

DEPARTMENT OF
UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK
STUDENT HANDBOOK
AND
PRACTICUM MANUAL

Revised December 2025

BSW Program Accredited by the Council on Social Work Education through 2027

[Undergraduate Social Work Department](#)

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Undergraduate Social Work Department - Philadelphia Site

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UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

West Chester University is located in Chester County, Pennsylvania, about twenty-five miles west of Philadelphia. It is one of ten institutions serving Pennsylvania and out-of-state students. The Undergraduate Social Work Program was founded in 1970 and is located in the College of Education and Social Work. The Undergraduate Social Work Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education through the year 2027 and seeks to maintain the high standards required to remain accredited.

The Undergraduate Social Work Department offices are located on the 4th floor of Anderson Hall at 725 S. Church Street in West Chester. The 4th floor houses faculty and staff offices, a conference room, and a student lounge.

During the 2013-14 academic year, the University launched a satellite BSW program in Philadelphia. The campus is located at 701 Market Street in Center City. The program has the same curriculum and standards as the West Chester campus but is offered in a part-time format. The Philadelphia BSW program is designed to meet the needs of degree completers and working professionals with classes that are offered in the evening. All policies and procedures outlined in this handbook apply to Philadelphia-based students as well as those based in West Chester.

Social Work majors are prepared as entry-level generalist social workers upon graduation with a Bachelor's (BSW) degree from West Chester University. Our graduates are highly regarded by the social service community and are successful in finding jobs as entry-level generalist practitioners in urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Our graduates traditionally get jobs in the practicums of aging and adult services, residential and in-home services, and housing services, community mental health, crime victims' assistance, child welfare and social justice advocacy. Moreover, students are prepared for graduate study for the Master's in Social Work (MSW) upon successful completion of the BSW Program and may qualify for the one- year Advanced Standing MSW program of study.

Changing demographic, practice and funding contexts demand that future social workers demonstrate the ability to work in a range of settings with diverse individuals, families, groups, and communities. In taking 60 credits of social work coursework that include three semesters of practicum, students learn to view difference as a strength rather than to perpetuate negative stereotypes about diverse groups in society.

Emphasis is placed on the unique contributions and potential of groups of people who have suffered from discrimination, oppression, or restricted opportunity based upon their race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, gender expression and identity, sexual orientation, physical, mental, or intellectual ability, and socioeconomic status.

In addition to developing competency in social work practice skills, students must develop competency in written communication, research, and critical thinking. The curriculum is designed to help students integrate theory with practice; to this end, students write papers, engage in service-learning assignments, complete a research and policy practice project, and learn to evaluate their own

practice. Professors and practicum instructors assist students in thinking through their questions and suggest sources of information as they relate to practice in each course.

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Non-Discrimination

The Social Work Department conducts all aspects of the educational program without discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, political affiliation, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

THE UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

Generalist Social Work Practice

The primary objective of the undergraduate social work department is to develop students' competence in generalist social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and larger societal systems.

The curriculum has been designed to ensure a high-quality educational experience. Consistent with the program's mission and goals, both classroom learning and a range of required practicum activities systematically expose students to entry-level generalist practice with multiple-sized social systems.

Attention is paid to assisting students with the integration of curriculum content and experiences, and with taking increasing responsibility for evaluation of their own professional development and personal growth.

The BSW Program at West Chester University defines generalist practice as practice that is grounded in a liberal arts foundation upon which a generic and integrated social work knowledge base is developed and informed by social work values. From this grounding, generalist practitioners utilize a professional problem-solving process to engage, assess, broker services, advocate, counsel, educate, and organize with and on behalf of clients and client systems. Generalist practitioners work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations in a variety of social work and host settings. They view clients and client systems from a strengths perspective to recognize, support, and build upon the uniqueness of all groups of people as well as the innate capabilities of all human beings. Finally, generalist practitioners evaluate service outcomes to continually improve the provision and quality of services most appropriate to client needs. Generalist social work practice is guided by the NASW Code of Ethics and is committed to improving the well-being of individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations and furthering the goals of human rights and social justice in a global society. [Informed by the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Director's definition of Generalist Practice as cited in Mizrahi, T.M. & Davis, L.E. (2008). *The Encyclopedia of Social Work* (20th ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press; New York: Oxford University Press.]

Mission of the Undergraduate Social Work Department

The mission of the undergraduate social work program is to prepare students for beginning generalist social work practice and lifelong learning. To this end, the program teaches the knowledge, values, and skills of generalist social work with an emphasis on self-reflection and accountability, critical thinking, scientific inquiry, cultural humility, anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion. Through classroom and practicum-based experiential learning, students are prepared to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate practice with individuals,

families, groups, organizations and communities and to understand the intersections of people and their environments. In accordance with the social work profession's values and purpose, the program prepares students to act both locally and globally to advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Goals of the Undergraduate Social Work Program at West Chester University

Goals for the Undergraduate Social Work Program are linked to core practice competencies as set forth in the [Council on Social Work Education's 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards \(EPAS\)](#). with the liberal arts as its foundation, BSW graduates are prepared to engage in entry-level social work practice through mastery of these nine core competencies. As such, it is our goal that by completion of the program, students will be prepared to:

1. Engage in evidence-based entry-level social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations within a multicultural society (Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
2. Practice according to the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession (Competency 1)
3. Influence social policies with the goal of alleviating poverty, oppression, and social injustice as well as advocating for human rights (Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
4. Identify and affect the bio-psycho-social, spiritual, and cultural functioning of people (Competencies 6, 7, 8, 9)
5. Engage in evidence-based practice from a culturally responsive perspective which recognizes, appreciates, and applies the knowledge of diverse cultures, particularly those that differ from one's own (Competency 2, 4).

EPAS Competencies

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social Justice

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

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 with 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, Communities

Program Goals, Core Competencies, and Generalist Practice

The Bachelor of Social Work Program at West Chester University implements its goals via its curriculum and organization of its resources. All aspects of the program focus on preparing students for effective beginning generalist social work practice. Faculty recruitment, student recruitment and retention, curriculum development, and administrative planning and advocacy are directed toward these objectives. As shown below, there is consistency between the BSW program's goals, the nine core competencies delineated in the 2022 EPAS, and the program's working definition of generalist social work practice. Each goal is listed, along with a short narrative that describes the corresponding competencies.

1. *Engage in evidence-based entry-level social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations within a multicultural society.*

The first program goal is consistent with several core competencies specified in the 2022 EPAS. In order to engage in evidence-based entry-level social work practice with client systems of all sizes, students must: demonstrate ethical and professional behavior (Competency 1); apply critical thinking to inform judgements and engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research (Competency 4), both of which are consistent with the program goal's use of the term "evidence-based;" engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services (Competency 5) which prevents the false dichotomization of policy and practice and emphasizes the systems orientation of generalist practice; and engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (Competencies 6, 7, 8, 9), which delineates the steps in the generalist intervention model consistent with the program goal's use of the term "entry-level social work practice."

2. *Practice according to the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession.*

The second program goal is consistent with the first competency specified in the 2022 EPAS. Social workers must 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. The National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics as well as the International Federation of Social Workers' (IFSW) Statement of Principles provide guidelines for professionals, but do not offer clear-cut answers to resolve challenging and often ambiguous ethical dilemmas in practice. Students must learn the professional social work principles, values, and ethics, but they must also learn to think critically and apply their knowledge and values with discernment.

3. *Influence social policies with the goal of alleviating poverty, oppression, and social injustice as well as advocating for human rights.*

The third program goal is consistent with four core competencies specified in the 2022 EPAS. In order to influence social policies with the goal of social justice and human rights, social workers must: use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy and service delivery (Competency 4); engage diversity and difference in practice (Competency 2) in order to understand the life experiences of poverty and oppression that are a consequence of difference, and seek to redress them through the advancement of human rights and social and economic justice (Competency 3); engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice (Competency 4) to advocate for just social policies based in client experiences as well as the research evidence; and engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being (Competency 5), which is the practical application of social work knowledge and values in the broader arena of legislative advocacy.

4. *Identify and affect the bio-psycho-social, spiritual, and cultural functioning of people.*

The fourth program goal is consistent with the final four core competencies specified in the 2022 EPAS. To both identify and affect the intersecting bio-psycho-social, spiritual, and cultural spheres that impact individual functioning, social workers must apply their knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to engage with clients and constituencies, assess, intervene, and evaluate outcomes in practice (Competencies 6,7,8,9). In responding proactively to the environments that impact clients and workers alike, social workers are flexible enough to adapt to changing service-environments but also have the knowledge, values, and skills to create change in environments that do not support the adaptive functioning of people.

5. *Evidence practices from a culturally responsive perspective which recognizes, appreciates, and applies the knowledge of diverse cultures, particularly those that differ from one's own.*

The fifth program goal is consistent with the competency devoted to the engagement of diversity and difference in practice (Competency 2), as well as Competencies 6 through 9. Educating social workers for a dynamic and multicultural society requires focused attention to the impact of difference, and whether that difference creates privilege and power or social and economic oppression and marginalization. A culturally-competent perspective starts with self-evaluation and self-knowledge and builds towards not only an understanding of others, but a valuation of difference. Moreover, a culturally responsive perspective appreciates and applies the knowledge of diverse cultures at multiple levels of practice and is not relegated to individual client-worker engagement. A culturally-competent perspective is applied at mezzo and macro levels of practice as well, which is consistent not only with the program's mission and goals, but the principles of generalist practice as well.

Assessing One's Aptitude and Motivation for a Career in Social Work

We provide our students with extensive opportunities to assess their motivation for a career in

social work and their aptitude for the profession in both academic and practicum work areas. Through informal discussions with faculty and practicum staff, agency staff, fellow students, classroom discussion, practicum seminar and independent papers or projects, students are challenged to re-examine their attitudes, expectations, and motivations. The Undergraduate Social Work faculty members spend time talking with students individually and in small groups about their capacities and abilities and how they fit with their interest areas in the social work practicum. This continuing emphasis on self-awareness and self-direction is brought about through classroom assignments focusing on one's personal philosophy of helping, role-plays, simulations, audio and videotaping in the classroom (with verbal and written feedback), oral course evaluations, meetings preparing students for practicum, weekly practicum instruction with site practicum instructors, and final written practicum evaluations and conferences. All students meet with an undergraduate faculty advisor regularly and discuss their aptitude and motivation for a career in Social Work and review their current transcript and G.P.A.

Our focus is to help students see that they are part of a changing system in the social work profession.

To be effective in such a role, one must have self-awareness about one's prejudices, strengths, challenges, unique skills, and talents. Students are consistently given the message that challenges are opportunities for further growth.

Our students learn that self-evaluation is essential for effective, professional social work practice. In expecting feedback from students on our teaching style, course content, assignments, and program, we both model and maintain our philosophy and we all need continuous evaluation and feedback. Only through feedback, educational resources, and lifelong learning can we change and grow to our fullest potential.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The Baccalaureate Social Work Program at West Chester University has two phases for the delivery of the undergraduate social work program. As declared undergraduate social work majors, the first year is classified as the ***"Pre-Candidacy"*** track for majors. The last three years of the social work major is the ***"Professional Social Work Foundation"*** track for majors. The ***professional social work*** phase begins in the second year and combines academic course work and practicum practice. The bachelor's in social work (BSW) is conferred on undergraduates who complete all the academic requirements of the program and West Chester University. The BSW is recognized as the first professional level of social work practice. ***Certain criteria are, therefore, established for admission to and continued matriculation in the professional program.*** These policies and procedures are outlined in this handbook and the West Chester University Undergraduate Course Catalog, which all students receive when admitted to the University.

The admissions standards strengthen the baccalaureate program by providing close monitoring of students' academic progress. Also, this procedure clearly outlines the academic requirements for students' admission and continued matriculation in the department.

Study Abroad Opportunities

Students interested in international study abroad opportunities can consult with the University's [office of international programs](#), their academic advisor, and social work faculty.

Junior Spring Semester in Mexico

The Experiential Learning in Mexico

While it is generally recommended that students complete cross-cultural programs prior to the junior year, the Department has developed a partnership with the [Center for Global Education in Cuernavaca, Mexico](#) where students can complete the junior spring semester coursework and practicum placement abroad. Having bilingual, bicultural competency is highly valued by the Department, the social work profession, and future employers, particularly if students are proficient in Spanish. Students interested in the Social Work in a Mexican Context Program can visit the department webpage, speak with their academic advisor, and/or contact Dr. Michele Belliveau for further information at mbelliveau@wcupa.edu.

Winter Study Abroad to Ghana

Experiential Learning in Ghana: Public Health Social Work

Public Health Social Work study abroad program is designed to enable students of all majors to travel to Ghana for eight (8) days in January (winter break) while earning three credits towards their degree. Students traveling to Ghana enroll in the SWO 493: Public Health Social Work elective, a five-week, 100% online asynchronous course offered in the summer and winter terms. Students traveling to Ghana complete 3.5 weeks of the SWO 493 elective online and use the Ghana experiential learning trip to complete the remainder of the course. The experiential learning activities include trips to social work and public health agencies in Ghana, as well as a visit to the University of Ghana for interactions with social work and public health students and faculty. Other program highlights include cultural immersion excursions to major/historical landmarks such as the Assin Manso Slave River, the Elmina Slave Castle, and the Kakum National Park. For more information, contact Dr. Hadih Deedat hdeedat@wcupa.edu

May Study Abroad Experience Kenya- (This program is not active this Academic Year)

The Experiential Learning in Kenya

The study abroad program provides Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students at West Chester University with an exceptional opportunity to explore global social work practices while engaging with Kenya's vibrant culture and social work systems. The program can be combined for our junior students who can take a component of this course online. Contact Dr. Wysor Nguema for more information: swysornguema@wcupa.edu.

Double Study Abroad Opportunity-Winter and Spring Break

The Experiential Learning in Benin, West Africa/Africatown and Montgomery Alabama

The BSW program offers a unique opportunity for students to do two travel study opportunities within one three credit course. The program takes students to Benin, West Africa for ten days in January during winter break and then to Africatown and Montgomery, Alabama over Spring Break. The course is divided into two 1.5 credit courses, one in the second seven-week session of the Fall semester tied to the travel to Benin and the second in the first seven-week session of the Spring semester tied to the travel to Alabama. It is recommended that students do both courses and experiences for maximum impact, but students are not required to do both. Contact Dr. Wysor Nguema for more information: swysornguema@wcupa.edu.

Undergraduate Social Work Requirements

In compliance with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the national accrediting body for social work, the Program only accepts upper division social work courses from accredited programs, which correspond with the West Chester University Undergraduate Social Work Program. No social work credits are granted for life or work experience. Applicants must meet University requirements for admission. Students must also achieve the professional standards of behaviors that were adopted by the Undergraduate Social Work Department (see Undergraduate Social Work Professional Behavior Standards). The following is our sequence of BSW courses:

First Year

Fall

SWO 200 - Intro to Social Welfare (3)

SWO 225 - Race Relations (3)

Spring

SWO 220 – Introduction to Generalist Practice (3)

SWO 300 – Family Systems (3)

Second Year

Fall

SWO 332 – Social Welfare Policies & Services (3)

SWO 350 – Human Beh. In the Social Environ. I (3)
(3)

Spring

SWO 320 – Generalist Practice I (3)

SWO 351 – Human Beh. In the Social Environ. II

Third Year

(Students apply for candidacy by September 15th; the year to apply for candidacy may differ for internal and external transfer students. Please see your academic advisor or the Chairperson to confirm the date to apply for candidacy)

Fall

SWO 321 - Generalist Social Work Practice II (3)

SWO 431 – Methods of Social Inquiry (3)

Spring

SWO 375 – Practicum

Experience I (6) SWO

395 – Junior Seminar (3)

SWO 432 – Advanced Policy Practice (3)

Fourth Year

Fall

SWO 495 - Senior Seminar I (3)

SWO 450 -Practicum Experience II (6)

Spring

SWO 496 - Senior Seminar II (3)

SWO 451 - Practicum Experience III (6)

******Please note that the course sequence may differ for internal and external transfer students. Transfer students will meet with their advisor to create a feasible academic schedule.**

ELECTIVES may vary per semester and campus.

ELECTIVES may vary semester to semester.

SWO 421 - Mental Health and Social
Work (3)

SWO 423 - Child Welfare Practice and
Policy (3)

SWO 491 – Human Sexuality (3)

SWO 493: Public Health Social Work

SWO 410 - Independent Study (3)

SWO 490 – Topical Seminar (3)

SWO 494 – Global Social Justice (3)

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admission to the Undergraduate Social Work Program

Students must meet all University requirements for admission to West Chester University.

A student may declare the social work major at any time, although it is better to declare the major as early as possible in order to take the pre-candidacy social work, general education, and liberal arts courses in a timely manner.

Transfer Students

Individuals who have been enrolled in any post-secondary institution after graduation from high school and/or have attended West Chester University on a non-degree basis must apply as transfer students.

Applicants whose secondary school credentials would not warrant admissions consideration must complete the equivalent of one full academic year prior to attempting a transfer. A minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.50 is required for transfer consideration. However, the University's modified rolling admissions policy gives priority to applicants with the strongest academic credentials. Specific information may be obtained from the Office of Admissions.

Transfer applicants for the fall semester should begin the application process early in the preceding spring semester, preferably by February 1, despite the recommended May 1 deadline. Spring semester applications should be completed by October 1. If enrollment limits are met before these dates, admissions will be closed.

The Registrar's Office conducts a transfer analysis and West Chester University credits equivalence is assigned; the student is then referred to the Social Work Department for advisement. The undergraduate Program Director (Chairperson) will review the general education requirements, which have already been evaluated and accepted by the University. The undergraduate Program Director (Chairperson) has a two-fold purpose (1) to review social work courses that are transferred to the University; and (2) to advise those courses needed for completion of the social work major.

In compliance with the Council on Social Work Education, the national accrediting body for social work, the program only accepts upper-division social work courses from accredited programs that correspond with West Chester University BSW program sequencing. No social work credits are granted for life experience.

If the following criteria are met, the student is accepted:

- A) Students from accredited BSW programs will receive credit for all social work courses

that they have successfully completed, if the course is similar in content and in sequence to the WCU social work department.

- B) Students from non-accredited programs shall have their previous coursework evaluated by the transfer analyst.
- C) Required social work courses are accepted from non-accredited programs as electives.
- D) No social work course with a grade of “C” or below will be accepted.
- E) Not all required social work courses will be accepted unless the student transfers from an accredited social work program.
- F) The Social Work Program will not accept transfer credits for practicum placement and seminars since they are concurrent in the BSW program. (Credits will be accepted as elective courses.)
- G) All other social work courses not meeting the requirements of the program may be accepted as SWO 199 course credit hours.

After determining acceptance to the Program, students are scheduled for classes, given information regarding online access to the Student Handbook/Practicum Manual, an advisor is assigned, and an outline of courses is given to the student to take each semester to fulfill social work graduation requirements at West Chester University.

This process occurs year-round, but the highest numbers of transfer students enter during the summer. Transfer students must also apply for candidacy, completing the required information.

The University requires that transfer students complete at least 30 credit hours at the Institution (please see the Undergraduate Catalogue for an explanation of the residency requirement).

Please note: The Undergraduate Social Work Department may offer some Pre-candidacy Social Work courses in the summer to assist transfer students to begin as a junior when they enter West Chester University in the fall. It is crucial that all transfer students be advised by the Undergraduate Program Chairperson as soon as they are admitted to the university.

Internal Transfers (Change of Major)

The Chairperson meets with all WCU students who have obtained a GPA of 2.50 or higher, and are interested in changing their major to social work to discuss interest, expectations, the

requirements of the Social Work Program, the profession, and to customize a package that allows for credit from coursework already completed, maintaining standards for social work education. Attention is paid to degree candidates from other disciplines since they usually have worked predominantly on general education courses. Students are highly encouraged to first complete SWO 200 (Introduction to Social Welfare) and SWO 225 (Race Relations) prior to requesting a change of major. Students must have obtained the minimum GPA required of 2.5 before they can request a transfer into the department. Students are given information on how to access the Student Handbook and are made aware of Social Work Program policies and the courses needed to complete the major. When internal university students have met the minimum 2.50 GPA, have successfully completed SWO 200 and SWO 225 (students are highly encouraged to complete these courses before requesting a major change), and have successfully completed the interview with the Chairperson, they are provided with a plan of study and an academic advisor is assigned. Internal transfer students must apply for candidacy, completing the required information.

Readmission. On occasion, BSW students are readmitted to the University after a long hiatus from school. All accepted students that are returning to complete their BSW degree must meet with the Chairperson of the Department, and if appropriate, the Director of Practicum Education prior to coming back into the program.

Undergraduate Social Work Candidacy Application

Students must submit a complete Candidacy Application (no partial applications accepted) to the Chair of the Candidacy Process, following the candidacy application instructions, by September 15th of the third year. Transfer students must submit a complete Candidacy Application to the Chair of the Candidacy Process by September 15th of the year specified by the Chairperson or academic advisor during admittance. Incomplete applications will not be accepted and may place in jeopardy the student's ability to move into the junior practicum experience. Please obtain a Candidacy Packet from the Department D2L site.

If a student has received a level 2 or level 3 professional behavior form, student is encouraged to discuss their situation with their academic advisor and/or the Chairperson of the Undergraduate Program before applying for Candidacy as it may impact your ability to move forward in the program.

The Candidacy Application must include the following:

- In order to enter junior practicum, students must have completed **SWO 200, 220, 225, 300, 320, 332, and 350**. SWO 321 and 351 may be taken concurrently. A substantial amount of general education requirements (see the guidance sheet) for the BSW degree should be completed to be formally accepted into the program. The candidacy review board will determine if the student needs to complete more general education requirements before moving on to junior year.
- A candidacy application Personal Data form – Please see D2L-Social Work Department site.
- The following documents must be obtained and stored by the student: Verification of Liability Insurance, Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse History. These need to be available

for potential practicum sites and universities, upon their request. Please do not bring in, email, or upload to D2L any documents to the Undergraduate Social Work Department. Keep these documents available as they are often requested during any practicum interviews.

- A copy of the student's unofficial transcript – a list of courses student has taken to date (a GPA of 2.5 or better is required)
- A signed form acknowledging that the student understands the professional behaviors expected prior to entering a practicum
- A completed and signed volunteer certification form or similar letter verifying volunteer experience of a minimum **20** hours within the past **three** years. The volunteer requirement for students that have worked in a professional setting or have completed a community college human services practicum will be waived.
- Certificate of completion of [PA Child Welfare Mandated Reporter Training](#)
- Letter of recommendation for candidacy by someone (non-family member) who the student worked or volunteered with, supervised student, or who can honestly recommend that the student has the qualities to be a good social worker.

The Chair of the Candidacy Process and faculty review applications and recommend all candidates to the director/chair of the undergraduate social work program. Letters of acceptance/non-acceptance will be emailed to the student's WCU account from the Director of the Undergraduate Social Work Department between October 1 – October 15.

Please note: Although the Undergraduate Social Work Department does not require child abuse and criminal clearances for the candidacy process, students need to obtain them for their practicum

Problematic background check reports may be the cause to deny the student a practicum placement. If a student is concerned about something that might appear on their record, they should discuss any concerns in advance with the Director of Practicum.

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Standards of Professional Behavior and Professional Behaviors Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4

The BSW Program takes seriously the development of professional behavior in students. Therefore, standards of the profession have been developed and are integrated into the curriculum in stages. These standards are considered in every course. Students are provided with opportunities to develop a professional identity by enhancing self-awareness and critically thinking about their role as change agents. Students who do not satisfactorily meet these expectations will have a meeting with their professors, academic advisors, and/or the Chairperson to explore actions for success and achieve satisfactory performance of the standards.

The Undergraduate Social Work Program has implemented a [Professional Behaviors](#) protocol to support students' success in meeting ethical and practice social work standards. There are four levels of professional behaviors that may be discussed with students. Level one is a discussion between anybody intersecting with a social work student (i.e., professor, practicum liaison, Practicum Director, practicum supervisor, university administrator) who may have observed a student's challenge with professionalism. Level 2 professional behavior happens when another Level 1 professional behavior is documented and/or the new concern grants an immediate Level 2 professional behavior concern. Level 2 professional behavior requires a meeting with the Chairperson to discuss the professional behavior matter and create an action plan for success. Level 3 professional behavior happens when a serious violation to professional ethics, judgment, or other professional matters emerges and/or when a Level 1 or 2 professional behavior remains an unresolved matter despite explicit intervention via the action plan. Level 3 professional behavior requires a meeting with the Associate Dean for the College of Education and Social Work (CESW) and when indicated the Chairperson of the Undergraduate Social Work Program. A Level 4 is a serious professional matter requiring immediate action by the Dean of the CESW and if indicated the Chairperson of the Undergraduate Social Work Program.

Students with professional behaviors may not be cleared for practicum and they are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Chairperson, academic advisor, and/or Practicum Director.

The standards are as follows:

EXPECTATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR:

- **Professional Behavior**

Exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in classroom, practicum, and community. Appearance, dress, and general demeanor reflect a professional manner. Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines,

completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner. Works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority. Advocates for him/herself in an appropriate and responsible manner and uses proper channels for conflict resolution. Shows a willingness to receive and accept feedback and supervision in a positive manner, as well as use such feedback to enhance professional development.

- **Self-Awareness**

Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences affect thinking, behavior, and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one's own limitations as they relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.

- **Communication Skills**

Demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.

a) **Written:** Writes clearly, uses correct grammar and spelling, and applies appropriate writing style, including American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation. Demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and to complete adequately all written assignments, as specified by faculty.

b) **Oral:** Communicates effectively & sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, & professionals. Expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others. Demonstrates sufficient skills in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to complete adequately all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of practicum placement experiences, as specified by faculty.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR & CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

In class participation, presentations, interviews, & written work, you are expected to exhibit:

- Respect for the dignity of others, even if you disagree
- Respect for group processes in class
- Respect for confidentiality of information shared in class
- Acceptance of & respect for differences & diversity in class
- Intellectual curiosity & a scientific attitude; openness & honesty
- Accountability (meeting course expectations; completing projects; professionalism)
- Entering &/or leaving the room after class has started is distracting. Use time between classes to address personal concerns and bathroom needs.
- You should be participating in class and not be on phones or other devices. Photos &/or any recording of class are prohibited (see below).

ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM, AUDIO-VISUAL, PHOTOGRAPHY &

AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDING

Most class PPT slides are available on D2L. Social work classes are very interactive, and we want you to engage with the professor and your classmates about the content. Occasionally, computers may be used to support learning activities in the classroom such as taking notes and accessing course readings under discussion. However, non-academic use of laptops and other devices is distracting and disrupts the learning process for everyone. This class covers content that will require you to think and answer questions in class. Please tell friends & family that you are “not available” during class time, except in cases of real emergency (crisis). E-mailing, texting, social networking & use of the internet for non-academic reasons in the classroom are inappropriate & unprofessional. The use of cell phones during class time is prohibited; cell phones should be turned to silent before class begins. In case of an emergency, please step out of the room to take the call. If a student does not meet these expectations, they may lose participation points or may be asked to leave the class.

PLEASE NOTE: No one is permitted to photograph, video, audio-record or take/post any other representations of the professors, students, or others without discussing it with the professor in advance & obtaining explicit WRITTEN permission. You do not have permission to take, use or share images or recordings of the professor or your classmates; you do not have permission to post pictures, videos, audio recordings or other representations on the internet, any social media sites (public or private), or on any social media or other technology space. Students with ADA accommodation should present their documentation to the instructor in advance of the course. To respect the privacy of all in the course, the concept of INFORMED CONSENT applies here. You must obtain written consent in advance for any of the above.

Official Evaluation of Professional Behaviors

The evaluation of Professional Behaviors of candidates/students is conducted every semester in every course. When a professional behavior concern is identified by an instructor, practicum personnel, university personnel, or other university entity, a protocol will be followed to support the student to be successful. There are four levels of professional behaviors each level identifies the gravity of the

concern. Level four is the highest level of concern. When a professional behavior form is completed, a meeting will be scheduled with the student and the form will be managed by the CESW. Any subsequent meetings with the student and any progress made on the identified action plan will be documented on a follow-up professional behavior form and updated with the CESW.

Professional Behaviors in the Classroom and Practicum

All students in the Undergraduate program within the College of Education and Social Work (CESW) must adhere to the code of ethics as outlined by the [National Association of Social Workers](#). CESW views its students as mature individuals who are either preparing to be members of the profession or continuing to develop their knowledge and skills within the profession. Students are expected to exhibit a high level of integrity, humility and empathy when working with others (client, peers, instructors, etc.) all while upholding the professional standards of conduct. Students are also expected to adhere to additional expectations set forth by Faculty and Practicum Instructors.

Problematic behaviors refer to a student's behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics that may require remediation, but are perceived as not excessive or unexpected for professionals in training. Performance anxiety, discomfort with clients' diverse lifestyles and ethnic backgrounds, and lack of appreciation of agency norms are examples of problematic behaviors that are usually remedied and not likely to progress into ethical misconduct, impairment, or incompetence.

Ethical misconduct occurs when the NASW Code of Ethics is not followed. This code is intended to provide both the general principles and the specific decision rules to cover most situations encountered by professional social workers in their professional activities. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. It is the individual responsibility of each social worker to aspire to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct. Social workers promote social justice and social change, respect, protect human and civil rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

Impairment is defined as an interference in professional functioning that is reflected in one or more of the following ways:

- Inability or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior.
- Inability or unwillingness to acquire professional skills and reach an accepted level of competency; or
- Inability or unwillingness to control personal stress, psychological disorder, or emotional reactions that may affect professional functioning.

Incompetence is defined as a lack of ability. This lack of ability may include inadequate professional or interpersonal skills, or academic deficiency. When students continue to provide social work

services beyond their current level of competence, they are violating the ethical standard of competence.

The following is a list of some, but not all, practice behaviors that can be used to infer students' ability to demonstrate the competencies outlined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

Candidates are provided opportunities to demonstrate these behaviors in a variety of settings.

Behaviors can be displayed through the quality of assignments candidate completes, their interactions with instructors, staff, and colleagues, and through experiences in practicum settings. This document will be used in every course or when a student exhibits problematic behaviors, ethical misconduct, impairment, or incompetence. These behaviors may also be in violation of West Chester University policy (academic integrity, honesty).

Students are expected to:

- 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
- Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations
- Demonstrate professional demeanor and behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes
- Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior
- Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels
- Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experience
- Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies

For a more thorough description of the **Professional Behaviors and Expectations** of the Undergraduate Social Work Program – please refer to the [Social Work Professional Behaviors website](#).

and in D2L course content.

Electronic Devices in at the Practicum Site

Emailing, texting, social networking, cell phone use and any other use of electronic devices, including computers, for non-practicum related reasons is unprofessional and not permitted. Inappropriate use of electronic devices at the practicum site can result in removal from the practicum. If it is a practice of your practicum site to use email to communicate with clients, you should only use the email address that was assigned to you by your practicum site. All emails and texts, whether to clients or other professionals, should be communicated professionally and in a manner that maintains the client's confidentiality.

You should not use or give your personal email or phone number to your clients.

Social Media

The Undergraduate Social Work Department recognizes the everyday uses of social media. It can be a great tool for staying connected and informed; however, it is important to use it professionally. Confidentiality in the practicum extends to Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, and other forms of social media. It is an ethical violation to share information about your work with clients, including pictures, or confidential information about your practicum site on social media sites unless it is part of your role at your practicum site and all the necessary release of information forms have been signed. When referring to the Undergraduate Social Work Department, your practicum site, clients, colleagues, classmates, or client populations, you should use respectful, professional language without misrepresenting or misleading information. In addition, it is important that you represent yourself accurately and identify yourself as a student. When using social media, it is important to maintain good professional boundaries. You should not “friend” your current or former clients. If you receive a “friend” request from a client, you will need to have conversation with your client to inform them why you cannot “friend” and the importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries.

Web Searches

It is not unusual for clients to become curious about the professionals who work with them. Hence, you should set your security settings so that your clients cannot obtain access to your personal social media sites. Since there are limitations to the security of the internet and social media, you should make sure that you are represented on the web in a professional manner in case your client does a web search on you. In turn, it would not be appropriate for you to do a web search on your client without your client’s informed consent.

Evaluation of Student Development

The pre-candidacy courses, [Intro to Social Welfare (SWO 200), Race Relations (SWO 225), Family Systems (SWO 300), and Introduction to Generalist Practice (220), have been designed to invite students to reflect on their own values and attitudes, and whether these are consistent with the social work profession. These are also known as “gatekeeping” courses in that they provide an opportunity for the student and professor to examine together the suitability of the student for the social work profession. The values and attitudes addressed in each of these courses are depicted in the table below.

INTRODUCTORY GATEKEEPING COURSES

| <u>Course</u> | <u>Content Addressed</u> |
|--|--|
| Introduction to Social Welfare Values (SWO 200) | Exploration of Professional and Personal Social Work Profession and Services History of Social Work and Social Justice Introduction to Contemporary Social Problems Global Awareness |
| Race Relations (SWO 225) | Discrimination Institutional and Internalized Racism Oppression of Diverse Groups Cultural Competence Self-Reflection and Awareness |
| Family Systems (SWO 300) | Family Systems Theory Intergenerational and Structural Models of Assessment Personal/Family/Cultural Value Systems Normative Versus Non-Normative Stressors |
| Introduction to Generalist Practice (SWO 220) | Personal and Professional Values Interviewing Process Role Conflict and Resolution Bio/Psy/Soc/Spiritual/Cultural Assessment |

The Roles of a Generalist
Practitioner The Helping
Process

Beginning Skills of Social
Work Oral Histories

Critical Thinking

Ethical Dilemmas: Conflicts and Decision
Making

Gatekeeping: An Ongoing Process

Student progress, both academic achievement and the development of professional behavior, is monitored and evaluated in several ways:

- 1) Faculty meetings devoted to student review at least once per semester.
- 2) Student-Faculty Advisory Meetings (students are assigned an advisor upon acceptance into the major). Face-to-face advising meetings are required at least once per semester with the social work advisor.
- 3) Course performance evaluation. The program standards of professional behavior have been integrated into the relevant course objectives.
- 4) Practicum evaluation completed in both the junior and senior year.
- 5) Successful completion of the candidacy process.

Termination for Academic Reasons

The Undergraduate Social Work Program endorses all West Chester University rules on termination of students based on academic performance (see [WCU Undergraduate Catalogue](#) and [Ram's Eye View](#)). In summary, the Academic Standards Policy has three categories: Good Academic Standing - maintain a 2.00 GPA for all work taken at the University; Probation and Dismissal are actions taken by the University when a student's GPA falls below an acceptable level at the end of a semester or summer term.

In addition, the following Undergraduate Social Work Program policy on termination of majors for academic performance is meant to supplement the University policy:

- ❖ Students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.50 or higher.

- ❖ Students must receive a grade of C or better in SWO 320, 321, 375, 395, 450, 451, 495, and 496.
- ❖ Students who receive less than a 2.50 (cumulative) grade point average are not able to graduate with a BSW degree.
- ❖ Students may retake courses only twice. If after the third time a student fails to receive a C grade, the student will be terminated from the Undergraduate Social Work Program.

Students are informed of the minimum grade point average expectations and are advised during admission and during academic advising every semester. If it appears that students are struggling, they should see their academic advisor or the Chairperson immediately. A student who is falling below the University and/or Department's required GPA will meet with their academic advisor to develop an academic recovery plan.

Students that are unable to maintain the minimum grade point average for social work of 2.50 are notified if they 1) must repeat a course; 2) are unable to progress into the next sequence of courses and/or 3) must select another major other than social work. If a student does not maintain a 2.50 after two consecutive semesters, they will be transferred out of the social work major. If it becomes necessary for a student to change majors because of their inability to perform at the expected level, the Chairperson meets with them to provide academic guidance to locate another major that is suitable for the academic and professional needs of the student and facilitates the internal transfer.

Grade Appeals and Violations of Academic Integrity

The BSW Program adheres to the University Policies on Grade Appeals and Violations of Academic Integrity (see WCU Undergraduate Catalog). In addition, the Program's gatekeeping mechanism is in accordance with the University's position on "Maintenance of Academic Standards: Probation and Dismissal." If a situation arises that a student's academic performance, practicum performance and/or adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and Professional Values and/or the Program's Standards of Professional Behavior has not been remedied by the above process, the student may be counseled by the appropriate faculty advisor and/or the Program Director/Chairperson to seek another degree program. The advisor and/or the Program Director/Chairperson will assist in facilitating this process.

Students have the right to discuss and/or appeal this process. To do so, students should (in the following order):

- (1) Contact their Faculty Advisor
- (2) Contact the Director/Chairperson of the Undergraduate Social Work Program
- (3) Contact the Dean of the College of Education and Social Work
- (4) Request a hearing as outlined in the *Ram's Eye*

Students who have a grade of NG (incomplete) and/or a grade of D+ or below in required social work courses (C in 300-level practice courses) must repeat these courses and achieve a satisfactory grade before entering both the junior and senior practicum placement. Not achieving at least, a

2.50 cumulative grade point average in all social work required courses is considered grounds for dismissal from the Social Work Program.

Grievance Procedures Related to a Practicum

Social work students should take the following steps in the order listed with regard to any grievance related to practicum:

Step 1: Discuss the grievance with the person immediately involved; if not resolved,

Step 2: Discuss the grievance with Faculty Practicum Liaison; if not resolved,

Step 3: Discuss the grievance with Director of Practicum Education; if not resolved,

Step 4: Discuss the grievance with Director/Chairperson of the Undergraduate Social Work Department,

Step 5: If the grievance is related to a grade, the student follows the procedures outlined in Student Handbook/ Manual and the Ram's Eye.

The Ram's Eye

Ram's Eye View (Student Handbook) produced by the Division of Student Affairs, provides information about student services on campus, student activities, university policies, and the West Chester community.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: Students may be removed from their practicum immediately for any of the following reasons:

- ❖ Serious breach of the Practicum Education Agreement.
- ❖ Physical, mental, or academic incapacity that seriously interferes with the work required in practicum education settings.
- ❖ Intentional breach of social work ethics as detailed in the NASW Code of Ethics and/or the Undergraduate Social Work Department's Standards of Professional Behavior.
- ❖ Any Professional Behaviors (levels 1-4)
- ❖ Request from the practicum setting due to concerns about the student's ability to perform the expectations of the practicum setting.

If there is a need to remove a student from the practicum placement for any of the above reasons, the Practicum Director, assigned faculty, and/or Chairperson will address the concern, following the above procedure, in an expedited way in order to resolve the issue.

The Undergraduate Social Work Program follows the University's policy on Grievance and Appeal Procedures (See [*Ram's Eye*](#)). The results of all evaluation conferences and meetings with the

students are recorded in the student's advising record and any professional behavior concerns documented in levels 1-4 are kept by the CESW. In addition, if a student has a concern about a faculty or staff member, after fully discussing the concerns with the faculty or staff member, the student may make an appointment with the Undergraduate Social Work Director/Chairperson to address and resolve the concerns. If a student has a concern with the Undergraduate Social Work Director/Chair after fully discussing the concerns with the Director/Chair, the student may make an appointment with the Dean or Associate Dean of the College of Education and Social Work.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The Undergraduate Social Work Program believes that protection of students' rights and responsibilities is necessary for a vital program. Students have a right to a quality education from faculty who are committed to excellence in learning. Students also have a responsibility to participate actively in all educational areas such as the classroom, Practicum, Social Work Club, University activities, and the larger community.

Students' rights and responsibilities, as well as programs and services for students, are described in the *Ram's Eye*. A copy of specific student's rights/responsibilities is included in the *Ram's Eye*. Grade appeals, Termination, and Sexual Harassment are examples of policies found in the *Ram's Eye*. The University offers many programs and services such as a Health Insurance Program and Health Services, Mail Service, Career Planning and Placement Services, Counseling Services, and writing and study assistance (through the Writing Center and Learning Assistance Resource Center), to name a few. Any students' rights specific to the Social Work Department are outlined in the Social Work Student Handbook/Practicum Manual, found on the WCU website and the Undergraduate Social Work Department D2L site. Any new policies or revisions of existing policy are clarified in Faculty/Student Meetings, posted on the Department website, and available to all students.

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY POLICIES

A. Evaluations

1. Faculty teaching below the 400 level should examine student academic progress by means of at least three major evaluations during a semester. However, in a skills-based course, a student's final mark may be determined by either: 1) three major evaluations; or 2) a combination of intermediate evaluations and the final level of skills attained as established by the instructor of department at the beginning of the course. This policy does not apply to unique situations such as off-campus and practicum experience.
2. Faculty should inform students at the beginning of a course of the nature and number of evaluations.
3. The student is to be notified of the results of each evaluation during the course. Normally, this should be done prior to the next scheduled major evaluation.
4. One major evaluation should be given prior to the end of the eighth week of the semester or its equivalent in summer school.
5. Faculty members are requested to retain the results of all evaluations, including final examinations, for a period of six months before discarding them.

B. Final Examinations

1. Final examinations in a course below the 400 level should be assigned a weight not to exceed 33-1/3 percent of the final mark.
2. In accordance with college policy, no final examinations should be given before the scheduled final examination time.

C. Course Information

By the second-class meeting, students in all courses except those given by individualized instruction or independent study, must receive a course syllabus containing at least the following information.

- a) Course name and number
- b) Instructor's name, office location, office telephone number, email address, and scheduled office hours
- c) Required textbook(s)
- d) Student learning outcomes (including General Education goals if course is an approved General Education course)
- f) Evaluation policy
- g) Course outline
- h) Attendance policy
- i) Policies concerning granting of No Grade, violation of academic integrity, and violation of student code of conduct.
- j) ADA policy statement

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Undergraduate Social Work Department will determine a class attendance policy and publish it in their syllabus at the beginning of each semester. When a student fails to comply with the policy, the professor has the right to assign a grade consistent with their policy as stated in a course. Social work is a profession; therefore, all students must comply with the standards of professional behavior. Excused absences, in accordance with the Excused Absence Policy for University-sanctioned events, will not result in a penalty, provided the student follows this policy. University departments or programs may establish attendance policies to govern their sections as long as those policies fall within these guidelines. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities regarding any health-related concerns.

CURRICULUM

COURSES

Introduction

The academic classroom and practicum components of the Undergraduate Social Work Department are designed to prepare the student for beginning-level professional practice as a BSW social worker and graduate study. The baccalaureate curriculum prepares students for professional generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, and societal systems.

The curriculum has been developed from the mission of the institution, to be consistent with the Curriculum Policy Statement and accreditation standards for undergraduate social work programs established by the Council on Social Work Education (see Appendix for the Educational Policy Statement). The social work curriculum comprises fourteen required social work courses and three practicum courses.

Please consult the Practicum Education section of this manual for a full description of our program's practicum component.

The curriculum design for the Social Work Program reflects an integrative approach to generalist social work practice. Intervention on three levels: the micro (individual), the mezzo (families and small groups), and the macro (agencies, communities, social policies, and societal systems) is stressed throughout each core course. The integrative model of social work practice illustrates a multi-level approach to generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, and societal systems.

Pre-Candidacy Courses and the First Year

(note: students in the Philadelphia BSW program will take the courses below on a part-time schedule and may transfer in many of the general education requirements)

Pre-candidacy social work courses are designed to introduce students to the history and purposes of the social work profession, social work values and ethics, theories that help explain human behavior in the social environment, the generalist intervention model, the role of policy and research in social work practice, the importance of recognizing and appreciating diversity, and principles of social and economic justice.

Collectively, they lay a foundation of knowledge, values, and skills towards the achievement of all five program goals and the corresponding nine core competencies. While taking pre-candidacy social work courses, students are also taking specified general education and liberal arts requirements that support the goals and objectives of the program.

Year One. Social work students take Introduction to Social Welfare (SWO 200) and Race Relations (SWO 225) in the first semester of their first year. SWO 200 serves to introduce students to the history and purposes of social work and social welfare, the practicums of service, values and perspectives of the profession, and a beginning understanding of the role of advocacy. The faculty determined that an introduction to policy and the professional aim of social and economic justice lays the foundation of a systems perspective and socializes students to the interdependence of policy and practice. Similarly, SWO 225, Race Relations, provides a comprehensive and interdisciplinary introduction to the examination of race relations in historical and contemporary society. Emphasis is placed on racial awareness by examining racial, ethnic, and cultural differences of people in the United States. Students are taught models of racial identity development and the effects of oppression on individuals and members of historically oppressed groups. Students are supported in examining their own beliefs, attitudes, and learned stereotypes in order to prepare them for practice that is culturally competent in that it is both fundamentally non-discriminatory and values the strengths of people of color. In taking SWO 200 and 225 concurrently, students are simultaneously exposed to the concept of systematic oppression and a professional value system and history that seeks to redress it.

During this first semester, students also take their first English Composition course (academic foundation requirement, WRT 120), a sociology course (behavioral and social science requirement, introductory courses recommended), and the first of two department-required language courses. Effective writing is a basic requirement for professional social work practice and students must learn the mechanics of writing prior to taking professional foundation, upper-level social work courses where expectations for writing assignments and professional writing are high. The sociology course helps to lay the foundation for the Human Behavior in the Social Environment content of the curriculum by initiating students in the fundamentals of the sociological perspective through a comparative, historical, and cross-cultural analysis of human behavior (Competency 2). The foreign language requirement helps to lay the foundation for diversity content by giving students the opportunity to learn a foreign language. Even for students that do not pursue foreign language study beyond the 6-credit department requirement (or for those who pursue a cultural cluster based on their challenges in learning a second language), this is seen as a valuable exercise in empathy-building to work with clients for whom English is a second language. It also provides a horizontal linkage with SWO 225, Race Relations, where the focus on racial and ethnic minority groups also looks discrimination from the standpoint of English-only legislation.

In the second semester of the first year, social work students take Introduction to Generalist Practice (SWO 220) and Family Systems (SWO 300). SWO 220 introduces students to the Generalist Intervention Model (the planned-change process), emphasizing that client system assessment and planning must occur at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels (micro, mezzo, and macro). Students are given the opportunity to begin development of interviewing skills through an assignment to obtain an oral history from an older adult. In addition, students are introduced to the NASW Code of Ethics and engage in exercises aimed at helping students identify similarities and differences between their personal and professional value systems. In SWO 300, Family Systems, students are introduced to family systems theory, the family life cycle, and diverse family forms. The

course emphasizes a nonjudgmental stance to difference and assists students in understanding the interactional effects of individuals and their family systems. Students are taught to understand families within broader systems, as well, to appreciate the effect of social dynamics, including laws and social policy, on family functioning. By taking SWO 220 and 300 concurrently, students interview an older adult while learning about the family system within society at the stage of older adulthood, thereby providing another horizontal linkage within the curriculum

During the second semester, students also take their second writing course (WRT at the 200 level), a psychology course, and the second course in foreign language. As with sociology, the psychology course helps lay the foundation for HBSE content area that ultimately produces student competency in this area (Competencies 6-9). Psychology courses introduce students to the scientific study of human behavior, and in the introductory course recommended, emphasize the learning process.

The Professional Foundation and Years Two, Three, and Four

Professional foundation courses build upon the foundation established in the pre-candidacy social work courses, and the general education and liberal arts courses, creating vertical integration across the curriculum. Within the professional foundation, the emphasis is on producing practicing and proficient levels of social work practice; therefore, emphasis is on application and integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills.

Once students have reached the second semester of the third (junior) year, they have completed most of the general education and liberal arts requirements and are able to select, with guidance from their faculty advisor, electives both within and outside the BSW program. Moreover, a strong and integrated beginning and practicing-level curriculum has prepared students for their first practicum experience that occurs in the second semester of the junior year.

Year Two. In the first semester of the sophomore year, social work students take Social Welfare Policies and Services (SWO 332) and Human Behavior in the Social Environment I (SWO 350). SWO 332 provides students with an understanding of social movements and present-day policies and makes the connection between societal values and traditions and social policy. Students learn a social justice framework for analysis and develop an awareness of how individuals and families are very much affected by how society defines and treats its members. SWO 350 focuses on the “first” half of the life cycle (pre-birth through adolescence), making use of diverse theories to understand human behavior during these stages and to help students better understand individuals and families. In being taken concurrently with the policy course, a horizontal linkage is made as students can connect theories that address individuals and families and policies that both impact individuals and families and are impacted by them.

Students in the first semester also take a required course in history and one in government/political science. Since the department recommends PSC 100, US Government and

Politics, and HIS 150, The American Experience, students experience horizontal integration of content from these classes and the policy course, SWO 332. In takes these courses concurrently, students are better prepared to understand the historical, ideological, and political context within which the U.S. social welfare system developed. This integration helps lay the foundation for at least two of the core competencies related to advocacy for social and economic justice, Competencies 3 and 5.

In the second semester of the sophomore year, students take the second Human Behavior in the Social Environment course (SWO 351), as well as the first of two Generalist Social Work Practice courses (SWO 320). SWO 351 focuses on the second “half” of the life cycle (young/middle to older adulthood) as well as theories that help students understand group and organizational client systems but can be taken prior to SWO 350 if necessary (this determination creates greater flexibility for students without undermining the congruity of the curriculum). SWO 320 teaches the Generalist Intervention Model and moves students from the beginning level of knowledge, values, and skills to the practicing level, as students apply the model within the classroom setting. Students are also taught to apply Shulman’s (2009) Interactional Model where emphasis is placed on the use of relationships as a means of support and influence in work with clients and client systems. Horizontal integration occurs as students connect the interactional nature of people and systems with their own beginning social work practice.

Vertical integration occurs, for example, as students begin to apply theories of human behavior in the social environment to their work with “clients” through case studies and role play in the classroom. This integration provides the building blocks of several of the core competencies including Competencies 6-9.

Students in the second semester of the second year also take a communications course (Academic Foundation requirement, SPK 208 or 230), a literature course (distributive requirement, LIT 165—a writing emphasis course—recommended) and the second University-required science course (menu of options delineated by the social work department). The course in communications helps students develop skills in public speaking, while the literature course provides additional life perspectives upon which students can draw to round out their own experiences that are often limited (in part) by age. Taken concurrently with the Generalist Practice course, students are afforded the opportunity to view others as experts in their own lives, an understanding that helps lay the groundwork for competency 2, engage diversity and difference in practice. Finally, the second science course provides a breadth of knowledge that serves as a foundation of generalist practice.

Year Three. In the fall of the junior year, students take Generalist Practice II (SWO 321) and Methods of Social Inquiry (SWO 431). In SWO 321, students learn and apply the knowledge, values, and skills of social work practice with groups, organizations, and communities. As with SWO320, students use a developmental group work model and begin to apply their beginning-level skills within the classroom setting. They also deepen their understanding and begin to apply the theoretical material on organizational and community change learned in SWO 351 through the assigned course material.

In SWO 431, students learn to analyze and engage in qualitative and quantitative research methods applicable to social work practice, with an emphasis on sound, ethical principles. Students plan, conduct, and write up a team research project, and learn methods to evaluate their own practice. The research methods course builds upon beginning and practicing-level research content embedded in prior social work courses.

In addition to the social work courses, students in the first semester take a math course (academic foundation requirement) and the department-required Humanities course in Philosophy (180 recommended). While students may take any math course, the department recommends Introduction to Applied Mathematics.

(104) or Statistics I (121), with particular emphasis on the latter. Given that students are enrolled in research methods during this semester, the statistics course provides horizontal integration and a complementary foundation to students as they analyze their own data and that reported by others. By taking one of the specified math courses, students learn the building blocks for social work courses that ultimately lead to the nine core competencies, in this case competency 4, to engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. Moreover, students become more critical and sophisticated consumers of social work research in the ultimate service of their clients. Similarly, the social work program recommends that students take Introduction to Ethics (PHL 180) to fulfill the philosophy requirement based on its emphasis on ethical decision making. This provides additional foundation content for the multiple social work courses that build the first core competency, demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in practice. To apply social work ethics, it helps for students to learn the theory and purpose of ethical thinking, knowledge that can be gained in any University philosophy course.

Finally, in this semester, students take the first of their advised electives. Students that are interested in child welfare practice often fulfill their first elective credits by taking the department's child welfare elective (SWO 420) (this elective is offered once per academic year, either in the fall or spring). *Students interested in the State's Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureate's Program (CWEB), a program designed to increase social work's presence in state child welfare agencies, are required to take the child welfare elective.* Students choose their electives in consultation with their academic advisor in the department.

In the second semester of the junior year, students enter their first practicum setting. **In order to enter junior practicum, students must have completed SWO 200, 220, 225, 300, 320, 332, and 350. SWO 321 and 351 may be taken concurrently.** After completing their candidacy packet, meeting with the Director of Practicum Education to discuss their interests and background, and completing the required coursework, students are prepared to enter the practicum. In this semester, students take Practicum Experience I (SWO 375), Junior Seminar (SWO395), and Advanced Policy Practice (SWO 432). The professional practicum education component of the BSW program at West Chester is comprised of three semesters (16 hours per week/224 hours/semester) of practicum and begins in the junior year. (The following two semesters, which occur in the senior year, are discussed below.) The first practicum experience gives students

the opportunity to practice relationship-building skills, identify and begin to perform multiple social work roles (broker, advocate, counselor, mediator, educator, and facilitator), and experience working within a professional setting. In this way, the first practicum experience provides a foundation for the senior year practicum experience whereby students deepen their application of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes, and move towards an integration of these three.

The seminars (junior, senior I and senior II) have been conceptualized as occurring along a developmental trajectory with the purpose of building student competencies and supporting practicum as the signature pedagogy. The primary purpose of the senior seminars is to help students integrate academic learning with learning in the practicum. Consequently, students must take junior and senior practicum with the corresponding practice course. **If a student must retake junior or senior practicum or the corresponding seminar course, they must retake the corresponding course.**

While students are honing their beginning generalist practice skills, they take Advanced Policy Practice (SWO 432). In this course, students begin to apply and integrate knowledge gained in SWO 200 and SWO 332 in order to influence larger social systems. This course, which entails the completion of a policy practice project and participation in the Pennsylvania Chapter of NASW's Legislative Lobby Day (LEAD Day), provides students the opportunity to build competency in areas not always offered through the practicum, but in the service of clients and the practicum.

In this second semester, students take the second of their advised electives. Often, based on the practicum setting, students begin to choose electives that will enhance their knowledge base for generalist practice.

Year Four. In the first semester of the senior year, students enroll in Practicum Experience II (SWO 450), and Senior Seminar I (SWO 495). At this point, students are only taking social work professional core courses at the proficiency level. Therefore, the focus of each course in the senior year is on the integration of social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes necessary to be competent generalist social work practitioners. The practicum in the senior year is at a different site from the practicum in the junior year: this provides students with two different experiences. The expectations of the practicum experience in the senior year are greater than those for the junior year, as far as students are expected to function more autonomously (with supervision), initiate and engage clients in the planned-change process, and enhance their relationship skills. There is also the expectation that students will be given opportunities to practice at different system levels.

As with the junior year practicum, students are in the practicum 16 hours per week for a total of 224 hours/semester.

Senior seminar provides students with the opportunity to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills developed in prior coursework and the practicum experience, within the classroom. To this end, the

course is case- driven whereby students present process-recordings of their work with clients/client systems to hone assessment, planning, and intervention skills. In addition, students practice the skills of peer consultation by offering and receiving feedback from fellow students on their work. While skills and cognitive and affective processes at all levels of practice are honed, the first senior seminar tends to focus on the skills and cognitive and affective processes of practice with individuals and families. This is part of an intentional design whereby students move into honing the skills of mezzo and macro practice in the second senior seminar (SWO 496). As culmination of the first seminar, students complete a Senior Integrative Paper, which they present before the faculty in the fall semester.

In addition to social work courses in the first semester, students fulfill their University Art requirement and the third of their advised electives. Given the heightened expectations for proficiency in the senior year, taking a course in the Arts can be a welcome reprieve from writing and analysis. While rigorous, art courses remind students of the importance of their own and all individuals' need to be creative. In being able to take an advised elective, students are once again in position to take a course that will enhance their knowledge and skills with their client population in the senior-year practicum. For those students fulfilling the requirements for a minor (18 credits in the discipline), 15 elective credits in the junior and senior year facilitate the completion of this process.

In the final semester of the senior year, students take the third semester of Practicum (SWO 451) and the second Senior Seminar (SWO 496). While the practicum experience remains focused on helping students integrate knowledge, values, skills, and develop the cognitive and affective processes necessary for generalist practice in the practicum, there is also a focus on post-graduation plans and professional development. SWO 496 continues to deepen student integration of theory and practice and maintains its case focus; however, in the second seminar "case" is conceptualized more broadly to incorporate practice with systems of all sizes. While the primary focus of evaluation of practice is on individual students in the first senior-year practicum practice class and Senior Seminar, in the second seminar, it is on evaluation of the practicum settings practice. Students are asked to not only identify service arrangements or policies that are not "working" for clients, but to devise ways to address these, thereby building the leadership skills specified in the nine core competencies. Finally, in the seminar, termination is discussed at all levels of social work practice.

In the final semester, students also fulfill their final six (6) credits of advised electives, giving them the opportunity to advance their knowledge in areas that inform their proficiency-to-competency level generalist social work practice.

For additional details see:

- Undergraduate Social Work Department Guidance Sheet.
- BSW Academic Program Plan

**** Please note that the trajectory described above may differ for transfer students.**

Initial Advising

Advising: _____

Candidacy: _____

PDF: _____

D2L: _____

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT**Guidance Sheet**

Student's Name: _____

Student's ID: _____

Year Entered: _____

Anticipated Graduation Date: _____

Advisor's Name: _____

NOTE: The Department advises all students to commit to this sequence and register courses accordingly. Academic credit for life experience or previous work experience is prohibited. If a Social Work student has difficulty enrolling in a Social Work Course, contact the Chairperson Dr. Deedat at Hdeedat@wcupa.edu immediately. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CHECKING THEIR DEGREE PROGRESS REPORT (via myWCU) TO ENSURE THEY ARE FULFILLING ALL UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS.

For a complete list of University General Education and Distributive Requirements download the Undergraduate Catalog at:

<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/>

| | |
|--|--|
| WRT 120 and WRT 200+ (Contact ENG to request WRT 120 Credit) | 6 credits of Science (For SW – suggested courses include: NTD 303; PHY 123; PHI 125/PHY 125) |
| 3 credits Ethics Designation Course (SWO 320) | 6 credits of Behavior Science (For SW 9— PSY, SOC, PSC) |
| 3 credits Math course above 100 levels (104 or 121 recommended) | 6 credits of Humanities (For SW –HIS, PHI) |
| Speaking Emphasis Courses (S) (9 Credits Total) * see below | 3 credits of ART |
| 3 credits of diverse communities (J) (for SW – SWO 351) | 17 or 18 credits of Advised Electives |
| 3 credits of interdisciplinary course (I) (for SW – SWO 225) | Minimum 120 credits for graduation |
| 9 credits of writing emphasis courses (<u>W</u>) (for SW— | <u>Social Work Major Specific Requirement</u> |

| | |
|---|---|
| SWO 300, 351, 495) | <u>6 credits of FLG/Culture Cluster</u> |
| <u>SW Students need 2.50 GPA overall for BSW</u> | |
| Minimum grade of C required for SWO 320, 321, 375, 395, 450, 451, 495, and 496. All other required SWO courses minimum C- | |

*Transfer students with less than 40 credits need 9 credits of **speaking emphasis (S)** and 9 credits of **writing intensive (W)** courses. Students with 40-70 credits only need 6 credits approved **S** and 6 credits **W** courses. With 70+ transfer credits, only 1 approved **S** and 1 **W** (3 credit) course is required. All students must complete at least 1 approved **S** and 1 **W** course at the 300 or 400 level. **S** courses can count as electives.

| First Year: Pre-Candidacy - Fall Semester | | | | |
|---|---|---------|------|-------|
| Course # | Course Name | Credits | Term | Grade |
| SWO 200 | Introduction to Social Welfare | 3 | | |
| SWO 225 | Race Relations (<i>I and J</i>) | 3 | | |
| FYE 100 | First-Year Experience (Transfer students with 24+ credits do not have to complete) | 4 | | |
| WRT 120 | English Composition Effective Writing I | 3 | | |
| FLG I | Foreign Language or Language Culture Cluster (<i>Spanish and SPA 118 recommended</i>) | 3 | | |

| First Year: Pre-Candidacy - Spring Semester | | | | |
|---|---|---------|------|-------|
| Course # | Course Name | Credits | Term | Grade |
| SWO 220 | Introduction to Generalist Practice | 3 | | |
| SWO 300 | Family Systems (<i>W</i>) | 3 | | |
| PSY 100 | PSY 100 required | 3 | | |
| FLG II | Foreign Language II (one level above foreign language I) <i>or take Language Culture Cluster II</i> | 3 | | |
| WRT 200 | Above 200 level WRT 200, 204, 205, 206, 208, or 230 | 3 | | |

| Second Year: Pre-Candidacy - Fall Semester | | | | |
|--|---|---------|------|-------|
| Course # | Course Name | Credits | Term | Grade |
| SWO 332 | Social Welfare Policies and Services (SE) | 3 | | |
| SWO 350 | Human Behavior in the Social Environment I | 3 | | |
| PSC | Select approved Political Science Course (PSC 100 recommended) | 3 | | |
| Science | Select approved science class from BIO, CHE, CSC, GEO, NTD, PHI, PHY or SCI | 3 | | |
| HIS | Select approved HIS course (HIS 150 Recommended) | 3 | | |

| Second Year: Pre-Candidacy - Spring Semester | | | | |
|--|---|---------|------|-------|
| Course # | Course Name | Credits | Term | Grade |
| SWO 320 | Generalist Practice I (<i>E</i>) | 3 | | |
| SWO 351 | Human Behavior in the Social Environment II (<i>W</i>) (<i>J</i>) | 3 | | |
| Science | Select approved science class from BIO, CHE, CSC, ESS, GEO, NTD, PHI, PHY, or SCI | 3 | | |
| SOC | Select approved Sociology course (SOC 200 or SOC 240 recommended) | 3 | | |
| Elective | Advised Elective | 3 | | |

| Third Year: Apply for Candidacy by September 15 th - Fall Semester | | | | |
|--|--|---------|------|-------|
| If Interested in CWEB, Please Enroll in the <i>Child Welfare Course SWO 423</i> | | | | |
| Course # | Couse Name | Credits | Term | Grade |
| SWO 321 | Generalist Practice II | 3 | | |
| SWO 431 | Methods of Social Inquiry | 3 | | |
| MAT | Select any math course based on placement (MAT 104 or MAT 121 recommended) | 3 | | |
| PHI | Select approved Philosophy course (PHI 180 recommended) | 3 | | |

| | | | | |
|----------|--|---|--|--|
| Elective | Advised Elective (SWO 423 if interested in CWEB) | 3 | | |
|----------|--|---|--|--|

| Third Year: Professional Core - Spring Semester | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---------|------|-------|
| Course # | Course Name | Credits | Term | Grade |
| SWO 375 | Practicum Experience I | 6 | | |
| SWO 395 | Junior Seminar | 3 | | |
| SWO 432 | Advanced Policy Practice | 3 | | |
| Elective | Advised Elective | 3 | | |

| Fourth Year: Professional Core - Fall Semester | | | | |
|--|---|---------|------|-------|
| Course # | Course Name | Credits | Term | Grade |
| ART | Select approved Art, Cinematography, Dance, Photography, or Theater | 3 | | |
| SWO 450 | Practicum Experience II | 6 | | |
| SWO 495 | Senior Seminar I (W) | 3 | | |
| Elective | Advised Elective | 3 | | |

| Fourth Year: Professional Core - Spring Semester | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------|------|-------|
| Course # | Course Name | Credits | Term | Grade |
| SWO 451 | Practicum Experience III | 3 | | |
| SWO 496 | Senior Seminar II (SE) | 6 | | |
| Elective | Advised Elective | 3 | | |

| | | | | |
|----------|---|--------|--|--|
| | | | | |
| Elective | Advised Elective (Take 2 or 3 credits to earn 120 credits for graduation) | 2 or 3 | | |

| SOCIAL WORK ELECTIVES | | | | |
|---|------------------|---------|------|-------|
| Courses | Terms Offered | Credits | Term | Grade |
| SWO 421 – Mental Health and Addictions | | 3 | | |
| SWO 423 – Child Welfare Practice and Policy | | 3 | | |
| SWO 491 – Human Sexuality Concepts for Social Workers | | 3 | | |
| I = Interdisciplinary J = Diverse Communities W=Writing Emphasis E = Ethics S=Speaking Emphasis (begin AY 2020/2021) | | | | |

- Students may take social work courses concurrently while applying for candidacy.
- Students cannot fulfill a general education requirement and interdisciplinary with the same course.

Chairperson's Signature

Date

Advised Student's Signature

Date

Revised August 2019

Student's Name: _

.....Column Break..... **West Chester University**

BSW Program Academic Plan

Student ID: _

Semester/Year Entered: _

Academic Advisor:

| | | |
|------|--------|--------|
| Fall | Spring | Summer |
|------|--------|--------|

| | | |
|------|--------|--------|
| | | |
| Fall | Spring | Summer |
| | | |
| Fall | Spring | Summer |
| | | |
| Fall | Spring | Summer |
| | | |

Electives (Minimum 18 credits required). Total Elective Credits_

Completed: Speaking Emphasis (May count as electives)

I have met with my advisor, and I understand this ladder as it has been presented. I understand that I must follow the courses in the sequence above to apply for candidacy and graduate on time. At any time, I may meet with my Academic Advisor to adjust this plan, as necessary.

Student's Signature

Date

Advisor/Chairperson's Signature

Date

PRACTICUM EDUCATION

[Practicum Education](#) is a significant part of a student's preparation for professional social work practice. The BSW Program at West Chester University provides practicum setting experience with concurrent course work designed to provide instruction and the opportunity to integrate theory and practice. In addition, during the spring semester of junior year, students attend a weekly one-hour practicum class designed to facilitate professional development.

Practicum setting experience is required of all social work majors: 224 hours in the spring of junior year and 224 hours per semester in their senior year. **Practicum education is part of the course. Students cannot start practicum early and must remain in practicum until the end of the course.** Social work settings providing practicum opportunities are in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Students are placed at different practicum settings for the junior and senior years to ensure a broad and varied experience in the practicum.

Given the challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, practicum experiences can be in-person or a hybrid of in-person and remote. The BSW program and our practicum settings are committed to student and client safety. If students have safety concerns, they are encouraged to discuss them with their practicum director or faculty practicum liaison.

Junior Practicum Experience

Junior practicum education provides experience designed to complement the student's academic work and enables the application of theory to social work practice. The student will have the opportunity to observe the social worker's role in the helping process, network with professionals, learn basic social work tasks, and share experiences with other students in their practicum class. The student will start to develop awareness of their part in the helping process, perform as a professional at the agency to which they are assigned, and put into practice beginning generalist social work skills.

Junior level students fulfill their practicum education requirements over one semester in an assigned social work setting. The practicum requires 16 hours per week (a minimum of 224 hours/semester).

Also, students attend a one-hour practicum class and a three-hour seminar. Juniors, while at their practicum setting, are responsible for a setting-based practicum instructor with whom they meet on a regular basis. In addition, students meet weekly in a one-hour practicum class to discuss their practicum experience and learn to develop an individual-specific learning contract. During their first semester of practicum (or the semester prior), juniors take the second Generalist Social Work Practice (SWO321) where they are afforded an opportunity to discuss the integration of theory and practice while they also learn about mezzo and macro practice. These courses give students the opportunity to share new knowledge, awareness, and reactions to their practicum experiences with peers and faculty on campus.

Senior Practicum Experience

The senior practicum experience is designed to provide the student with the opportunity to further integrate and apply knowledge and theory learned in academic courses to actual social work situations. In the senior year, the student is expected to perform social work tasks under close supervision of the practicum instructor. It is expected that the student will become aware of and analyze their own values and feelings about people and the problems which they bring to practicum settings. Emphasis is placed on learning techniques and skills common to social work practice. In addition to the 448 hours at the practicum setting, seniors also meet in a three hour/week seminar with their seminar professor/faculty practicum liaison throughout concurrent with the placement. By the end of the second semester of senior practicum, students are expected to perform at the same level as a beginning level generalist social worker.

Because the junior and senior practicum education experience and the corresponding junior and senior seminar course are concurrent and lean on each other, failure to successfully complete one of the courses results in the student needing to retake both courses.

Integration between Curriculum and Practicum Education

Concurrent classes, practicum education experiences, and seminar groups give students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to practicum experience, share knowledge of a variety of social work roles and functions, and engage in problem solving with other students. In the classroom, seminar groups, practicum classes, and at the practicum setting, the student is expected to integrate and apply social work theoretical concepts as well as values, knowledge, and skills necessary for generalist social work practice. This begins with the incorporation of knowledge from social work courses into the junior practicum experience; it culminates with the integration of social work knowledge, values and skills, and cognitive and affective processes into the senior practicum practice experience.

All students are expected to be well-grounded in the planned change process (Generalist Intervention Model). Prior to entering junior practicum, all students must have completed SWO 200, 220, 225, 300, 320, 332, and 350. Prior to entering senior practicum, students must also have completed SWO 321, 351, 375 and 395.

Application of the Planned Change Process

Here are the steps of the planned change process: Method Illustrations

1. Assessment

- Information about the client system
- Clarification of the function of the agency and the student's role
- Identification of client strengths and challenges

2. Planning

- Discussion of practicum programs and policies that apply to service.
- Discussion of societal policies and expectations, impact of power/privilege or lack thereof, and the intersection of multiple cultural influences that apply to the situation
- Discussion of how the client may feel about the service and how the case was referred to the

organization.

- Clarifying the purpose of the contact and need to prioritize problems and translate problems into needs

3. Intervention

- Helping the student with the anxiety of the first interview and the client's reactions.
- Clarifying the need to contract with clients and work on primary goals.
- Helping students understand specific objectives, who will do what, by when? How will success be measured?

4. Evaluation

- Helping the student to understand the need to develop and follow a plan, monitor the progress, and revise the plan when necessary and/or to end services

5. Termination

- Assuring the student that they need not be 'perfect' in the use of social work skills.
- Demonstrate that the proper application of skills results in the ending with clients since the initial goals have been accomplished

6. Follow-Up

- Assisting the student in reviewing the case. What would they have done differently?
- Assisting the student in understanding the need to evaluate work through research methods. This ensures better service to the client system and increases the student's ability to assess practice skills and sharpen them when necessary to become more effective as a generalist practitioner.

Integration between Practicum Education and the Profession

Throughout the practicum education program, continuous and intensive involvement connects students with the social work profession. Familiarization with routines and procedures give the student a more solid identification and feeling of belonging with the practicum setting, other professionals, clients, and delivery systems. Each student has ongoing supervision and instruction from their practicum instructor and guidance and support from their faculty practicum liaison to address a variety of issues and needs such as progress, obstacles to growth, and observations. The faculty practicum liaison serves as a pivotal linkage between the social work program, practicum site, practicum instructor and student. Practicum instructors are carefully screened and selected in accordance with criteria, which comply with the standards of Council on Social Work Education. These relationships give the student consistent opportunities for feedback and input on how they can work more effectively as a professional.

Grading

The practicum education experience is closely monitored by both practicum instructors, faculty practicum liaisons and the Director of Practicum Education. Communication among the practicum director, faculty practicum liaisons/seminar professors, practicum instructors, and students is an integral part of Practicum Experience I (SWO 375), Practicum Experience II (SWO 450), and Practicum Experience III (SWO 451). Junior and senior practicum experiences are graded by the faculty practicum liaison based on the student's coursework, input from practicum instructors and written practicum

evaluations. **Given the concurrent nature of the junior and senior practicum experience (SWO 375 and SWO 395), (SWO 450 and SWO 495), and the senior seminar (SWO 451 and SWO 496), if a student does not pass one of the two concurrent courses in a semester, they must retake both the practicum and seminar classes.**

Scheduling Time for Practicum

Students are expected to complete a practicum education experience in an approved setting during the same semesters that they are registered for classes. This means that the student will need free blocks of time within their academic, personal, and employment schedule to provide for practicum education experience hours that coincide with hours when the practicum setting provides services. Transportation time to and from practicum settings vary with the distances and accessibility to freeways and public transportation. This travel time does not count towards practicum experience hours. Every attempt is made to find a practicum setting within an hour commute from the student's residence. Many practicum settings require the use of a car. It is beneficial for the student to secure a car for junior and/or senior year. If this is not feasible, every effort will be made to assign the student to a setting within walking distance to their residence or accessible to public transportation.

University and Site Requirements

Clearances, medical and other documentation

Students need to obtain child abuse and criminal record clearances prior to the start of their first practicum experience. All clearances will be completed after placements are fully confirmed and students will be entered into the CastleBranch portal to begin the clearances process as instituted by the university. A representative of the Office of Academic Contract Administration and Compliance Operations will contact students to complete next steps. If students do not complete the clearances process with CastleBranch, they will not be permitted to continue in the placement process for that semester. To be fully compliant, students must purchase:

1. a standard package that includes PATCH background check and PA child abuse background report,
2. A medical add-on package for certain placements that must be purchased and activated

An email will be shared from the compliance department communicating to each student where they are in the process as well as successful completion of their compliance.

The university also requires its students who are participating in a practicum education setting to comply with the requirements of the setting, including but not limited to, FBI fingerprint background check, physical examinations, vaccinations and health screening requirements for tuberculosis, hepatitis B and measles. **Proof of compliance must be presented prior to the start of the practicum education experience.**

Professional Liability Insurance

Students are required to carry social work liability (malpractice) insurance coverage in the amount of

\$1,000,000/3,000,000 continuously during the junior and senior practicum education experience. Students may join the [National Association of Social Workers](#) to receive liability insurance at a reduced rate. Students can also purchase insurance through other providers, such as [American Professional Agency](#),

Inc. Students should review any insurance policy carefully to understand the limits of coverage. Students need to have verification of their liability insurance readily available to provide their practicum setting and university while completing the clearances process. Liability insurance must be uploaded to the CastleBranch portal when requested as a part of the students compliance package.

Insurance related to driving clients

Students participating in practicum education experiences pursuant to their course of study may be required to transport clients at the practicum setting for which they are participating in practicum education experience. It is recommended that students transport clients in practicum setting vehicles. If a practicum setting vehicle is not available, however, and the student chooses to transport a client(s) in their personal vehicle it is mandatory that the student have adequate automobile insurance to cover any incidents that may occur during transportation of the practicum setting client. Therefore, students are encouraged to contact their insurers prior to the commencement of their practicum education experience to discuss their coverage and any questions that they have about using their personal vehicles to transport clients. If driving clients is a requirement of the practicum setting and the student does not want to assume the liability/risk, the student should contact their practicum director prior to the start of the practicum education experience so another practicum setting can be found.

PRACTICUM PLACEMENT PROCESS

Practicum education experiences are a significant part of student' preparation for professional social work practice. The placement process begins after students have completed required liberal arts foundation and social work courses. Prior to being placed in the practicum, students must be accepted into Candidacy, successfully completed the required pre-requisite courses, have a minimum GPA of 2.50, and have no outstanding or incomplete grades for social work courses.

Procedure for Placing Students with Practicum Education Settings

During the fall semester of junior year, the Director of Practicum Education meets with all eligible students to inform them of how the placement process will proceed. All matters concerning the process are discussed and student questions are answered as completely as possible.

Prior to placing students, the Director of Practicum Education and the faculty meet to discuss the learning needs of each student and the type of practicum education setting most suited to each student. Each student is required to complete and submit a practicum education application via the Exxat portal, which includes uploading their current resume by October 7th for junior year and February 10th for senior year. Students need to attend a meeting with the practicum director by December 1st for their junior year practicum placement and by March 6th for their senior year practicum placement. The information gathered from the practicum education application, resume, the meeting with the student, and faculty input are all used to determine which practicum settings to contact to explore the availability of practicum education experiences. The Director of Practicum Education contacts prospective practicum settings to find out if they are accepting students that semester or year.

Students are not to make the initial contact with potential practicum settings.

The department offers juniors and seniors a variety of opportunities in urban, suburban, and rural practicum education settings. Students are placed in a setting that will strengthen the student's practice skills and learning needs.

Below is a partial list of practicum settings used within the last five years:

Students have been placed with the following organizations to fulfill their practicum experience requirements:

Juvenile Probation and Parole Resources for Human Development

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|---|--|
| Delaware County Family Services | Coatesville Treatment Center |
| Chester Co. Children, Youth and Families | Values into Action |
| Chester County Adult Probation and Parole | Habitat for Humanity |
| Friends Association | Philadelphia County District Attorney's Office |
| The Salvation Army | Red Cross House |
| Children's Hospital of Philadelphia | ReMed Recovery Care Centers |
| Crime Victims of Chester County | One Bright Ray Charter School |
| Fair Acres | Chester County OIC |
| Gaudenzia | Kendall-Crosslands |
| West Philadelphia Senior Center | Pro-ACT |
| Renaissance HCR | Council of SEPA |
| Episcopal Community Services | Housing Authority of Chester County |

Students can review some practicum settings descriptions posted on the BSW Department D2L page.

We encourage students to view the junior practicum education experience as an opportunity to take on a challenge by accepting a practicum of practice that they would not ordinarily choose because of fear or unfamiliarity with a particular client population. This is a requirement for students to become generalist practitioners, i.e., being able to work with any client population. Dealing with such a challenge stimulates growth and expands the horizons of students. For example, students who resist educational experiences at behavioral health settings are often surprised to learn that they like working in this area, once they have experienced it.

Once a potential practicum setting is identified, the Director of Practicum Education notifies the student. *Within one week of being matched, the student must directly contact the site supervisor or interviewing team to schedule an interview.* If the student fails to contact the practicum setting representative within the designated week, the student risks not being able to interview at the setting and may not be placed with a different practicum setting.

In preparation of the interview, the student should review the perspective practicum settings' website and gather some basic information about the population served and services provided. The student is expected to dress professionally for the interview. They are encouraged to bring a resume and a list of questions they want to discuss so the interview can be a two-way process, i.e., similar to a job interview. Both students and practicum instructors are encouraged to be frank and open in discussing all aspects of the practicum education experience. If accepted, after the interview, students should send an email thanking the prospective practicum instructor for their time and confirming their acceptance of the practicum education experience. Students are then expected to confirm their acceptance by the placement site with the Director of Practicum Education. Most practicum education experiences are finalized at the first interview; however, in some cases students return for a second interview. *Securing an interview is not a guarantee of placement. Students can be denied practicum opportunity after an interview.* If there are questions or concerns by the student or the potential practicum instructor, the Director of Practicum Education should be contacted.

If after the interview, the student has concerns about the practicum setting and/or would like to be considered for a different practicum setting, the student must submit those concerns and/or request in writing to the Director of Practicum Education for further discussion. *Since students are expected to go to urban, rural, and suburban placements, refusal of settings based on location is not acceptable nor meets the standards of NASW.*

Students are expected to complete their interview and finalize the practicum education experience by the conclusion of the fall semester for junior year and by the conclusion of the spring semester for a senior year experience. *If the practicum education experience is not finalized by the stated date and it is determined to be the result of a lack of follow through by the student, the student may not be able to enter practicum education during the next semester.* Instead, the student will need to meet with the Director of Practicum Education and/or the Chair/Director of the Undergraduate Social Work Department to discuss an alternative plan for the student. Similarly, *if a student is turned down by or turns down more than one potential practicum education site, the student needs to meet with the Practicum Director to assess whether the student can move forward into the practicum education experience.*

All students who are entering practicum education settings need to obtain a child abuse history certification and criminal record check prior to starting their practicum education experience. Many practicum settings have additional on-boarding requirements. These must be completed by January 10th for junior practicum placements by July 15th for senior practicum education experiences.

Once the practicum education setting is finalized, a notice is sent to the practicum instructor informing them of the dates for the orientation and the start of the practicum education experience. At the orientation, students and their practicum instructors are encouraged to tend to any last-minute changes and to discuss expectations or concerns about the beginning process. *Typically, orientation is the first Tuesday morning during the first week of the Fall and Spring semesters.*

When the Director of Practicum Education confirms a student practicum setting, students will receive a notification within the Exxat system which is also where the placement application, timesheets, and ongoing communication during the semester will be carried out. The student will be required to view their setting information, make sure their placement site is correct, and complete the student attestation form. All students need to complete their Student Attestation Form prior to entering practicum.

Statement on Dual Relationships within Practicum Settings

We recognize that many students are driven to social work out of the passions of their personal experience. For example, persons living with mental illness may have an ultimate desire to work professionally in service to others living with mental illnesses. At WCU, we value the power of lived experience. However, as social work educators, we are ultimately dedicated to imparting strong ethical practice habits and providing an educational experience of excellence. Therefore, we reserve the right to deny requests by students for practicum setting experiences where they may be at risk for harmful dual relationships in which roles of student and consumer of services may be blurred or where there is the likelihood that a student's lived experiences will negatively impact their ability to meet the expectations of practicum settings.

Evening and Weekend Practicum Settings

When a student demonstrates a need for an evening or weekend practicum, the Undergraduate Department of Social Work will attempt to accommodate the need. However, due to the difficulty in finding appropriate social work learning experiences and supervision during the evening and weekend hours, the Undergraduate Social Work Department does not guarantee students an evening or weekend practicum setting. In addition, *if a student is placed in an evening or weekend practicum setting, they must be available a minimum of four (4) hours each week during the regular working hours of the practicum setting* (this is not in addition to their other hours, but a portion of the required weekly hours).

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF PRACTICUM SETTINGS AND PRACTICUM INSTRUCTORS

Selection of Practicum Settings

- Clearly defined services, the goals of which are compatible with the values of the social work profession.
- Willingness to provide for the duration of the practicum education experience a qualified practicum instructor with adequate time to carry out the educational task.

- Provision of appropriate learning experiences for students, which will enhance the student's education in generalist social work practice with diverse populations and allow the student to demonstrate the nine core competencies established by the Council on Social Work Education.

Selection of Practicum Instructor

The practicum instructor for a senior level student must hold a BSW or MSW degree from a school accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) plus two years of post BSW/MSW social work experience. There are few exceptions made when the practicum instructor has a related degree plus appropriate work experience. When this exception is made for senior level practicum experiences, the student will be required to participate in a weekly supplemental supervision group or individual meeting facilitated by a MSW level practitioner. Practicum instructors must also meet the other requirements listed below:

- Committed to the education of social work students.
- Open to new approaches in the practicum of social work.
- Able to teach and use the generalist intervention model with multiple size systems.
- Able to assign direct service responsibility in accord with the student's learning needs early in the practicum education experience.
- Committed to providing a minimum of one hour of uninterrupted educational supervision each week.
- Willing to provide regular feedback to the student and the faculty practicum liaison.
- Able to attend orientation and trainings.
- Sensitive to the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Practices and teaches from a strength's perspective.
- Adherences to social work values and ethics.

Using Work Site for Practicum: "Employment-based Practicum"

If a student is currently working in the social services practicum, *one* of their two practicum settings can be employment-based. Students must complete a proposal and submit it to the Director of Practicum Education for approval. An employment-based practicum setting will be considered only when:

- The student maintains a minimum of a 3.0 GPA in social work courses, the student has been approved by their advisor and has no documented professional behavior concerns.
- The student prepares an [Employment-Based Practicum Education Plan](#) explaining how the experience will work in accord with the conditions below and secures approval of the Director of Practicum Education.

- The student's employer ensures release time for courses and practicum instruction and the student can complete the required number of hours for practicum education courses.
- The practicum setting can provide practicum education experiences that meet the Undergraduate Social Work Department's educational requirements.
- There is an identified practicum instructor who is not the employment supervisor and would not be involved in a dual role with the student, as required by CSWE.

For senior year, employment-based practicum placements may be approved if the student as part of their employment is performing duties that meet the learning objectives for the practicum education course. the workplace can offer the student 1) eight hours of new learning that will meet the student's learning needs; 2) a practicum instructor who has a BSW/MSW, is qualified to assist the student with integrating social work theory with practice and is someone other than the student's work supervisor; and 3) the workplace signs an affiliation agreement with West Chester University.

For junior year, employment-based practicum placements may be approved if the workplace is able to offer the student: 1) opportunities that will allow the student to use a social work framework to perform their work assignments; (2) a practicum instructor who has a BSW/MSW or related degree, is qualified to assist the student with integrating social work theory with practice, and is someone other than the student's work supervisor and

(3) the workplace signs an affiliation agreement with West Chester University.

To maintain the integrity of the student/practicum instructor relationship, attention must be given to avoid a dual relationship. For example, the student/practicum instructor should not consider themselves to be friends, nor should they socialize outside of the work environment.

To be considered for an employment-based practicum placement, the student must complete a minimum of three months of employment at the site and be committed to maintaining employment until the practicum has ended. *If the student's employment is ended during the employment-based practicum placement, the student needs to meet with the Director of Practicum Education to explain the termination of employment. Depending on the circumstances, the Undergraduate Social Work Department will make a determination of whether to place the student in another practicum education setting.*

The student completes, in consultation with the employer who is also offering a practicum education experience, an [Employment-Based Practicum Education Plan](#). Once complete, the plan is submitted to the Director of Practicum Education for review and approval. The proposed plan must be submitted to and approved by the Director of Practicum Education at least four weeks prior to the start of the semester. If the plan is not approved, the Director of Practicum Education will meet with the student to discuss the reasons for non-approval and alternative options for the practicum education experiences.

SUPERVISORY PROCESS

Practicum Instructor's Preparation for the Arrival of the Student

The quality of the beginning experiences in the practicum setting is vital. It is an overwhelming experience for a student to begin practicum. Students have questions about their role and function within the organization including whether staff and clients will accept them. The following suggestions will help the student deal with the new situation:

- Prepare for student's arrival by providing workspace, list of staff and programs, etc.
- Inform other staff of the student's arrival date. Let them know what the student's role and responsibilities will encompass.
- Clarify hours of work and personnel policies affecting students, including required training, paperwork, and dress code.
- Plan for the first day with introductions, and other common concerns such as where rest rooms are, and where one eats lunch, etc.
- Set aside an hour to talk with the student and discuss the underlying fears that the student might have.
- Provide orientation to the practicum setting such as the mission and function of the unit.
- Identify a person or persons to whom the student can direct immediate questions if you are not available
- Clarify preferred methods of communication for when the student will be absent or needs immediate assistance
- Review the practicum evaluation and become familiar with the competencies which the student will need to demonstrate during the practicum education experience. Identify a case or case related activity to assign the student on the first day.
- Avoid extensive reading of an organization manual until the reading applies to a particular case. Partializing this process with a case helps the student learn this important knowledge.
- Set a scheduled time with the student for your supervisory meeting each week and clarify with the student when you would like the student to provide you with the agenda for supervision. The student needs to know that time will be set aside for serious reflection on where the student and the practicum instructor are in the learning process.

The student must prepare an agenda which includes their questions and concerns, as well as the theory and skills they have used in their practice. The student must provide the agenda in advance of the supervisory meeting. **The agenda is then used to structure the supervisory session.**

Make every attempt to be available on the student's first day of practicum. If for some reason, you are not able to be available, please arrange for someone to welcome and orient the student.

Evaluating Student Learning Needs

Early in the supervisory process try to identify the student's learning style. This is best accomplished by obtaining the student's perspective of their learning style, observing the student's interactions with cases and/or using a learning style tool. It is important to remember that some students learn best through doing and then reading the theory while other students learn best through reading the theory and then doing. When assigning initial responsibilities to the student, it is helpful to keep in mind the student's preferred learning style and the developmental skills of the student.

Evolving Learning Contract

Early in the first semester, the student, with practicum instructor input, is expected to develop a learning contract. The learning contract should support the development of the competencies necessary for generalist practice and professional and personal growth. The goals and activities for the student's practicum experience should be specific and reflect the practice behaviors and competencies on which the student will be evaluated. The activities listed are to assist the student with meeting the goals. Students and practicum instructors are encouraged to use the final evaluation tool to help guide them in creating the learning goals and activities. The learning contract should be reviewed and revised as needed.

Preparing the Student to Meet with Client Systems

Having learned a theoretical base in the classroom one might expect that the student would know what to do at the beginning and feel prepared to work with client systems, but this is almost never the case. Students often feel that they ought to know everything about the practicum and its services and be able to answer any question. This has the effect of paralyzing even the strongest students. Early assignment of a case and careful preparation by the practicum instructor will help alleviate some of this feeling and lead the student to discuss the key practice questions raised during an interaction with a client system. This preparation will include:

- Clarification of the function of the practicum site and the student's role in it.
- Providing background on the client or client system.
- Discussion of the practicum site's program and any policies that may apply in this type of situation.
- Discussion of how the client might feel given the nature of the service and the point of origin (preliminary tuning-in).
- Helping the student reach a clear understanding of the purpose of the contact (clarifying role and function).
- Discussion of possible client reactions and how the student might choose to respond (anticipatory empathy).
- Assuring the student that they do not need to know all the answers to questions, but that the student can provide the appropriate answers at the next client meeting (follow-up).

Supervisory Agendas

To keep the supervisory session focused on the student's learning, the student is expected to complete a supervisory agenda each week. The student should give the agenda to their practicum instructor prior to their scheduled supervisory meeting. This gives the practicum instructor time to review the agenda and complete any preparatory work prior to the meeting. It is expected that the student demonstrates a range of social work

values, knowledge, skills, and depth of thought on the agendas. Therefore, the student should not be asking the same questions, using the same theories, etc. each week on their agendas.

Learning Environment

For a productive relationship to emerge between the student and practicum instructor, a safe comfortable learning environment needs to be established. Attention to the following will foster this relationship:

- Keeping to a regularly scheduled supervision time with interruptions held to a minimum.
- Demonstrating by your comments that you have thought about the items on the agenda.
- Recognizing positive aspects of the approach taken by the student.
- Leaving room for the student to suggest what might have been done differently at points where obstacles occurred or where opportunities were missed.
- Identifying skills or understanding called for building a bridge between theory and practice.
- Conveying an attitude of it being okay to discuss personal reactions but limited to reactions that inhibit or enhance professional activity. If personal issues are arising that are beyond the role of a practicum instructor, encourage the student to seek professional support.
- Practicum instructors are asked to focus on helping students to achieve the goals stated in their learning plan, and to utilize the faculty practicum liaison to address issues that may be detrimental to cultivating the learning process. Discussing alternative ways of proceeding at the next student-client contact.
- Helping the student connect classroom learning with practicum experiences by making use of the problem-solving process and looking at skills i.e., anticipatory empathy, dealing with feelings, contracting, and exploration skills. This helps the student make the vital connection between classroom learning and the real world of client, practicum, and service network.
- Encouraging the students' honest reactions to the conference with you. Reaching for honest feedback will help the student learn to utilize this skill with clients (parallel process).

After several student-client contacts have occurred, the major learning goals and practice behaviors that need to be strengthened should be clear to both student and practicum instructor. Assignments should be made with these goals and practice behaviors in mind. With support and encouragement

from you, most students will actively engage in working on these goals and practice behaviors. However, it needs to be kept in mind that what is easy for one student may be exceedingly difficult for another.

Liaison Activity

During the practicum experience, the faculty practicum liaison will contact the practicum instructor at least twice and conduct an in-person or virtual visit each site at least once per semester usually around the time of the mid-semester review to obtain a close view of the practicum education process and provide consultation on the needs of the student. If needed, the faculty practicum liaison will visit more often to assure compliance with the learning objectives. Students are encouraged to save a copy of the student's process recordings, learning contract, supervisory agendas, and practicum monthly reports. Practicum instructors are also encouraged to keep notes of interactions with the student and copies of the student's paperwork. The faculty practicum liaison and practicum instructor review these to be sure relevant learning is taking place. The assigned faculty practicum liaison provides feedback to the student and practicum instructor.

This is a collaborative process; The faculty practicum liaison keeps the practicum instructor informed about the social work curriculum and suggests many ways to incorporate academic content into the practicum experience and feedback from the practicum instructor is encouraged. When a separate seminar professor and faculty practicum liaison are assigned, they are encouraged to meet at least once a semester and more often, if needed, to discuss the student's progress and share perceptions to facilitate the student's learning process in the practicum. This facilitates more integration between the senior seminar and practicum experience.

Evaluation

Practicum instructors are encouraged to provide regular feedback to students from the beginning to the end of placement. This feedback should clarify for the student what has been learned and what needs to be learned. The mid-semester review provides an opportunity for the practicum instructor and student to discuss the student's progress as well as possible areas of focused improvement for the second half of the semester. The end-of-the semester evaluation is meant to provide the student with a detailed written evaluation indicating when competencies have been mastered and where effort needs to be made. The evaluations often mark a turning point for both practicum instructors and students. Seeing it in written form helps students become focused on crucial learning issues and often facilitates growth. For this reason, it is important to evaluate the student realistically.

Evaluation needs to be based on what seems to be a reasonable expectation for students at their level (i.e. the students understanding of the area of competency for junior year, application of the area of competency in the 1st semester of senior year or achieving beginning level competency in the 2nd semester of senior year) and not in comparison with regular employees or former students. It is of the utmost importance that the evaluator is as objective as possible and not base the evaluation on one's liking and appreciation of student's efforts in the practicum. For the protection of current and future clients, students need to meet the competencies established by the social work profession. Because the evaluation process should be occurring throughout the practicum experience, there should be

no surprises on the written evaluations.

The Undergraduate Social Work Program, specifically the faculty practicum liaison, is responsible for assigning a final grade. Final grades are based on the two written evaluations, the faculty practicum liaison's visit(s) to the practicum site, the faculty practicum liaison's knowledge of the student's performance in the practicum and the student's performance in the practicum class, including written classroom assignments.

Ending Process with the Student

Students may start to experience increased anxiety toward the end of their practicum education experience.

Concerns often begin to be felt about whether they will accomplish everything in the time that is left and there is an increased awareness of the impending ending. At the same time, they are also often focused on planning for their personal next steps. It is important to begin identifying with the student the important ending dates. It is also important to respond directly to indirect cues indicating anxiety or concerns as the ending of the practicum education experience becomes more of a reality.

The dynamics of the ending of the practicum instructor-student relationship are similar to those of ending with clients. The parallel nature of these processes provides the practicum instructor with an opportunity to demonstrate the same skills that the student needs to use with clients. Common themes that occur in facing endings are a denial of the feelings associated with the student's leaving; lack of discussion of the ending event; a reluctance to say good-bye; a sense of urgency about unfinished business. The practicum instructor should devote careful attention to the student's ending experiences to help the student learn the skills needed to end with clients. Calling attention to the dynamics of the ending as they emerge is important. It is especially important for the practicum instructor to share with the student about their own feelings about the student's departure. By identifying what is happening in the supervisory relationship and discussing the parallel process that occurs with clients, the student is assisted in developing the ability to deal with the often-neglected termination phase of practice. Since it is hard to express ending feelings, the practicum instructor should take the first step in discussing feeling about ending.

WHEN THE PROCESS IS NOT WORKING

When a student's learning is at an impasse, the faculty practicum liaison should be contacted immediately after discussion with the student. Joint efforts between the faculty practicum liaison and the practicum instructor often succeed where one-on-one efforts have not been able to help the student. The practicum instructor, faculty practicum liaison and student are encouraged to create an appropriate learning plan with an agreed upon period for achieving the goals. If the student fails to meet the established plan within the timeframe that was establish, the

student may be removed from practicum. Students may also be removed from practicum for

any of the following reasons:

1. A serious breach of the practicum experience agreement.
2. Physical, mental, or academic incapacity that seriously interferes with the work required in the practicum education setting.
3. Intentional breach of social work ethics as detailed in the NASW Code of Ethics.

In these cases, the procedure for removing a student from the practicum setting for unprofessional behavior may be undertaken.

Students may also be removed from a practicum education experience if the practicum setting, or the practicum instructor is unable to provide the student with the type of learning experiences needed to fulfill the curriculum requirements. Prior to the removal of the student, every attempt will be made to create learning experiences that will allow the student to remain in the practicum setting. In such cases, the student will be placed in another practicum setting. If a student is replaced, they may be required to complete additional practicum hours above the required minimum to allow the student to be oriented to a new site.

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Director of Practicum Education:

Responsibilities are to:

- Identify, develop, and evaluate practicum education opportunities in relation to the Undergraduate Social Work Department's mission and learning objectives.
- Place students with a practicum setting that is appropriate to their learning needs and the curricular requirements.
- Manage the database that tracks BSW/MSW practicum settings. Facilitating the updating of the practicum education database on practicum settings; including current affiliation agreements and practicum instructor applications.
- Support the educational experience by coordinating practicum orientations prior to the start of the practicum education experience, providing on-going trainings for the practicum instructors, meeting regularly with the practicum liaisons, and encouraging on-going communication between the students, practicum instructors, practicum liaisons and the Undergraduate Social Work Program.
- Provide support to students at the beginning and throughout the practicum education experience.
- Educate practicum instructors and practicum settings on the mission, goals, and learning objectives of the Undergraduate Social Work Department. Also, educate practicum instructors and practicum setting personnel on the core competencies established by CSWE. Inform practicum instructors and practicum setting personnel of the academic year calendar and due dates for assignments and evaluations.
- Invite practicum instructors' feedback on curriculum development - especially regarding practicum curriculum.
- Develop and evaluate changes in practicum curriculum with regard to content, policy, procedures,

evaluation procedures, and training for practicum instructors.

- Consult with faculty and practicum instructors to ensure that Undergraduate Social Work Department's program objectives are dealt with experientially in the practicum experience.
- Consult with faculty practicum liaisons, practicum instructors, and students if issues arise at the practicum setting that the parties are having difficulty resolving and/or changing practicum settings becomes necessary.

Practicum Instructor

Responsibilities are to:

- Assist the student in translating classroom learning into beginning level generalist social work practice. Provide the student with opportunities to develop competence in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and larger societal systems.
- Establish individual learning goals within the framework of overall social work competencies, encourage full engagement of the student in their own learning, assign direct service tasks, and utilize

the weekly practicum instruction conference to help the student integrate classroom and experiential learning.

- Communicate with the faculty practicum liaison to facilitate student learning. The faculty practicum liaison needs to be kept aware of movement toward growth and mastery as well as impediments. It is important that the faculty practicum liaison is notified as soon as a problem is identified so there is enough time for a corrective plan to be implemented.
- Explore each student's approach to learning. Each student begins the practicum experience at a different place given one's own personality, life experiences, and previous exposure to helping. It is highly desirable that the practicum instructor explore with the student how they learn best. For example, one student may require intensive discussion of a situation before meeting a client; another may benefit from a discussion after seeing the client.
- Work with the faculty practicum liaison in looking at the student's learning opportunities to facilitate the integration of classroom learning and practicum experiential learning. The Undergraduate Social Work Program utilizes resources collaboratively, (i.e., the practicum instructors, the Director of Practicum Education, and faculty) to help the student through the difficult learning process. Process recordings are used in the classroom and can be used in the practicum setting to help reveal the student's strengths, value conflicts, blind spots, gaps in knowledge and skills as well as afford an excellent springboard to looking at larger agency, community, and macro policy issues.
- Set a schedule for one hour of structured weekly supervisory time with the student. This should be a safe learning climate that is structured and clear about what is expected of the student in preparation for and during the supervisory conference. Throughout the supervision process, it is important to encourage and support students particularly when they are struggling with complex issues. Provide complete orientation to the practicum site and the community served.
- Provide suitable space, access to a telephone/computer, supplies, and policy/procedure

- manuals, etc. as necessary for the student to fulfill their role and assigned tasks
- Provide assignments from the beginning commensurate with students' readiness to take responsibility for helping clients (keep student challenged but not overwhelmed). Design assignments to meet learning needs. It is important to give students assignments from the beginning as it reduces student anxiety about working directly with clients as well as client related assignments are necessary for the student to complete other coursework.
- Model interactions with the student in ways that demonstrate skills and attitudes needed by the student in relating to clients.
- Involve the student in continuous evaluation of performance using the learning contract, agendas and the two formal evaluations.
- Provide the faculty practicum liaison with the completed mid-semester reviews and end-of-the- semester written evaluations.
- Attend orientation and training sessions as required.
- Maintain student confidentiality.

Faculty Practicum Liaison

The faculty practicum liaison is the primary linkage between the Undergraduate Social Work Department and the practicum site and is the faculty member who is responsible for the student's educational progress in the practicum. This is the third person in the student/practicum triad (consisting of the student, practicum instructor and faculty practicum liaison), who supports student learning in the practicum.

Responsibilities are to:

- Review and monitor student learning in the practicum and help integrate the achievement of the knowledge, skills, and values of the nine core competencies in the practicum. This is primarily achieved through calling/emailing the practicum instructor at least twice a semester and visiting the agency at least once per semester to meet with the practicum instructor and student. At practicum visits, the learning contract is reviewed, and special learning needs are addressed. The faculty practicum liaison may make recommendations concerning revisions to the plan and educational strategies and additional assignments that will address the learning needs of the student.
- Teach the practicum class, maintain records, and assign grades.
- Provide an ongoing liaison relationship with the practicum instructor and practicum site; this includes providing information about the curriculum content and policies of the Undergraduate Social Work Department. In addition, the faculty practicum liaison is always available to the practicum instructor to answer questions regarding student issues, learning needs or crises by phone or if necessary, by making a visit in a timely fashion to the practicum setting.
- Maintain ongoing two-way communication regarding the student's learning needs between the student's practicum instructor and seminar professor (for the senior year, the seminar professor serves as the practicum liaison).
- Coordinate efforts and mediate differences between the student and practicum instructor or practice site regarding learning needs, student behavior, assignments, hours, values and ethics and other issues. *After* the student has attempted to work through any significant differences directly with the practicum instructor, without sufficient success, the faculty practicum liaison may be approached for help toward problem resolution. This is the first level of the practicum instruction grievance

procedure.

- Review mid-semester and end of semester practicum evaluations, making educational recommendations, and assigning a grade. The grade is based on the practicum instructor's evaluation, the faculty liaison's practicum visits, the student's assignments for practicum class and the faculty practicum liaison's ongoing knowledge of student progress in the practicum.
- Clarify program or practicum policies, procedures, events, and curriculum issues for students, either individually or in a group setting, as they relate to the practicum.
- Participate in scheduled practicum liaison meetings which will be addressing programmatic and practicum issues, addressing issues related to the practicum course, and reviewing current practicum sites as well as identifying new practicum sites.
- Provide feedback on practicum sites and practicum instructors to the practicum director so an assessment of the practicum experience can be made.

- **The Student**

- The student applies for a practicum experience that will meet their learning needs. This is accomplished by working closely with the Director of Practicum. Once all parties agree on a practicum site, it is the responsibility of the student to stay in touch with the practicum instructor to keep pace with any change in the site affecting the practicum and to notify the Director of Practicum Education and practicum instructor of any changes in the student's situation that is likely to affect the placement.
- Responsibilities are to:
 - Meet all requirements of the Undergraduate Social Work Department and the practicum site. This includes but is not limited to signing an attestation form.
 - Students need to complete the *minimum of number of hours/semesters* at their practicum. Students cannot start or end their practicum early.
 - Both in their practicum and the practicum class, students need to complete all assigned tasks in the specified time.
 - Notify both the practicum instructor and faculty practicum liaison promptly via a phone call of any anticipated lateness or absence due to illness or emergency. In the event of inclement weather, students are expected to attend their practicum, if the site is open. If the student does not feel that they can safely travel, the student should notify their practicum instructor and faculty practicum liaison. Students should not be taking time off from their practicum to do school related activities, including writing papers, unless they have prior approval from their practicum liaison and practicum instructor. Whenever a student is absent from their practicum site, whether it is due to illness, a late start, or inclement weather, etc., the student needs to arrange for their work to be covered during the absence. Lost time must be made up within a reasonable time. Both the practicum instructor and faculty practicum liaison need to be notified of arrangements for making up the lost time.
 - Arrange with the practicum instructor for coverage of the student's caseload while out for school breaks. Notify the practicum instructor and the faculty practicum liaison if the student plans to continue at the practicum during vacation periods. Students are required to submit to

their faculty practicum liaison a signed Request for Practicum Extension form (see appendix), if time is spent in the practicum during vacation periods when the University is officially closed.

- Arrange and be responsible for their own transportation to the practicum site whether it is by public transportation, own car, or by sharing the expenses in a carpool. Travel time to and from the practicum site is not included in the required practicum hours for the course.
- Students participating in practicum experiences pursuant to their course of study may be required to transport clients to the agency for which they are participating in practicum experience. It is recommended that students transport agency clients in agency vehicles. If an agency vehicle is not available, however, and the student chooses to transport an agency client in their personal vehicle it is mandatory that the student have adequate automobile insurance to cover any incidents that may occur during transportation of the agency client. Therefore, students are encouraged to contact their insurers prior to the commencement of their practicum to discuss their coverage and any questions that they have about using their personal vehicles to transport clients.
- Use only an agency email, phone, and phone number to communicate with clients. If students need to communicate with clients using their own phone, they should use a third-party phone number like Google Voice.
- Discuss with the practicum instructor and the faculty practicum liaison any policy, procedure, expectation, or requirement that is unclear, or which raises questions. In a timely manner, the student should also make them aware of any concern or problem which affects the placements so that it can be resolved.
- Participate actively in the supervisory conference by preparing any requested written work including an agenda at least one day prior to the scheduled conference.
- Participate, where appropriate and permitted, in practicum meetings and activities.
- Engage actively in the evaluation process by a continual self-evaluation and by asking for feedback from the practicum instructor.
- Assume professional responsibility for the confidential nature of the case record by disguising any case material used in class. Such material must be approved by the supervisor before leaving the agency to ensure confidentiality. Confidentiality extends as well to any contact with fellow workers, clientele, or the community.
- Participate in the practicum class and meetings.
- The first student to read this far in the handbook will receive a complimentary gift card

STUDENT ADVISEMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

Advising

Students are made aware of the advisement process in the following ways:

- 1) The Department Advising Policy is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook, which is distributed to each student via email link.
- 2) Students can obtain information about who their advisor is by visiting their *My WCU* site
- 3) The advising process and Assigned Faculty List are discussed with students during Summer Orientation or, in the case of transfer students, during the initial transfer meeting with the Program Director/Chair.

The policy of West Chester University is to encourage incoming undergraduate students to

declare a major as they enter their first year. Advising by the major department therefore begins and is required as soon as the prospective student expresses an interest in the Undergraduate Social Work Department. The undergraduate social work faculty at West Chester University mentors and advises students regarding the curriculum and the social work profession from the recruitment phase to graduation or the departure of the student from the Social Work Program. The social work faculty advisors all have their Master's in Social Work; many have their Ph.D., all have at least two years of practice experience in various practicums of practice. Only social work faculty advise students in the social work majors.

Periodic training during regular faculty meetings and during the spring retreat is utilized to prepare faculty members for advisement duties. Faculty members also act as resources and serve as mentors. Changes in Departmental policy is reviewed by the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee (CAPC) of the University. This ensures consistency with the University policy on advising and other curriculum issues. CAPC then recommends changes through the appropriate channels.

The first phase of the advisement process begins with the Admissions Office of the University. The Admissions Office of the University has two Admissions Counselors who work solely with the Undergraduate Program Director. One of the Admissions counselors admits new social work first-year student only, and the other counselor admits transfer and readmit social work students.

The social work advisor's role is to serve as mentor, advocate, and as a faculty resource person, and to oversee the student's schedule. The advisor also acts as "gatekeeper," assuring compliance with the standards of the Council on Social Work Education. Of utmost importance is the awareness of the advisor to the growing ambivalence on the part of some students towards the stated major. The advisor encourages questioning from students to discuss alternatives if needed, and all options for the student.

For seniors to be cleared for graduation by the Chair of the Department, they must meet with their faculty advisor during their final semester (for the majority of students, this is the spring semester of the senior year). Students should periodically check and review their degree progress throughout their educational career. The online degree progress is updated by the University registrar's office and is the official record of the student's fulfillment of degree requirements. We take advising very seriously in our department, yet in accordance with university policy, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure that they fulfill their degree requirements.

It is inappropriate and outside the function of any faculty member to give sustained and continuous counseling to the student. If the student should need counseling services, a faculty member may only become involved to the extent of helping a student to a referral.

Undergraduate Social Work Faculty and Advisors

| Faculty Member | Email | Contact number |
|------------------------|--|----------------|
| Dr. Pablo Arriaza | parriaza@wcupa.edu | 610-436-2785 |
| Dr. Claire Dente | cdente@wcupa.edu | 610-436-3252 |
| Dr. Michele Belliveau | mbelliveau@wcupa.edu | 610-436-3469 |
| Dr. Hadih Deedat | hdeedat@wcupa.edu | 610-436-2884 |
| Dr. Travis Ingersoll | tingersoll@wcupa.edu | 610-436-2767 |
| Dr. Meg Panichelli | mpanichelli@wcupa.edu | 610-738-0501 |
| Dr. Brie Radis | bradis@wcupa.edu | 610-436-2883 |
| Dr. Susan Wysor Nguema | swysornguema@wcupa.edu | 610-436-2527 |
| Dr. Greg Tully | gtully@wcupa.edu | 610-436-2767 |
| Dr. Ebonnie Vazquez | evazquez@wcupa.edu | 610-436-2885 |

First semester transfers and change of majors see the Chair/Undergraduate Program Director. When possible, each student is assigned an advisor in the first year and an advisor follows the student until the student departs the program. To assure continuity of social work courses advising meetings are required by the social work program. The student is expected to meet with the advisor each semester prior to pre-registration to review credits, courses, grades, as well as future educational and professional plans. If personal problems develop that would interfere with a student's learning, the student is expected to immediately see their advisor. It is not necessary that details of a personal problem be revealed, but it is important that the advisor be aware that a student is having problems so that all instructors can be supportive. If a student has revealed details of the problem to the advisor but wishes not to have these facts made known to the other faculty, confidentiality regarding the nature of the problem is maintained.

Open Houses and Orientation

In the fall the University hosts two Open Houses for all prospective students who desire to enter the University. The purpose is for the applicant and their parents to have a tour of the Institution and receive an academic overview of the intended major. At that time the social work faculty and students from the social work major give a formal presentation describing the role of the social worker, the program, and the needed commitment from the student to matriculate in the major. The applicant is given a packet of information highlighting the information from the presentation. The applicant is also encouraged to visit and sit in on classes before they commit to the social work program.

In the spring, accepted students are hosted at the Institution once again to get a second look at the intended major. The faculty and students from the program talk with applicants and their parents. The focus is on the benefits of attending a social work program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The fact that the generalist model is taught, the sequencing of courses, the liberal arts perspective, and the need for close communication with the social work advisor are all emphasized.

The Undergraduate Social Work Program Director designs a prototype for each student before they enter the Institution. This ensures the sequencing of courses for the new students in the academic discipline and for compliance with the standards of the Council on Social Work Education.

In the summer, all new first-year students and new admits to the Institution attend a two-day orientation. Students spend time with the academic discipline and are given a Student Handbook, the courses that have been selected on the prototype, as well as any additional selections if the student has space in the schedule. The student is assigned an academic advisor who will work with them as they progress through the Undergraduate Program in Social Work.

In the fall semester, the Undergraduate Social Work Program hosts a "formal welcome" with the Social Work Club officers for newly admitted social work students and returning students. The advising procedure is again highlighted as well as other important procedures for social work students. The student is also requested to make an appointment with the advisor for fall and spring semester scheduling. All students who transfer internal and external must meet with the department chair first to review social work sequence of courses. If a student has any questions regarding the sequence of social work courses, they should make an immediate appointment with the advisor or chairperson before the drop/add period each semester. If a student cannot get a required social work course due to the course being closed, please see the chairperson as soon as possible in order to obtain the required social work course. Majors are guaranteed placement in a required social work course, though the desired section cannot always be guaranteed.

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STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

There are a number of ways for students to be actively involved in the life of the Social Work Program.

Below is a list of ongoing student organizations and activities. Students can also refer to the University Catalog and the *Ram's Eye View* for additional opportunities. Social work students are expected to participate and lead social work activities each year.

Social Work Club

The Social Work Club (SWC) is a registered student organization. The Social Work Club, open to all college students, exists to enhance the professional development of students of the social work profession. Faculty advisors meet regularly with the SWC; however, the organization is run for the students and by the students (see SWC constitution and by-laws). The primary objective of the SWC is to enhance the learning experience of the Social Work student while they attend the University. The SWC provides both educational and social networking opportunities to the students, the chance to become involved in concrete service projects, and the opportunity to develop both group and leadership skills. In addition, the SWC affords a support system for students and an opportunity to address Departmental and University-wide concerns. Furthermore, the Social Work Club provides students with information relating to their practicum such as current information and literature on organizations, agencies, and other related areas. The exact goals and purposes of the Social Work Club for the current year are determined by the present year's officers, class representatives, and the active members. Officers are elected by the student body in scheduled elections. The SWC has its own budget.

The SWC has carried out several educational projects, which have involved the University as well as provided a service to the surrounding neighborhoods. These include the bi-annual rose sale, clothing, food drives, volunteering at community centers, and working with families. Social Work Club officers participate in student governance in the University at large through the Student Government Association and thus have opportunities for the development of leadership skills, for conference attendance, and for enrichment of their entire learning experience at WCU. Student membership in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) provides similar opportunities at a much broader level. Students involved in NASW interact with experienced professional social workers and participate in city and regional projects. In addition, SWC has sponsored several fundraisers including the bi-annual rose sale to allow many students to attend national conferences, which enabled them to develop contacts, skills, and awareness far beyond the classroom or local community level.

Numerous activities and projects have been undertaken and/or sponsored by SWC such as:

- **Conferences:** Social Work Students attend conferences, seminars, and local, state, and national meetings.

- **Community Projects**
- **Campus Projects**
- **Recreational activities for students**

Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW)

This West Chester University Club is a member of the National Association of Black Social Workers.

ABSW is committed to enhancing the quality of life and empowering people of black community through advocacy, human services delivery, and research. The programs and activities work to ensure that people of African ancestry will live free from racial domination, economic exploitation, and cultural oppression.

NABSW's vision is guided by the Principles of the Nguzo Saba, which are Unity, Self-determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith, and the Seven Cardinal Virtues of Ma'at, which are Right, Truth, Justice, Order, Reciprocity, Balance, and Harmony.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

The Social Work Honor Society, Phi Alpha, is a national organization dedicated academic excellence and leadership in social work. The WCU chapter of Phi Alpha has been in existence since 1991. Students are made aware of this organization through the Social Work Student Handbook (see Appendix), the WCU Catalog, and the *Ram's Eye View*, handout material, the Social Work bulletin board, class announcements and dialogue at student/faculty meetings. Phi Alpha is run by the student-elected officers (elected each Spring) and has its own budget. A faculty advisor is assigned to Phi Alpha and participates in regular meetings and Society activities.

Each spring semester the faculty advisor and Phi Alpha executive officers distribute information regarding application to Phi Alpha. The WCU chapter of Phi Alpha sets its own standards for eligibility in accordance with the criteria of the national organization. Eligibility requirements include:

- 12 completed social work credits
- GPA of 3.25 in social work courses
- Involvement in community and/or campus activities

Students meeting the eligibility criteria are notified by the current chapter President and are officially welcomed into Phi Alpha in an annual Induction Ceremony. Phi Alpha activities include, but are not restricted to:

- Presentations and leadership roles in annual social work conferences (BPD, NASW, PA Chapter of NASW)
- Service projects
- Fundraisers
- Social activities
- Working closely with the Social Work Club in all of its programs and activities

All social work students, regardless of Phi Alpha membership, are invited and encouraged to participate in Phi Alpha sponsored activities.

NASW (National Association of Social Workers)

Student membership applications to NASW can be accessed through this link:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/Membership/Membership-Types/Students>.

DeBaptiste Scholarship

The Undergraduate Social Work program has an endowed scholarship for social work majors entering their senior year. Announcements for eligibility are distributed each spring semester by the Chair of the Department. Criteria for the award include excellence in academic achievement, demonstrated community leadership initiative, demonstrated commitment to bi-cultural and bi-lingual social work practice, and assignment to a practicum working with at-risk, culturally diverse populations. Initially, the DeBaptiste Scholarship will provide assistance for the purchase of books and travel to and from practicum sites. Funds per student may be limited to approximately \$500 each.

Travel Grants for Practicum

The Undergraduate Social Work Department has begun to grant students funds to support travel to their practicum site. Students should look for the application announcement in the fall semester.

Other Honors

Each year the Dean of the College of Education and Social Work honors the Social Work Senior of the Year. The Senior of the Year is nominated by faculty of the Social Work Department. The criteria are outstanding academic performance, community involvement, and commitment to the social work profession.

Student Participation in Curriculum and Program Policy

The Social Work department encourages students to actively participate in the process of formulating policies, having input on the curriculum and initiating other extra- or co-curricular activities. Student participation is supported in the following ways;

- **Student-Faculty Meeting (West Chester Campus).** Every first Wednesday of the month at noon (12:00) is designated for student/faculty meeting for the year. The dates of these meetings are announced at the beginning of each semester and reminders are posted on the Social Work bulletin board. This meeting is co-chaired by the Social Work Club president and the BSW Program Director/Chair and is open to any and all students. Prior to the meeting, the Social Work Club President, and the Director/Chair meet to develop an agenda. The Social Work Club President invites students to place items of interest or concern on the agenda. The meeting is designed to provide an opportunity for social work students to come and discuss issues or concerns and receive clarification from the social work practicum director and faculty. This also provides an opportunity for students to propose suggestions and/or solutions to any problems they may encounter in the curriculum or department.
- **Student Representatives for a Student Council (Philadelphia Campus).** Student representatives are elected by their classmates, one from each class, in order to participate in meetings each semester with the Chair and/or Assistant Chair in Philadelphia. The student representatives act as a liaison between the Undergraduate Social Work Program and the Social Work student body.
- **Student Representation at Advisory Board Meetings.** The Social Work Advisory Board meets approximately once a semester. The President, Vice-President, or other selected member from each of the student organizations (Social Work Club, Phi Alpha Honor Society, Association of Black Social Workers, and the Advocate) may attend at least one Advisory Board meeting.
- **Informal Procedures.** In addition to the formal procedures described above, the social work faculty all operate under an "open-door" policy, in addition to their required scheduled office hours, which allows for dialogue, exchange of opinions, and feedback.

Examples of changes, modifications and/or clarifications that have been made based on student participation in program and curriculum discussions:

- Sequencing of senior year courses and key capstone assignments (to lessen burden on students)
- Integration of more issues of diversity in the Race Relations Course
- Integration of senior practicum class and seminar to reduce redundancies and have faculty that teach seminar also follow students in the practicum.
- The proposal to re-institute a Junior Seminar to accompany the Junior Practicum Experience based on students' recommendations
- Development of a mutual meeting schedule for student organization
- Class Registration concerns
- Smoking Policy for Department Building

- Students' Right to Confidentiality
- Grading policies regarding late assignments
- Consistency in assignments (and due dates) across different sections of the same course
- Coordination of activities among the student organizations
- Better communication from faculty to students
- Initiation of a Leadership Development Retreat for executive officers of the social work student organizations

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SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM PERSONNEL

Educational Leadership - Undergraduate Chairperson/ Director of the BSW Program

The Chairperson and Director of the Social Work Department is responsible for directing the administrative activities of that Unit, subject to the approval of the Dean of the College of Education and Social Work. The Undergraduate Chairperson of the Social Work Department is elected every three years by the Social Work faculty.

The Chairperson/Director of the BSW Program receives one half (6 credit hours) time in accordance with the Union agreement which bases release time on the size of the Department and the number of faculty and reports to the Dean of the College of Education and Social Work (CESW). The Chairperson/ Director of the BSW Program teaches 6 credit hours (2 courses) per semester in addition to fulfilling all of the administrative and program duties of the Department. For the 2016-17 AY, the Department also has an Assistant Chairperson for the Philadelphia BSW Program. The Assistant Chair also teaches 6 credit hours and receives 6 credits of release time to assist on the satellite campus. The Chair and Assistant Chair meet at least monthly to review curricular and administrative issues on both campuses.

The Undergraduate Social Work Program Director/Chairperson has access to quality personnel and equipment. The Department is fortunate to have a full-time secretary who has excellent administrative and people skills, is computer and program-savvy, and is involved in student events, department events, and campus-wide initiatives.

The Department has a copier, computers, scanner, printers, and adequate telephone resources. Graphics Department resources are also available. There are undergraduate work-study students assigned to the Program and graduate assistants who handle special assignments such as coordinating campus-wide, Social Work Department sponsored lectures or conferences. The Graduate Assistant may also write proposals for funding for special Social Work Department projects and activities.

Undergraduate Social Work Director of Practicum Education

The Undergraduate Social Work Program has two administrative positions, which are filled by the Directors of Practicum Education at the West Chester and Philadelphia campuses. The Directors are responsible for the daily operation of the practicum education program for the BSW Program, work closely with the Undergraduate Social Work Program Director/Chairperson. The Directors of Practicum Education work with a variety of community agencies to develop quality practicum experiences for students. The Undergraduate Director of Practicum Education on the West Chester campus, Janet Bradley, has an office located with the Undergraduate Program at Anderson Hall, Room 410. The Director of Practicum Education for the Philadelphia campus, Cornell Davis, has an office at 701 Market Street, Philadelphia.

Undergraduate Social Work Faculty

The Undergraduate Department of Social Work currently has ten full-time tenure track faculty positions charged with educational responsibilities and services assigned to the program. There are typically at least two other temporary adjunct faculty. The faculty work with the Undergraduate Social Work Program Director/Chairperson to deliver the accredited social work curriculum to students enrolled in the program.

Student advisement and mentorship is the responsibility of social work faculty.

All social work faculty members teach in the classroom. Faculty provide the practicum director with input into students' learning needs to help facilitate the practicum placement process. Core faculty evaluate student performance in individual courses and through evaluation of the Senior Integrative Paper Presentation. All faculty are involved in community service, belong to social work professional organizations, and regularly attend social work professional workshops and national conferences.

Many social work faculty members teach workshops and lead groups, serve on boards, and hold national positions as part of their community service responsibility.

The undergraduate social work faculty members and practicum directors are responsible for the overall design, administration, and evaluation of the Undergraduate Social Work Program's curriculum and educational policies. Minor changes take place regularly and the plan for the Program and curricular re-evaluation is reviewed bi - yearly at the Fall and Spring Faculty Retreat. Ongoing input is solicited and received from students and the practice community. All proposed objectives are evaluated in light of the Program's overall objectives and professional developments.

Faculty regularly reviews new textbooks, articles, videos, social media, and other teaching materials to remain current in the academic discipline. Changes in course content, assignments, terminology, or textbooks are discussed thoroughly in faculty meetings to ensure that they are then integrated by other faculty in all courses. Faculty recommend changes; the Competency Chair is ultimately responsible for assuring that new proposed changes are relevant and consistent with CSWE standards.

The Program receives advice and guidance from the practice community. The Program

formally receives advice and guidance from the Undergraduate Social Work Advisory Board during the advisory board meetings that are scheduled for October and May of the academic year.

The Social Work Advisory Board

The Undergraduate Social Work Advisory Board meets at least two times a year and has membership from the following five groups: community leaders, WCU social work alumni, social workers employed in the practicum from both public and private sectors, educators, and students declared as social work majors. An updated list of Advisory Board members can be found on the Department's website.

The purpose of the Advisory Board is as follows:

"To promote the professional growth and advancement of social work at West Chester University as it relates to local, national, and international issues; to implement and monitor the Curriculum Policy Statement mandated by the Council on Social Work Education; to serve as the impetus for social work alumni activities; to advise and consult the Dean of the appropriate School of innovative directions that the Department should pursue; to advise and assist in soliciting and maintaining practicum placements for students; network with employers on career placement for graduates; assist in fundraising activities for the Department.

FACULTY OF THE UNDERGRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Hadih Deedat, Ph.D., MSW, MPH

**Chairperson/Director of the Undergraduate Social Work
Program
*Associate Professor***

Ph.D., Widener University, M.S.W., Widener University; M.P.H., Temple University.

Greg Tully, Ph.D., M.S.W.

Professor.

B.S., New York University; M.S.W., Hunter School of Social Work; Ph.D., New York University.

Pablo Arriaza, Ph.D., MSW, LCSW

Ph.D., University of Alabama; M.S.W., Florida State University

Michele Belliveau, Ph.D., MSW

Professor

**Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania., M.S.S.W., Columbia University School of Social
Work; B.A., Earlham College.**

Claire Dente, Ph.D., M.S.W.

Professor.

**B.A., Chestnut Hill College; M.S.W., The Catholic University of America; Ph.D., Temple
University.**

Travis Ingersoll, Ph.D., M.S.W.

Professor

Ph.D. Widener University.

Meg Panichelli, Ph.D., M.S.W., B.A

Associate Professor

**B.A. West Chester University; M.S.W., West Chester University; Ph.D., Portland State
University.**

Brie Radis, DSW., MSS., MLSP., LCSW

Associate Professor

DSW., University of Pennsylvania., MSS and MLSP., Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research

Ebonnie Vazquez, Ph.D., MSW

Associate Professor

B.S.W., Cheyney State University; M.S.W., University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work; Ph.D., Walden University

Susan Wysor Nguema, Ph.D., M.S.W.

Associate Professor

B.S.W., La Salle University; M.S., University of Pennsylvania; MSW, Temple University; Ph.D., Widener University.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Rachel Milano-Davis, MSW, SHRM-SCP

Eli Dehope, Ph.D., LCSW, BCD

Julie Knudsen, LCSW

Kathy Schank, MSS, LCSW

Deb Maccariella, Director

Suzette (Susi) Dominquez, LCSW, Clinical Supervisor

Stacey Steidler Zehren, MSW, LCSW, HSV, SSW

Natasha McVey, MSS, LCSW, CBIS

Mary McCormick, MSS, LCSW

Hank Owens

Michelle Legaspi Sanchez, Manager, Advisory Services

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ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS FOR YOUR INFORMATION

TELEPHONE: Faculty office extensions are listed in this handbook and in this document. When calling, after the third ring, an answering service should pick up the line if the faculty member does not answer. If you need to talk with someone to answer, please call 610-436-2527. The secretary may not always be at the desk but will distribute your message and/or get back to you as soon as possible. When you are calling about an absence from class, please call the faculty members' number directly. Except for the Chairperson, each faculty member keeps their own appointments.

LOUNGES: Sitting areas are located in hallway areas. A small eating area, and sink are in the kitchen area outside the student lab on both campuses. Please help us to keep them clean!

STUDENT FILES: To support global efforts for environmental sustainability, The Undergraduate Social Work Department does not have printed copies of students' files. All advising and guidance forms are uploaded to the Students' Advising Notes found within their Degree Progress Report. In the event of an emergency, the Chairperson, Academic Advisor, and/or university administrator will access students' "Emergency Contact" information found on their student portal. Students have access to their advising notes and files via their student portal. If you want something removed from your file, please speak with the Department's Chairperson. Please check your personal information periodically to make sure all materials are in order and your most current address and phone(s) number(s) are included in your "Personal Information" section of your student portal. We ask that each student include the name and phone number of a contact person in case of an emergency in the "Emergency Contact" section of their student portal. For any assistance updating demographic information and/or emergency contact information, students can contact the Registrar's Office.

COMPUTER LABS AND RESOURCE ROOMS: The Social Work Department has three computers and one printer for student use at the West Chester campus. The PASSHE-Philadelphia campus has two computer labs.

SMOKING: Students may smoke outside in the back of the building.

COPY MACHINE: Students have access to a copy machine located in the Frances Harvey Green Library on North Campus and in Sykes Student Union and on other buildings throughout the university. Students in the Philadelphia Program, there is no copy machine at the Philadelphia site for students to use at this time. Officers of the Social Work student organizations are supplied a code to use the administrative copy machine for club/organization business only.

CAMPUS MAP – [West Chester](#)

CAMPUS LOCATION – [Philadelphia](#)