

Master of Social Work Practicum Manual

Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminology

Idaho State University

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**Idaho State
University**

**Sociology, Social Work
and Criminology**

Table of Contents:

Introduction and Overview	3
Persons, Roles, and Responsibilities:	3
Practicum Oversight Team:	3
Direct Practicum Oversight:	4
Other Practicum Participants:	4
Student Information	6
Practicum Requirements:	6
Practicum Requirements:	6
Practicum Eligibility:	7
Practicum Placement Process:	8
Practicum Placement Changes:	10
Student Conduct Expectations:	11
Student Practicum Evaluation:	12
Failure to Start or Complete a Practicum:	12
Agency Information	14
Agency Eligibility and Affiliation Agreements:	14
Criteria for Agency Affiliation with the ISU MSW Program:	14
Procedure for Approving an Agency as a Practicum Site:	15
Orientation for Practicum social work supervisors	16
Addendum	19

Introduction and Overview

The Social Work Program at Idaho State University has established this manual to explain the requirements and objectives of the MSW Practicum Program. It is intended for use as a handbook for social work supervisors, task supervisors, and students of the ISU MSW program.

The Practicum experience is a major testing ground for the student's knowledge, skills, values, cognitive and affective processes and behaviors. The student is supported in this experience by the leadership of the assigned practicum instructor, task supervisor, seminar instructor and practicum director. The information presented here is intended to provide helpful guidance and structure to aid in a successful practicum experience for the student and the practicum agency.

Practicum is the signature pedagogy of social work education. It consists of two major components: the agency placement and weekly practicum seminar course. Practicum represents the central form of instruction and learning in which students are socialized to perform the role of social work practitioner. Practicum education connects the theoretical and conceptual material of the classroom with the practical world of the practicum agency setting.

The ISU MSW Program welcomes feedback and questions. Correspondence may be submitted to the MSW Practicum Director, Stop 8114, Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho, 83209-8114. The MSW Practicum Director can also be reached by calling 208-282-3377 or at mawpracticum@isu.edu.

Persons, Roles, and Responsibilities:

For the practicum experience to be successful in meeting its educational function, a great deal of cooperation is essential between all concerned parties. The following provides an overview of all involved parties and their corresponding role in the practicum process.

Practicum Oversight Team:

Program Director: The MSW Program Director oversees total program operations for all MSW programs, including the campus program and the online program option. This individual may be contacted if concerns arise with the Practicum Director or if a student issue comes up in a practicum placement that requires a higher level of oversight or program involvement.

Practicum Director: The MSW Program has a designated MSW Practicum Director. This individual is responsible for oversight of practicum-related activities. This person works closely with the MSW Program Director and all other affiliated members of the Practicum Oversight Team.

Practicum Liaison: A practicum liaison is any designated member of our faculty who has been assigned responsibility for teaching practicum or seminar courses. These individuals are an integral part of the Practicum Oversight Team.

Direct Practicum Oversight:

Practicum Instructor of Record (PIR): Each student will be assigned to work with a member of the Practicum Oversight Team when they begin the practicum placement process. This person is referred to here as the practicum instructor of record. A student may be assigned to work with various members of this team depending upon their admissions status, program type, or regional location. Social work supervisors can expect to interact with various members of this team depending upon the students placed in their agencies. The PIR will typically take responsibility for the following activities:

1. Participate with the agency and the student in placement selection.
2. Serve as a regular liaison for the purposes of consultation to the social work supervisor.
3. Support the student and the social work supervisor in understanding and tracking required paperwork.
4. Meet with the student weekly during a scheduled seminar course to monitor progress and offer support.
5. Participate in site visits and end of semester evaluations.

Other Practicum Participants:

Social Work Supervisor: The social work supervisor is the agency-based licensed social worker who is responsible for guiding the student's applied educational and practice experience in the practicum setting. The social work supervisor is responsible for planning tasks for the student to engage in, provide weekly supervision for one hour per week in a formal capacity, and review any work conducted by the intern on behalf of the agency. The social work supervisor is typically responsible for the following:

1. Commit to carrying out the supervisory responsibility as a licensed BSW and/or MSW social worker who is knowledgeable about professional practice.
2. Orient the student to the agency's operations and help the student feel a part of the agency team.
3. Assist the student in the development of the learning agreement.
4. Make meaningful assignments that are appropriate to the student's skills that provide a wide range of learning activities commensurate with agency functions.
5. Provide ongoing supervision and feedback for the student. A regularly scheduled weekly session should be utilized for this purpose. Small group supervision can be utilized as

long as the group includes no more than five students at a time; students should have access to one-on-one supervision at least once per month.

6. Take initiative for contact with the practicum instructor of record or the practicum director prior to critical matters developing with the student.

MSW Supervisor Requirements: Supervisors for MSW practicum students need to be a masters licensed social worker with a full-time equivalence direct practice experience for no less than two years post-MSW, or a clinical licensed social worker. A member of the practicum team will verify that the supervisor has met these requirements utilizing the state board of licensing database, or other appropriate channels of verification.

*Please note that all social work supervisors are approved at the discretion of the ISU MSW Program Director.

Task Supervisor: Task Supervisors may be utilized in the event that a practicum placement has been approved, but where an appropriately licensed or credentialed supervisor is not available within the structure of the agency. In this case, the agency may identify a Task Supervisor who functions in the capacity of orienting the student to the agency and overseeing the tasks they are delegated during their practicum hours. An Off-Site Social Work Supervisor will also be required, working in collaboration with the task supervisor, to ensure that the student is adequately supervised by an appropriately licensed individual. In this scenario, a student will be responsible for locating an Off-Site Social Work Supervisor that is agreeable to the agency, the practicum team, MSW Program Director, and the student. The ISU Social Work Programs cannot guarantee that a proposed Off-Site Social Work Supervisor will be approved, and students should make every effort to locate an appropriate agency-based placement that has a supervisor available within the agency. The MSW Program does not provide an Off-Site Social Work Supervisor.

MSW Supervisor Requirements: Supervisors for MSW practicum students need to be a masters licensed social worker with a full-time equivalence direct practice experience for no less than two years post-MSW, or a clinical licensed social worker.

Student Intern: The student is responsible for initiating and maintaining open communication with the agency and their designated Practicum Instructor of Record regarding personal educational objectives and priorities. Student responsibilities are further outlined in the next section of this document.

Social Work Faculty Advisors: Students in all ISU MSW programs are assigned a faculty advisor. This individual is primarily responsible for academic planning and long-term career counseling and development. Students should not direct practicum related questions to their faculty advisors unless those questions are directly related to degree planning. Students should instead direct all practicum related questions to their designated member of the practicum team.

Student Information

The student is responsible for initiating and maintaining open communication with the agency and their designated Practicum Instructor of Record regarding personal educational objectives and priorities. In addition to being learners, students serve as an informal bridge between the school and the agency and are expected to comport themselves as representatives of ISU Social Work Programs.

Practicum Requirements:

Foundation Practicum: Students who have been admitted through our standard admission MSW program will complete 400 hours of foundation practicum at a social service agency over the course of two semesters. These hours must be completed in a Fall-Spring sequence, and students must pass the fall practicum and seminar courses before they are allowed to advance to the spring semester. Students who are attending the program part-time will be ineligible to begin practicum placement until the second year of their part-time program. Students who are admitted to our Advanced Standing Program are not required to complete a foundation practicum.

Advanced Practicum: Students who have been admitted into the advanced standing program or who have successfully completed the foundation practicum will complete 500 hours of practicum at a social service agency over the course of two semesters. These hours must be completed in a Fall-Spring sequence, and students must pass the fall practicum and seminar courses before they are allowed to advance to the spring semester. Students who are attending the program part-time will work with their academic advisor to create an approved program of study that includes a practicum component.

Practicum Requirements:

Learning Agreement: Students will be expected to submit a learning agreement created in coordination with their Social Work Supervisor at the beginning of their practicum. This learning agreement is designed to ensure that students are exposed to the core practice competencies outlined by the CSWE. Task items should represent specific learning experiences students anticipate having throughout the course of their internship.

Site Visits: The practicum instructor of record will conduct periodic site visits. The first visit is to assist the practicum instructor of record and the student in clarification and development of the learning agreement, review expectations and time commitments for the Social Work Supervisor, and to facilitate the creation of mutual practicum expectations. A mid-practicum site visit may be conducted at the end of the fall semester or beginning of the spring semester at the discretion of the PIR. This may be conducted via email or telephone to assess student progress. An end-of-practicum site visit will be conducted to complete a practicum evaluation either in-person or through an online meeting platform.

Social Work Supervisors and students are encouraged to request meetings with the practicum instructor of record or the practicum director at any time throughout the semester particularly if problems or issues arise that cannot be resolved within the agency or between the agency instructor and the student. If necessary, a corrective plan can be developed between the student, agency instructor and practicum team.

Professional responsibility and appropriate use of supervision suggests that the student attempts to do problem solving within the boundaries of the student-agency relationship before involving the practicum instructor of record or practicum director.

Other Practicum Paperwork: Students may be asked to complete a FERPA release of information, a confidentiality form, or other paperwork designated necessary by their practicum instructor of record. Students are responsible for completing this paperwork by the deadlines provided by their instructor in order to remain in good standing with their practicum placement. Failure to complete designated paperwork may result in suspension from or termination from practicum placement and/or the MSW program.

Tracking of Internship Hours: Students are required to submit timesheets that have been reviewed and signed by their Social Work Supervisor. Unsigned timesheets will not be accepted. Students are expected to commit to completing the full amount of hours required for the level of practicum they are completing. Students cannot complete their internship hours early (i.e. completing 200 hour in the first few weeks of the semester and then taking the rest of the semester off) and students cannot rollover hours from one semester to another (i.e. completing 300 hours in the fall semester and asking to only complete 100 hours in the spring). If hours are complete, students are not required to work at their practicum location during finals week.

Academic Breaks and Holidays: Students are not allowed to work practicum hours over the winter break and the summer semester. Students are not required to work at their practicum sites during the fall or spring breaks; however, students may choose to do so if it is agreeable to both students and Social Work Supervisor.

Practicum Eligibility:

Eligibility: Admission to Practicum courses is contingent upon the successful completion of prerequisite courses and concurrent enrollment in adjoining Practicum Seminar courses. Students will receive confirmation from the Program Director that they have met the eligibility criteria prior to enrolling in a Practicum course. Enrollment in these courses requires a registration override that will only be provided for eligible students.

Companion Coursework: Students must enroll in both the practicum and its companion seminar course. Students must complete and pass both practicum and seminar courses concurrently in order to remain in good academic standing and to remain eligible to advance to the next phase of

practicum. Students who do not pass either seminar or practicum are ineligible to advance and may be referred to a Faculty Review Committee for disciplinary action. Please refer to the MSW student handbook for further information on this process.

Practicum Placement Process:

The practicum placement process is a mutual collaboration between the MSW program and the student. **The ISU MSW program does not guarantee a practicum placement for students; if students are unable to secure an appropriate practicum placement they may be ineligible to complete their MSW degree.** Students should expect to be actively involved in the placement process and ultimately the success of practicum placement is a student's responsibility. The MSW practicum team will provide appropriate levels of support throughout the process. This section of the manual details the practicum placement process.

Practicum Orientation: Practicum eligible students will be invited to attend a Practicum Orientation either on campus or through an online meeting platform. This orientation will review the practicum placement process and discuss how to identify appropriate practicum opportunities in your community. Orientations typically occur in April. Students are responsible for keeping a copy of their approved program of study in order to identify the semester and year in which they are eligible for practicum placements.

Preparing for an Internship: Practicum-eligible students will meet with their practicum instructor of record to discuss potential internship placement opportunities. Students are responsible for identifying a list of potential agencies in which they have an interest in practicum placement. Students may work with their practicum instructor of record to identify opportunities and discuss appropriateness of the agency within the scope of their individual career goals and program requirements. Students who are attending our online program and who reside in geographic regions where we have not historically had practicum placements may be required to do additional work in identifying potential practicum locations. Once a list of potential practicum locations has been agreed upon and approved by the student and practicum instructor of record, the student can begin reaching out to agencies to schedule interviews.

Internship Interview: Students are responsible for preparing a resume and scheduling internship interviews the semester prior to placement. Most agencies will conduct formal interviews (much like an employment interview) and may interview more than one student for only one placement. An agency is under no obligation to accept a student; thus, it is recommended that students schedule at least three agency interviews and visits to compare various placement opportunities. The MSW program does not schedule interviews for students. Practicum settings can be extremely competitive; thus, students should begin applying for internships as soon as possible once they have completed the Practicum Orientation.

Placement Approval Process: Upon completion of interviews it is the students responsibility to follow-up with the agencies regarding a decision on whether an internship offer will be made. Once a student receives an offer from an agency they will email their practicum instructor of record notifying them of 1) the name of the agency in which the student has accepted an internship 2) the name and licensing credentials of the identified Social Work Supervisor. The PIR will evaluate this information to ensure that a current Affiliation Agreement with the agency is on file, and that the identified Social Work Supervisor meets institutional criteria. The PIR will provide written confirmation to the student via email that they have been approved to proceed with the requested practicum placement.

Students who will be utilizing an Off-Site Social Work Supervisor in collaboration with a Task Supervisor will need to anticipate additional time for review and approval. Students who have requested to work with an agency that does not have a current Affiliation Agreement should be aware that this process requires the agency to undergo a vetting process and that a contract must be signed prior to the student accepting a placement within the agency. This process can be lengthy and students pursuing a placement at an agency where we do not currently have an Affiliation Agreement should be aware that this process may impact their timelines, and that an agency may not pass the vetting process.

It is up to the student to secure and begin a practicum placement no later than first Friday of the fall semester.

Agency Eligibility Requirements/Background Check Requirements: Many agencies require specific eligibility checks prior to a student beginning their practicum. Agencies may extend a tentative acceptance offer, but this is often conditional upon the successful completion of eligibility requirements. These potential requirements may include, but are not limited to, background checks, a urinalysis test, evidence of vaccination status, etc. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure they understand the individual agency's requirements and have completed any eligibility standards prior to the start of their internship.** Idaho State University does not pay for eligibility checks; students are encouraged to coordinate with their chosen practicum setting regarding any potential cost of these requirements.

Employment-Based Practicum: Students who wish to engage in an employment-based practicum will need to have this placement vetted and approved by their practicum instructor of record. **The ISU MSW Program does not guarantee that your place of employment will be approved for a practicum; your agency may need to undergo the vetting verification process and be willing to or already have a signed Affiliation Agreement on file.** Students who wish to enter into an employment-based practicum will need to document their ability to engage in new learning activities that reflect the nine social work competencies, consistent with the student's

level of practice, and detailed in the student learning agreement. Additionally, practicum designated hours must be clearly distinguished from regular employment activities, and all practicum-related work must reflect an opportunity to apply classroom learning and practical experience in a role that reflects the level of practicum they are completing (i.e. Foundation Practicum or Advanced Practicum). The employed student must be given the opportunity afforded other practicum students to be in the observer and learner roles. The student's practicum role must be consistent with their learning goals, objectives, and activities as outlined in the Learning Agreement. The student should be assigned a Social Work Supervisor that is different from the regular work supervisor. In the event that this is not possible, the agency must be able to distinguish between supervision being provided as part of the practicum and supervision being provided to the employee on an ongoing basis. Employment-based practicum students are primarily insured by their employer and are not eligible for insurance through Idaho State University. Students in this type of practicum are eligible to work for their employer during winter break and summer semester; however, they are not eligible to count these hours towards their practicum requirements. Students who become unemployed in an organization where practicum education has co-occurred with employment should refer to our policy on practicum placement changes.

Out-of-State Practicum Placements:

Students who wish to complete their practicum in an agency outside of the state of Idaho are eligible to do so. Out-of-state agencies and Social Work Supervisors are subject to the same requirements as in-state agencies and Social Work Supervisors.

International Practicum Placements:

An international practicum placement may be considered in the event that a current student who is in good academic standing wishes to gain global experience; however, this will be considered on a case by case basis.

Practicum Placement Changes:

The MSW Program at Idaho State University does not encourage students to make practicum changes throughout the academic year. When a student makes a commitment to work with an agency, that commitment is being made for the duration of the academic year. In extenuating circumstances a change of practicum placement may be considered.

Leaving a Practicum Agency Mid-Practicum: Any student who experiences extenuating circumstances that might necessitate a practicum change in the middle of a practicum placement must submit a written request via email to their practicum instructor of record. This request must include a description of why the request for a change is being made, and a thorough explanation of the extenuating circumstance and any attempts that have been made to address the situation.

Requests for a change of placement will be considered on a case by case basis, and may be approved or denied by the practicum director. Every effort will be made to address the situation within a reasonable timeframe. Students may change their practicum placement immediately or at the semester break depending upon the circumstances of the situation, the approval of the practicum director, and the ability of the student to secure a new practicum placement. Students who choose to leave a practicum placement mid-practicum should note that the MSW program cannot guarantee a new placement will be made and should plan accordingly. Students should not resign from their practicum placement without first consulting with their practicum instructor of record.

Student Conduct Expectations:

The student intern is expected to adhere to the following guidelines in order to remain in good standing with their practicum placement:

Conflicts of Interest: Students should report conflicts of interest within their internship agencies to their Social Work Supervisor and the Practicum Instructor of Record.

Mandatory Reporting: In Idaho, every adult is required to abide by mandated reporting laws related to child maltreatment (abuse, neglect and abandonment) and many are required to make a mandated report for the abuse of vulnerable adults. Students should see linked statutes and speak to their Social Work Supervisor and the Practicum Director about their concerns and learn more about how to report.

Ethical and Professional Practice: All professional activities should be conducted in compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the practicum placement and/or social work program.

Compliance with Agency Guidelines: Students should take time to learn about, understand, and comply with agency policies, regulations, and specific requirements regarding confidentiality.

Utilization of Supervision: Students should utilize supervision as part of their practicum experience to further professional growth including the knowledge of self, practice theory, and skill development. Students should have a designated meeting time with their Social Work Supervisor for one hour per week, outside of regular task oversight or communications.

Confidentiality: Students are responsible for understanding the agency expectations for patient confidentiality and are responsible for ensuring compliance with agency guidelines.

Non-Discrimination Policy: Social Work Program students at ISU shall not discriminate on the basis of age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and

expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status.

Student Practicum Evaluation:

The evaluation of practicum placement is designed to provide opportunity for input from all involved parties. Practicum is graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis and this ranking is dependent upon input from both the PIR and the Social Work Supervisor. The practicum companion course, Seminar, is graded on a letter-grade scale and the grade will be dependent upon completion of coursework as identified by the PIR. Students who disagree with their final grades can initiate a formal grade appeal process as outlined in the MSW student handbook. Student practicum evaluation will include a review of student performance in relation to the nine social work competencies. This evaluation is typically conducted in reference to the students' learning agreement and final practicum evaluations. Both of these documents evaluate the student in all nine areas of competency.

Failure to Start or Complete a Practicum:

Inability to Enter into a Practicum Placement: If students are unable to secure a practicum placement prior to the identified deadline, they should contact their practicum instructor of record immediately to discuss alternative options. Students who do not secure a practicum placement may be required to wait one full academic year to begin a practicum, or they may be ineligible to complete the MSW program, depending upon the circumstances. Students are not guaranteed a practicum placement, and if they are unable to secure one they can be referred for termination from the program.

Inability to Complete Established Internship or Agency Termination:

Students who are concerned about a pending termination from a practicum placement should notify their practicum instructor of record and/or practicum director immediately. These individuals may work with the practicum supervisor to address any issues; however, practicum supervisors/agencies have a right to terminate students from their practicum placement at any time. In the event a student is dismissed or terminated from a practicum placement, the department will convene a Faculty Review Committee to review the termination decision and evaluate the appropriateness of the individual for the MSW/BASW program. In the event of a termination from practicum, the faculty review committee will be composed of the program director, appropriate practicum director, and the practicum instructor of record. Additional members may be invited to the faculty review committee as needed and at the discretion of the program director. The Faculty Review Committee may recommend a) dismissal from the program b) a period of academic probation and a corrective action plan or c) a reassignment of the student to another practicum placement. Students will be notified of the date and time of the faculty review committee meeting 5 working days prior to the meeting. Students are invited to write a letter to the committee for review; however, students do not have the right to attend this

meeting. Students will be notified of the committee decision via email within 10 working days of the meeting.

Notification of Practicum Concerns: Students who have concerns about their ability to be successful in their practicum placement, have concerns about the appropriateness of the practicum setting or tasks, have concerns about their practicum site/task supervisor, or have any other practicum related concerns, should notify their practicum instructor of record immediately. This person will assist the student in making a determination about the need to involve the practicum director in addressing the concerns. Concerns about student safety, major ethical violations, or pending practicum termination will require the immediate notification of the practicum director. Students have the right to the implementation of a corrective action plan as a method of addressing their concerns. Students who fail to notify either their practicum instructor of record of their concerns may waive their right to have a corrective action plan put in place.

Students with Incomplete Practicum Hours: Students are required to complete all practicum hours within the designated semester. However, students who experience circumstances that prohibit them from doing so should reach out to their practicum instructor of record to discuss their circumstances and explore the option of taking an Incomplete. Students who take an Incomplete in a practicum course are subject to the same policies and requirements established by the institution for taking an Incomplete. Practicum hours cannot be completed over the summer semester or winter holiday, so any incomplete contracts will need to account for these gaps in time.

Practicum Safety Protocols:

Statement on Safety: Keeping students safe in the practicum environment is a key priority for our program. Safety is defined as both emotional and physical well-being, and we strive to ensure that all agency partners are able to provide an environment where this is taken into consideration. Examples of safety concerns may include, but are not limited to, students being exposed to physical aggression from clients, environmental concerns in the agency setting, inappropriate levels of independent practice, or lack of adequate supervision. In the event that a student feels unsafe in a practicum setting, the practicum team will work with the student to conduct a risk assessment and identify potential safety issues and/or methods for enhancing safety within the practicum setting. If an agency site is deemed to be unsafe and a plan cannot be put into place that sufficiently minimizes safety risks, the student may be removed from the agency setting. Please see [Guidelines for Social Work Safety in the Workplace](#).

Student Responsibility: Students are responsible for ensuring that they understand their agency specific policies and protocols around safety. Students are responsible for notifying their Social Work Supervisor or task supervisor, and a member of the ISU practicum team, if they have concerns about their ongoing safety or if an incident has occurred that has jeopardized their ability to remain safe in the practicum setting.

Agency Responsibility: The practicum agency site is responsible for ensuring that protocols are in place to ensure the safety of both clients and personnel. This may include operational protocols around client engagement, use of safety measures such as panic buttons or driving requirements, and the use of ongoing risk assessments for client interactions. The agency should provide the student with orientation regarding safety policies and protocols and should ensure that students are able to access support in the event of a safety concern.

University Responsibility: Student Practicum safety is reviewed during Practicum Orientation, and is discussed in an ongoing capacity during Practicum Seminar courses. During the agency vetting process, a member of the practicum team will review the agency's internal safety protocols with each agency prior to approving the site for a student placement.

Agency Information

Agency Eligibility and Affiliation Agreements:

Periodically or when requested, the social work program will solicit new practicum placements to ensure a continuing variety of placement opportunities for students, or area agencies will contact the program to investigate the possibility of becoming a placement agency.

Criteria for Agency Affiliation with the ISU MSW Program:

The selection of an agency as a practicum instruction setting is based on criteria related to the agency's commitment to a shared responsibility for professional education and expertise of staff. The member of the practicum team will assist the agency with this approval process. The vetting process may include an evaluation of the following agency information: 1) agency mission/vision or agency description, 2) areas of prerequisite knowledge necessary for students to be successful within the agency setting, 3) description of the programs provided by the agency and the learning activities and/or services that the student will likely be involved in at the agency, 4) areas for learning opportunities with individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, and/or public policy, 5) opportunities for students to work with diverse client populations, and 6) Social Work Supervisor availability and appropriateness.

The specific criteria for selecting placement settings include the following:

1. Commitment by the administrator and staff to provide professional, educational learning opportunities in cooperation with the social work program.
2. A licensed Master's level social worker with a minimum of two years full-time direct practice experience who agrees to act as an Social Work Supervisor or willingness to provide a task supervisor who can work in collaboration with an off-site Social Work Supervisor. In the event that an off-site Social Work Supervisor is being utilized, the agency must be willing to vet and approve of this individual prior to working with them.

5. Agencies are expected to provide at least one hour of supervision to the student each week, not including daily supervisory tasks. Small group supervision can be utilized as long as the group includes no more than five students at a time; students should have access to one-on-one supervision at least once per month.
5. The agency has established protocols related to ensuring the safety of both clients and personnel.
6. The ability and willingness of the agency to offer a diverse practice setting in regards to factors including age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status.
7. The willingness to sign a collaborative Affiliation Agreement with Idaho State University.

Procedure for Approving an Agency as a Practicum Site:

Upon contact the social work practicum director or faculty liaison will:

1. Contact the potential new placement, explaining the criteria for selection of practicum placements and the structure of the practicum program and the overall social work program. The applicant agency may be asked to provide detailed information to the ISU MSW program.
2. Upon receipt of the requested information, a member of the practicum team will conduct a formal review to ensure that the agency meets institutional criteria for a partnership.
3. Once an agency is approved they will need to complete a formal Affiliation Agreement that outlines rights and responsibilities for both the agency and Idaho State University.
4. Completion of an Affiliation Agreement does not mean that a student will be placed in the agency. Placement of students is based on interest, student numbers and appropriateness of fit between the agency and the student.

Social Work Supervisors under Clinical Supervision

To ensure ethical and competent supervision of student learners engaging in clinical practice the following conditions apply in the event that a practicum supervisor who is a Licensed Master Social Work (LMSW) is also under the supervision for clinical licensure:

1. The practicum supervisor should notify their clinical supervisor in writing prior to beginning any oversight responsibilities for the student.
2. The practicum supervisor should obtain written or verbal permission from their clinical supervisor prior to beginning oversight responsibilities for the student.
3. The practicum supervisor should notify their designated practicum liaison at Idaho State University in writing affirming that these steps have been completed.

Orientation for Practicum Social Work Supervisors

Orientation with practicum Social Work Supervisors occurs at two different points in the placement process. Social Work Supervisors will receive information on supervision expectations and protocols during the agency vetting process. At that time a member of the ISU practicum team will review the minimum qualifications for providing supervision and review all expectations regarding supervision protocols and time commitments being made to the student and the program. We will review and verify with the Social Work Supervisor that they will be able to provide and supervise appropriate learning opportunities for students depending on what type of practicum student they anticipate accepting.

A secondary orientation occurs after a student has been placed with an Social Work Supervisor and during the initial site visit. At this time the practicum instructor of record will meet with the student and Social Work Supervisor (and task supervisor as needed) to review practicum expectations. At that time the practicum instructor of record will review how to access the practicum manual. The group will review requirements for the practicum, the role of the Social Work Supervisor, the expectations for student conduct, and how to access university resources for ongoing support.

Additionally, the group will review all required paperwork and discuss the Social Work Supervisors role in reviewing timesheets and providing evaluations of the student.

Processing for Engaging with Social Work Supervisors

Social Work Supervisors will meet with the practicum instructor of record during the initial practicum site visit and during the end of practicum site visit. These site visits may be held through an online meeting platform or in-person. A third point of contact will occur mid-practicum and may be done through email, phone, online meeting platform, or in-person. At any point in the practicum Social Work Supervisors and/or task supervisors can reach out to their students' practicum instructor of record, the Practicum Director, or the Program Director to seek support or guidance. We strongly encourage Social Work Supervisors to reach out in the event of concerns about student conduct, and the practicum team is available to support the agency by creating intervention plans for students who are struggling in their practicum placement. Social Work Supervisors are encouraged to reach out to a member of our team prior to terminating a student from a practicum placement; however, this is not required and Social Work Supervisors can use their best judgment if a termination occurs.

Evaluating Practicum Agency Supervisors and Practicum Agency Settings

Evaluation of Agency Supervisors and Agency Settings occurs on an ongoing basis through the evaluation of student reflections, oral reports from students during Practicum Seminar courses, and during practicum site visits. In the event that a concern regarding an agency supervisor or

agency setting is raised by a student or by a member of the practicum team, the MSW Practicum Director and the MSW Program director are notified.

Agencies that have an Affiliation Agreement in place will not undergo a full vetting process every time a student requests placement within the agency. However, every time we place a student within an agency a member of the practicum team will reevaluate the setting to ensure that they remain compliant with standards and expectations outlined in our agency approval process. The evaluation of agency supervisors will happen on an ongoing basis, and every time a student is placed within an agency we ensure the agency has an appropriately credentialed agency supervisor available.

Additional Practicum-Related Policies and Procedures

Absence from class for a practicum placement activity:

Missing required class time to participate in practicum activities is not encouraged and these absences will not be excused. In extenuating circumstances, students should work with their individual instructor to discuss potential absences from class due to practicum activities.

Decisions to miss classes necessitate responsible choice by the student. Such decisions also involve acceptance of responsibility by the student for determining class content and assignments which will be missed. Finally, such decisions also include student acceptance of risk in missing tests or participatory classroom activities which may not be repeated or made up. Missing class for a practicum-related activity is considered an absence and a decision should be made accordingly.

Liability Insurance: Students who have been admitted to the Social Work Program are automatically charged a fee per semester for malpractice/liability insurance coverage as part of their professional program fees. The Social Work Program Practicum Director will provide a copy of the Student Malpractice Declaration Certificate upon request by the practicum agency.

Workers Compensation Coverage: Effective July 1, 2013, Idaho Codes § 72-102 and § 72-205 were modified to change the existing statutes to require a university or college to purchase workers' compensation coverage for students that fall under the definition of "a work experience student who does not receive wages while participating in the school's work experience program."

Students working under an affiliation agreement with a healthcare facility, student teachers, business majors, and others who may go out into the community and "work" internship hours in an unpaid setting to fulfill his/her practicum requirements for academic credit are covered by the Idaho Higher Education Policy and are eligible for some workers compensation benefits if they are injured on the job. However, it would not include students who are out in clinics observing in

instructional settings but not providing services. It would not include students who are paid by the employer, whether they are receiving academic credit for the experience, as paid employees would be covered under the employer's policy.

Addendum

Idaho Medical Freedom Act Compliance and Clinical Participation Disclosure

Idaho State University complies with Senate Bill 1210 (2025), the *Idaho Medical Freedom Act*. In alignment with this law, ISU and its academic programs do **NOT** require students to receive vaccinations, undergo diagnostic testing, or participate in other medical interventions as a condition of:

- Admission or enrollment
- Participation in coursework
- Campus access
- Employment with the university

However, many ISU programs—inclusive of undergraduate and graduate social work programs—require clinical education or experiential learning at external facilities that may include hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics. These third-party clinical sites may independently require:

- Immunizations (e.g., MMR, Varicella, Hepatitis B, Tdap, Influenza, COVID-19)
- TB testing or other disease screenings
- Physical examinations
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Completion of infection control training

Participation in practicum education is mandatory for program completion, licensure eligibility, and graduation. Students who decline to meet clinical site requirements may face:

- Delayed clinical placement
- Extended program length
- Ineligibility for graduation or licensure

Students may request medical or religious exemptions from clinical site requirements. However, approval is at the sole discretion of the clinical site, not ISU, and ISU may not be able to guarantee alternative placements for students who decline required interventions.

Exceptions and Caveats: In some cases, participation in **federally funded programs** or research partnerships (e.g., Idaho National Laboratory or VA facilities) may include health and safety requirements governed by federal law. In such instances, compliance with those federal requirements may be necessary to access the opportunity.

ISU may require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), clothing, or items required under established industry standards or federal regulations. Programs and sites may still require PPE and related training for health and safety reasons.

Professional Expectations: While not required by ISU, students preparing for careers in healthcare and human services are strongly encouraged to stay up to date on recommended immunizations and

preventive screenings. Doing so reflects the professional values of safeguarding patient health, protecting vulnerable populations, and modeling best practices in clinical and community settings.

Employment Consideration: Students should also be aware that employers may impose similar requirements for employment. Choosing not to undergo specific medical interventions may limit future job opportunities.

Note on Drug Screenings and Background Checks: Drug and alcohol screenings, background checks, and other safety-related assessments are not considered medical interventions under SB 1210 and may continue to be required by ISU programs.

Assumption of Risk Form:

Programs may, at their discretion, ask students to sign the [Clinical Education and Assumption of Risk Form](#), updated July 28, 2025, to acknowledge understanding of the clinical education process, including associated risks and site-specific requirements. This form is available on the KDHS website and may be used to support student awareness, documentation, and accreditation needs. Social Work program students at ISU will be asked to sign the assumption of risk form if they opt into a practicum placement where vaccination protocols are required as a term or condition of the placement.



Clinical Education Assumption of Risk

Participation in clinical education, including clinical simulations in didactic settings, is required by professional accreditation standards for health sciences programs. Any placement in a healthcare facility (including hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, or other such entities) for the purpose of clinical education entails certain risks, including the risk of exposure to infectious diseases and other personal injuries. Similarly, there exists some level of risk in didactic settings. While every effort will be made to minimize risks to students, staff, and faculty, the elimination of all such risks is beyond the control of the program or university.

Vaccination for many infectious diseases, including COVID-19, may be required by a healthcare facility for placement in clinical education. Idaho State University recommends, but does not require, the COVID-19 vaccination. All health science students may receive a COVID-19 vaccination free of charge. If unvaccinated, restrictions upon student activities may be imposed by the clinical placement site. Placement at certain healthcare facilities may be contingent on vaccination status and requirements may change without notice. Educational opportunities missed due to lack of vaccination may delay graduation and/or result in additional educational expenses to the student.

I freely and voluntarily accept the health risks and potential clinical placement site requirements described above to complete my clinical educational requirements. Before engaging in clinical education, please read, initial, and sign the following:

Initials

- _____ 1. I will not participate in clinical education if I exhibit any signs/symptoms of infection, including but not limited to: runny nose, fever, cough, shortness of breath, head or body aches, sore throat, loss of smell, or nausea/vomiting/diarrhea. If I exhibit any of these signs/symptoms, I will notify the appropriate person(s) at my clinical placement and my designated program contact person.
- _____ 2. I will comply with clinical placement policies related to facial covering/glove wearing and handwashing and disinfecting procedures before and after all patient encounters and at other times as specified.
- _____ 3. I will complete any required infection control or PPE training by my program or the clinical placement.
- _____ 4. I will follow all infection control guidelines, policies, and procedures of the clinical placement, program, and university. Such guidelines are subject to change.
- _____ 5. I recognize the dangers to myself and others of acquiring infectious diseases during clinical education, including the possibility of health related consequences of such diseases. I recognize that vaccination for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases is recommended to decrease the risk of these consequences.
- _____ 6. I have the right to feel safe during clinical education. I have the ability to talk to my clinical instructor regarding any concerns I may have related to breaches in infection control measures or public health recommendations at any clinical placement.
- _____ 7. I recognize I have the right not to participate in clinical education because of the potential risk to myself and/or members of my household. I recognize that any missed clinical education time due to lack of participation or required quarantine time will need to be made up to complete program requirements and may delay my graduation.
- _____ 8. If I test positive for COVID-19, or any other contagious virus, I will notify my program's clinical coordinator and complete the self-report form. I will follow all ISU or health facility-related screening requirements.

Documenting Exemptions:

Students may request an exemption to a clinical placement site's vaccination requirement for valid medical or religious reasons. If a student chooses not to be vaccinated for a medical or religious reason and seeks an exemption from the vaccination requirement imposed by a clinical placement, further documentation may be required by the site. Some clinical placements may facilitate the religious exemption request themselves and the student will need to complete the site's appropriate form. Other sites may ask the university to help facilitate this process. Decisions to accept an exemption request are generally up to the clinical site.

Medical exemption requests: Students should work with the ISU Office of Disability Services for disability accommodations. Students can fill out a Student Request for Services Form or call (208) 282-3599 (Pocatello), (208) 373-1723 (Meridian), or email disabilityservices@isu.edu. Upon the conclusion of the accommodation process, the Office of Disability Services will email a letter to the student with the decision of the medical exemption request for submission to any requesting clinical placement.

Religious exemption requests: Students should work with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX for a religious exemption request by completing the Religious Exemption Request Form. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX will email a letter to the student with the decision of the religious exemption request for submission to any requesting clinical placement. Students can reach the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX at (208) 282- 3964 or email quingrac@isu.edu to request the form.

Opt-out Guidelines:

In general, satisfactory progression through professional curricula requires that students complete clinical and didactic course requirements in the semester in which they are enrolled. Programmatic requirements are based on professional accreditation standards and licensing board requirements, and include clinical education activities. Should a student be unable to complete requirements due to illness or CDC recommended isolation/quarantine, make-up work may be allowed if congruent with programmatic or university policies for other medically related absences. Should a student choose not to complete any course or program requirement related to clinical education, the student is responsible for contacting the course instructor and providing a rationale for "opting out." Opt-out policies may vary between programs; students should contact their individual programs for specifics on process. Delays in progression and/or graduation may occur if a student chooses to opt-out of any aspect of required coursework.

Other potential consequences and considerations:

Clinical placement sites may limit the types of patient populations with whom unvaccinated students may interact. For example, some sites do not allow students to see patients with acute respiratory illness or to interact with pregnant patients if they have not been vaccinated for COVID 19 and other infectious diseases. A student's satisfactory progression through clinical education may be impeded if students cannot demonstrate adequate training in such patient populations.

Sharing Information with Clinical Placement Site

If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or any other contagious virus, this information may need to be shared with clinical site preceptors. A separate FERPA waiver form will need to be signed by the student and completed for each preceptor site with whom test results are to be shared. This form is available online and in the Health Occupations Department main office.

This assumption of risk agreement is in effect for the course of the program of study or until replaced with a subsequent executed assumption of risk agreement form a new document is signed, whichever is greater.

I have read, understand, and voluntarily accept the risks outlined above. By signing this document, I acknowledge that I am assuming full responsibility for any potential risks associated with the activity or situation described

Student Name (Print)

Student's Signature

Date