**WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY**

**Department of Graduate Social Work**

**SWG 596: Generalist Practicum I**

**Learning Agreement:** *Instructions*

**Overview**

The MSW Program uses a competency-based, outcome performance approach to its curriculum consistent with the Educational and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2015). Students take 30 credits of generalist content designed to offer opportunities to develop and demonstrate competency in nine core areas and 30 credits of specialized content specific to our MSW Program’s Specialization: *Advanced Practice with Individuals, Families and Communities*. Course content across the curriculum is designed to provide students the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive/affective processes needed to advance our department vision of preparing social work professionals who facilitate transformative social change.

The Learning Agreement is designed to facilitate the collaborative development of a plan for student learning in the Practicum. The Learning Agreement promotes a conversation between the Student and the Practicum 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.

In the Generalist Year, the Practicum Instructor is expected to design and assign appropriate social work practice activities that allow the Student the opportunity to develop and demonstrate competency in generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Competencies and expeted behaviors are listed at the end of this document.

Practicum Instructors are expected to actively engage in a process of guidance, observation and feedback on the Student’s development of these generalist 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 submit their independent assessment to the Practicum Instructor who will incorporate this supplementary information into the end of the semester evaluation.

**Components of the Learning Agreement**

The Learning Agreement is organized into the following components:

1. *5 Generalist Learning Goals:* Together, the Student and Practicum Instructor are to discuss the Student’s goals for the semester specific to the Generalist Competencies. They are to identify 5 separate learning goals: one for individuals, one for families, one for groups, one for organizations, and one for communities. This applies to all students in all types of practicum settings.

Learning Goals must 1) adhere to the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound), 2) be supported by at least two Objectives, and 3) include a mechanism for evaluation.

Examples (all goals should follow the format of the first one):

* + *Goal for Generalist Practice with Individuals*: By the end of the semester, the Student will have independently met with at least one client, consumer or stakeholder using engagement skills of empathy and reflection.
    - *Objective*: Shadow social worker at least 5 times before meeting independently
    - *Objective*: Role play meeting in supervision
      * *Evaluation*: Discuss in supervision, discuss at practicum visit, include in final reflection
  + *Goal for Generalist Practice with Families*: By the end of the semester, the Student will develop psychoeducational materials on trauma the family members of victims of sexual assault. These materials will be available to the Practicum Instructor and the Practicum Liaison.
  + *Goal for Generalist Practice with Groups*: By the end of the semester, the Student will sit in on at least one group meeting (therapy group, support group, staff meeting, board meeting, community meeting) and examine the ways in which diversity and difference affect the group dynamics. This will be discussed in supervision, at the practicum visit, and included in final reflection.
  + *Goal for Generalist Practice with Organizations:* By the end of the semester, the student will meet with two employees of the placement organization to learn about their roles in related to the development or oversight of agency policies. This will be discussed in supervision, at the practicum visit, and included in final reflection.
  + *Goal for Generalist Practice with Communities:* By the end of the semester, the student will identify at least one community (of geography or of identity) relevant to the placement site and identify any violations of human rights that are present. This will be discussed in supervision, at the practicum visit, and included in final reflection.

1. *Supervision Expectations:* TheAffiliation Agreement between WCU and the placement agency/organization requires that the Practicum Instructor provide at least one hour per week of uninterrupted supervision. Together, the Student and Practicum Instructor are to develop a schedule for how and when this will occur, an agenda for each meeting, 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.
2. *Signatures:* The signatures of the Student and Practicum 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 it is important. If anyone has concerns about signing the agreement that is developed, the Faculty Practicum Liaison is available for consultation.]

**MSW Program Generalist Competencies and Behaviors**

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

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how  
to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
2. Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
3. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
4. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
5. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

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

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
2. Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
3. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
2. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

***Generalist Competency 4: Engage in Practice Informed Research and Research Informed Practice***

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
2. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
3. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

***Generalist Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice***

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
2. Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
3. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
2. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in

the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
2. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
3. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
4. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter- professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter- professional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
2. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
3. Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
4. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
5. Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

*Expected Generalist Practice Behaviors*

1. Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
2. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
3. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
4. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.