in the second year; 24 hours/week for ASP students).

A detailed calendar will be distributed at the beginning the school-year that identifies time lines for various activities, including orientation, development of the Learning Agreement, completion of student performance evaluations, and termination.

The following minimum expectations are based on a typical field placement situation. If circumstances related to agency difficulties or student performance make these minimum assignments and time lines impossible to complete, the Field Instructor should contact the Field Faculty Liaison immediately in order to address the issue.

- a) Exposure to diversity in client population and administrative assignments, including cultural, ethnic, religious belief system, gender and socioeconomic class;
- b) Exposure and experience with the full range of practice activities on the continuum of social work practice in either micro practice, (e.g., information and referral, networking, case management, comprehensive psychosocial assessments, diagnostic assessments, treatment planning, crisis intervention, short-term therapy, long-term therapy and advocacy,) or macro practice, (e.g., community outreach, community organizing, program planning, program development, program evaluation, budget procedures, staff development, personnel policies and administration).
- c) Opportunity to work with individuals and families and be a facilitator or co-facilitator in a group situation. This expectation is specifically identified for micro practice placements, but could be adapted to the macro focus in terms of interaction with individuals and groups, meetings, and community work.
- d) Opportunity to collaborate with other agency staff and professionals.
- e) Opportunity to collaborate with other community agencies.
- f) Development of knowledge of the agency structure, mission and interdependence with the surrounding community.
- g) Opportunity to participate in case conferences, including multidisciplinary conferences where available, or in multidisciplinary planning conferences and activities where applicable.
- h) Each student shall receive a minimum of one hour of individual supervision from the Field Instructor each week.
- i) In the first-year fieldwork placement, a minimum of 50 percent of the time spent in fieldwork over the course of the fieldwork period should be spent in direct micro and macro practice areas, including work with individuals,

families and groups, telephone contacts, letter writing in relation to cases, and treatment planning meetings. The remainder of the fieldwork hours will be spent in supervision, staff/agency meetings, documentation efforts, community agency interface, and Faculty Liaison and collaboration activities.

- j) In the second-year fieldwork placement, students requesting a micro practice placement will spend a minimum of 50 percent of the time over the course of the fieldwork period in direct practice with individuals, families and groups. For those students requesting a primarily macro placement, a minimum of 50 percent of the time over the course of the fieldwork period will be spent in direct practice with groups, programs, organizations and communities.

### **Expectations of Field Instructors**

1. An MSW degree and at least two years of post graduate experience.
2. Interest and demonstrated skill in teaching.
3. Completion of the required series of Field Instructors Training.
4. Knowledge of the various program areas in which the student will be placed.
5. Ability to provide a comprehensive orientation to the agency and its services, and provide on-going orientation and in-service about pertinent issues.
6. Be present at the agency during the hours in which the student is in field placement. If the Field Instructor is not at the agency, a preceptor in the agency must be identified to assist the student if the need arises.
7. Provide each student with a minimum of one hour of individual supervision each week. (Group supervision is considered an enhancement to supervisory activities but not a substitute for individual supervision.)

### **Requirements of the Fieldwork Agency**

- Accept and cooperate with University and School of Social Work policies and guidelines.
- Accept/commit to the educational objectives inherent in the fieldwork curriculum.
- Provide appropriate office space, telephone access, supplies and other necessary materials to enable a student to function effectively.
- Designate qualified Field Instructors with a minimum of two years of post-MSW experience.
- Modify the schedules of any employee selected to be a Field Instructor to assure that adequate time is available for teaching and student supervision activities, including meetings and/or training sessions at the university.
- Provide any needed assistance to the Field Instructor in developing appropriate learning experiences within the agency.
- Adhere to policies and practices reflecting nondiscrimination applied to clients, staff and students.
- Inform the School of Social Work of any change in administration of the agency that impacts the field placement program.

- Complete an Affiliation Agreement with the University Office of Purchasing and Contracts.

### **Requirements of the Field Instructors**

Attend Field Instructor orientations and other field-related activities throughout the year. New Field Instructors must attend a new Field Instructor Training.

- Provide educationally focused experiences and opportunities for student learning based on the Learning Agreement objectives and action plans.
- Complete and submit a written evaluation at the end of each semester outlining student progress and further learning goals and needs.
- Meet with the Field Faculty Liaison during the placement period to assess student progress and coordinate learning experiences.
- Provide a minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision for each student placed in the agency and be available for ongoing consultation and/or supervision as needed.
- Be available in the agency during the fieldwork hours when the student is present. Assign a preceptor to enhance the student's learning experience and to be available in the absence of the Field Instructor.
- Maintain communication with assigned Field Faculty Liaison regarding student performance, potential difficulties or areas of concern as early as possible, or changes in the agency, which impact the fieldwork experience. Collaborate with student and Field Faculty Liaison and Performance Contract when progress is not satisfactory.

### **Placement Procedures for Students**

- Students are involved in a pre-placement interview process with the prospective field instructor and other agency representatives, as appropriate.
- Placement agencies for first-year students are selected for them by the School of Social Work Faculty Liaison based on the student's learning needs, skill level, past experience and areas of interest.
- Second-year students interview with two different agencies, and have the opportunity to indicate their preference for placement at the agencies where they have interviewed. The School of Social Work Faculty make final placement assignments.
- Field Instructors have the opportunity to indicate their preferences for and acceptance of students interviewed.