



Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research

PRACTICUM EDUCATION MANUAL

AY 2026 – 2027

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is intended to serve as a guide to the content, purpose, and expectations of practicum education and the roles and functions of the practicum instructor and practicum site, practicum liaison, faculty advisor, and student.

Mission Statement and Strategic Focus

Like Bryn Mawr College as a whole, the GSSWSR is distinctive for its dedication to fine teaching, attentiveness to individual students, and high academic standards within a liberal arts tradition. Founded in 1915, the GSSWSR has from inception embraced scholarship, practice, and collaboration within a broad construction of social work and social welfare. Vision The GSSWSR aspires to promote social justice and wellbeing through a variety of trans-disciplinary approaches to scholarship and practice, appropriate to the complexity of social work and social welfare in the United States and internationally.

Mission The mission of our GSSWSR is to “strengthen the social fabric of society by training and preparing a dynamic, diverse, and culturally responsive workforce committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-racism. We prepare diverse students to apply person-in-environment and strengths perspectives to the promotion of well-being and the support of human rights with diverse individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. Students in our program learn about innovative and research informed approaches to practice in current and emerging contexts. Throughout we are committed to social, economic, racial and environmental justice, to trauma-awareness, and to the development and implementation of anti-racist and anti-oppressive models of teaching and practice. Our generalist and advanced specialization courses prepare students to work across disciplinary boundaries and to apply their knowledge and skills across a wide range of settings. Within the context of a liberal arts college, and intricately connected to the city of Philadelphia, we are committed to critical thinking in education, and to community-placed research that each contribute to more just and effective systems of care at the local, national, and international levels”. Statement on Accreditation

Accreditation

The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, identifies practicum education as the signature pedagogy of the social work profession. The intent of practicum education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom with the “real world” experiences of the practice setting. The Master of Social Work (MSW) at the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research (GSSWSR) of Bryn Mawr College is

accredited by the CSWE. The GSSWSR strives to ensure that practicum education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and monitored for students to achieve learning outcomes and to meet the needs of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities served.

Master of Social Service

Bryn Mawr College's Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research (GSSWSR) MSS degree is equivalent in both licensure and use to the MSW degree.

Program Overview

Effective social work leadership remains much needed, whether in service to individuals, families, organizations, or entire communities and is shaped by the knowledge and level of skill and practice experience brought into the practicum by its professionally prepared graduates. GSSWSR responds to this need through a carefully balanced curriculum designed to explore the array of opportunities available to social workers, equipping them with the knowledge, values, skills, and flexibility essential to continual growth in a changing world.

The program is designed to:

- Teach social work ethics and frameworks for applying ethical principles to social work practice.
- Promote the use of knowledge, values, and skills for social work leaders.
- Develop strong relationships, assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills.
- Utilize an integrated perspective on theory, practice, policy, research, and ethics.
- Encourage self-reflection.
- Advance social and economic justice.
- Foster a critical awareness of diversity and the social and cultural forces that impact individuals, families, organizations, and communities locally, nationally, and globally.
- Understand and apply knowledge of human behavior in multiple social, cultural, and economic contexts.
- Emphasize critical and creative thinking skills.
- Teach strategies to engage in research-informed practice and learn how practice experience can inform research for increased effectiveness of both.

- Develop students' skills for advocacy and policy practice on behalf of clients and client systems.
- Create a learning community that is both challenging and supportive.

The MSW curriculum includes generalist courses, practice courses, practicum education, and elective courses. The program for the MSW degree provides Advanced Specialization study in two areas of social work practice: Clinical Social Work Practice or COPA:

Communities, Organizations, Policy, & Advocacy. Students select one area of specialization supported by a set of required courses that are common to the practicum.

Practicum education at GSSWSR is a concurrent model whereby students participate in practice classes while simultaneously applying the necessary skills and experience.

Because of the strong integration between classroom and practicum, students must take the practicum education course and related practice course at the same time. Practice and practicum education courses are taken concurrently in four consecutive semesters (two consecutive semesters for Advanced Standing students). For more information regarding the curriculum and sequence of courses, please refer to the 2026-2027 [GSSWSR Handbook and Catalog](#).

Links to Resources

[GSSWSR Calendars](#)

GSSWSR Academic Calendar

Practicum Education Calendar (In-Person)

Practicum Education Calendar (Online)

[CSWE EPAS 2022](#)

[NASW Code of Ethics](#)

[Standards of Professional Behavior](#)

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OBJECTIVES OF PRACTICUM EDUCATION

Practicum education is an integral part of the Master of Social Service (MSW) program in the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. As a critical part of the curriculum, practicum education provides a context in which students can begin the integration of practice, policy, theory, and research. The practicum education component of the curriculum provides students with both observational learning and practical “hands-on” social work experience in preparation for professional social work practice. Through this integration and practice experience, students are expected to demonstrate the application of nine social work competencies as identified in the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE)’s 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards ([EPAS](#)).

Practicum Education Curriculum

Practicum education courses are taken concurrently with practice courses over four semesters. All students are required to apply concepts embedded in practice course assignments to their practicum education experience. Practicum learning, in turn, is integrated through class discussions and assignments. The practice perspective that guides expectations for students in the practicum education experience views individuals in their social environment, with each shaping the other. Students integrate an understanding of practice that is based on the assessment of both the needs of clients and communities as well as the site’s capacity in the provision of services.

Students in practicum education (i.e., first-year Generalist or second-year Advanced Clinical or Advanced COPA: Communities, Organizations, Policy, & Advocacy) may provide social work services and clinical interventions with individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations; contribute to policy development and advocacy initiatives; and perform these responsibilities under the supervision of a professional social worker.

In rare occasions when a practicum site is unable to arrange a qualified social worker to be the practicum instructor, the school may assume responsibility for providing students with practicum instruction from a qualified social worker so the student can complete their practicum at the site.

Generalist Year

The generalist year practicum introduces students to a broad range of social work practices and prepares them to work across system levels, including individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Grounded in the ecological, person-in-

environment, and strengths perspectives, students learn to address clients' holistic needs within the context of their environments and to strengthen the interactions between individuals and the systems that affect their well-being.

The practicum curriculum aligns with the generalist practice curriculum and its associated competencies. Students develop the foundational knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes necessary for ethical and effective social work practice. Emphasis is placed on engagement, assessment, goal setting, and intervention, while fostering self-reflection through supervision and process recordings to support ongoing professional growth.

Students learn to assess the interaction between sources of stress and support within a client's environment, as well as clients' coping strategies, strengths, and challenges. They develop skills in facilitating discussions about feelings, observing family and group dynamics, identifying environmental barriers, and providing information and support to help clients achieve their goals.

At the organizational and community levels, students gain an understanding of policies, formal and informal systems, and decision-making processes that influence service delivery. They learn to advocate for clients and the social work profession, collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders, and develop strategies that respond to client, organizational, and community needs.

Advanced Specialization Year

In the Advanced Specialization year, student practicum settings are more complex, requiring advanced level knowledge and skills built on the mastery of generalist year learning.

Advanced Clinical Social Work practicum education prepares students to provide culturally responsive interventions with individuals, couples, families, and related social systems. Using bio-psycho-social-spiritual, eco-systemic, strengths-based, risk-and-resilience, and ethical decision-making frameworks, students build on the knowledge and skills developed during the generalist year. Students further develop practice skills across multiple modalities, including individual, group, and family work, while strengthening their abilities in engagement, assessment, intervention, and the intentional use of self in professional relationships.

Advanced COPA (Communities, Organizations, Policy, & Advocacy) practicum education is designed to help students develop competence in community practice, planning, and program development. Students gain the knowledge, skills, and values needed to mobilize people and resources to address social problems and improve quality of life at the

community level.

Building on generalist practice skills in working with individuals and groups, students learn to strengthen community capacity, address individual, family, and community concerns, and respond to broader social needs. Practicum experiences emphasize role development, the conscious use of self, and strategies for achieving social change through grassroots organizing, coalition building, advocacy, and policy practice, depending on the practicum setting.

Practicum assignments further develop students' skills in needs assessment and problem analysis, goal setting, program and policy intervention, client and community empowerment, and evaluation of both process and outcomes.

PRACTICUM PLACEMENT PROCESS

Students admitted to the GSSWSR will have demonstrated academic preparedness. Students must also be able to perform the essential duties required in a practicum education setting.

Assessment of student readiness for practicum education is carried out at the time of admission and throughout the practicum placement process. Newly enrolled students will be assessed for practicum placement readiness by a member of the Office of Practicum Education Office. While anticipated to be a small number, students who may not have the necessary experience or skill level to perform successfully in practicum settings with clients may be encouraged to delay their practicum placement.

Only students (full- or part-time) officially enrolled in the MSW program can register for social work practicum education courses (B521, B522, B541, and B542) or need to be matched with an appropriate practicum site. Students must also be registered for the corresponding practice course (B501, B502, B535/B531 or B536/B532). Part-time students typically enter a practicum in their second year in the program.

Generalist Year Placement Process

Before being admitted to Practicum Education I (B521), the first practicum education course, the student must complete a Pre-Placement Questionnaire (PPQ), provide proof of completion mandated reporter training, and submit their resume. Once submitted, the student schedules an individual meeting with the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education to discuss their interests in social work learning so potential practicum education sites can be identified. The Office of Practicum Education sends the student's resume to the potential practicum sites. Please note: In most cases, only one

potential practicum site is at a time, so students are asked to prioritize potential practicum sites.

Students being considered for a practicum site must be able to be contacted by voicemail and school's email throughout the practicum placement process. After receiving the student's resume, the practicum site's contact person informs the Office of Practicum Education if they wish to interview the student. If so, the student is connected to the appropriate contact person at the site to arrange an interview. Following the interview, the Office of Practicum Education learns from both the student and site's contact person whether the site is offered, and the student accepted the placement.

Student Support Services are available to assist students with resume writing and/or preparing for the interview.

Advanced Year Placement Process

Continuing students entering the Advanced Specialization year register for Practicum Education III (B541), only after successfully completing the generalist practice courses; B501, B502, B521, and B522.

In October before their advanced specialized year, students attend a class presentation on the practicum placement process and then complete the Pre-Placement Questionnaire indicating specific practicum setting preferences. Starting in December, they meet individually with the Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Practicum Education to discuss a potential practicum placement match. A similar practicum site setting referral and interview process is followed as described above for the generalist year.

Alternative Placement Process

Some practicum sites have their own process and timeline for inviting applications of potential candidates for student practicum education experiences. This placement process usually starts October before the advanced year practicum starts.

The Office of Practicum Education will share the list with students who are planning for their advanced specialized year practicum experience. Prior to applying to any of these sites, students meet individually with the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education to discuss their career and practicum interests as well as the potential practicum placement sites they are considering. In most cases, the sites with an alternative placement process consider and/or interview more applicants than the number

of practicum placement spots available. Because of the competitive interviewing process, students can apply to up to three sites on the list. Students can shift to the traditional placement process at any time; however, they have to close the outstanding applications that they have open utilizing the alternative placement process.

Employment-Based Placements (EBP)

In some cases, students may use their current employment site as a practicum education site. To be considered for this option, students are employed in a social services capacity and the practicum site is able to meet the requirements of a social work practicum education experience. Students must be employed at the site for a minimum of six weeks prior to the start of the practicum placement. In addition, the student cannot have made a commitment to another practicum site. In these instances, the GSSWSR works closely with the employment site and the student to establish a learning experience that recognizes the complexity of the student-employee role while providing learning opportunities for the student that reflect curricular expectations of the student's level in the program. The employment based site must be willing to sign an affiliation agreement with GSSWSR.

Students who are applying for an employment-based practicum complete an EBP proposal form with their employer. The proposal must include a minimum of eight hours/week of new learning opportunities that are not typical of the student's employment responsibilities. The employer must identify a qualified practicum instructor and be willing to provide the identified practicum instructor with the time to meet the responsibilities of the practicum instructor role.

Once the form is completed and signed by the student and proposed practicum instructor, the student submits the form to the Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Practicum Education for review. If the proposal is approved, the student arranges a meeting with the Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Practicum Education and the proposed practicum instructor to discuss roles and responsibilities.

ASSIGNMENT OF PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

In assigning practicum placements, the GSSWSR considers the student's previous experiences, interests, academic and professional goals, learning needs, along with the

GSSWSR's knowledge of practicum site's resources and appropriate learning opportunities.

Students' Participation in Seeking Placements

Students may inform the Office of Practicum Education of an organization of interest that may not be listed in the practicum education database. The Office of Practicum Education must assess all potential practicum sites to determine if they meet the school's criteria. All potential practicum sites are investigated, negotiated, and arranged by the Office of Practicum Education. Given the vetting process and curricular requirements, students do not arrange their own placements and may not interview at practicum sites before discussing it with the Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Practicum Education. Students are referred to only one practicum site at a time. Students are generally placed at a different practicum site in each of the program. Requests to remain at the same practicum site in the second year are reviewed and approved by the Director of the Office of Practicum Education.

Students have an opportunity to list specific learning goals as they relate to both setting services and professional standards. Practicum placement preferences will be considered, keeping in mind that there are numerous complex factors that go into the practicum placement matching process, and requests for specific organizations, or types of settings, may not be met. These factors include, but are not limited to, the organization's competitive interviewing process, a student's prior experience working in human service settings with clients, and a student's interview and social work knowledge and skills. The interview process is vital to a good match between student and practicum placement, so students are strongly encouraged to have an in-person interview. Not all students will be accepted by their first-choice organization for placement. Some practicum sites prefer to interview several students before selecting the students who will be offered a practicum at the site. This may require some students to be referred to and/or interview with more than one practicum site, as directed by the Office of Practicum Education.

Once a student accepts a placement offer, the student is making a commitment to that practicum site and an agreement to complete their practicum education experience with the site. The placement cannot be changed without practicum advising consultation with the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education. If a change in placement is approved, the student must inform the practicum site from which they are being moved and the Office of Practicum Education in writing of their decision to relinquish the confirmed practicum placement. The previously confirmed practicum site must be notified of this before a new potential practicum placement is sought.

Onboarding Requirements

Students must apply for clearances and/or background checks, if required by the practicum site. Some practicum sites, especially those serving children or serving individuals in health care, require child abuse history clearance and criminal background check, including state police and FBI, clearances. In some instances, practicum sites also require a physical, specific immunizations, and drug screenings. To assist with obtaining a FBI clearance and/or drug screen, GSSWSR has established a relationship with CastleBranch. Please use this [link](#) for more information. CastleBranch is an optional resource for students, if needed. Students are responsible for all costs associated with clearances and tests.

An occurrence on the criminal background check or child abuse history clearance or negative findings on tests, including a drug screen may result in a delay in the start of the practicum experience or prevent the student from being placed at a practicum site. A criminal background history may also impact their ability to obtain licensure as professional social workers. If a student is refused a placement because of an undisclosed criminal history that subsequently appears on a background check, this will suspend the placement process. The Committee for Academic Progress and Support will then be convened to determine the next steps in the practicum placement process and the student's continued status in the program.

Conflicts of Interest

To avoid conflicts of interest and other potential complications, students are not permitted to carry out a practicum placement in a practicum site wherein either they or an immediate family member has or is currently receiving services. In addition, a family member or friend cannot serve as the student's practicum instructor or task supervisor or be the immediate supervisor of the student's assigned practicum instructor or task supervisor. It is the responsibility of the student to decline (or not select) a placement based on a conflict of interest.

Practicum Site-Declines Placement

If a student is not accepted after their initial interview with a potential practicum placement, the student must have a conversation with the Director or Assistant Director of

Practicum Education to see if interviewing with another practicum site is warranted. If the student is not accepted by a practicum site a second time, the reason for the student's non-acceptance by that practicum site will be evaluated by the Office of Practicum Education. If the non-acceptance is due to student-related issues, the student will meet with either the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education for further advisement and assessment of student readiness for practicum placement. A decision may be made by the Director of Practicum Education to refer the student to the Committee for Academic Progress and Support for further advisement. If the student is rejected for practicum site-related reasons, like space, competition, supervision, etc., the student will be offered other placement options until an appropriate match is made.

Student-Declines Placement Offer

If a student declines more than one offer of a practicum placement following an interview with the practicum site, the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education will meet with the student to discuss the reasons for declining the second offer and reassess the student's readiness for a practicum placement. Planning for another placement at that point is at the discretion of the Director of Practicum Education, in consultation with the Dean.

Process for Requesting an Employment-Based Placement (EBP)

The option of proposing an Employment-Based Placement (EBP) is available for students who are currently employed in a human service capacity in an organization that meets the criteria for an approved placement setting.

Employment-Based Placement Criteria

EBP criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Adequate resources to support a student's practicum and the availability of learning opportunities that clearly link to the nine social work competencies and the student's level of practice (generalist or advanced specialized).
- Eight hours per week need to include new learning opportunities (not current employment responsibilities) to enhance the student's educational experience.

- To be approved, the EBP must meet all School requirements and learning objectives.
- In accordance with CSWE policy, credit cannot be given for past work experience. In addition, credit will not be given for hours completed before the EBP proposal is approved.
- Students meet with the GSSWSR Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Practicum Education and request the EBP proposal. Students then must complete the EBP proposal and obtain signatures documenting approval of all relevant organizational personnel, including the appropriate administrator's signatory/or designee, the student's current immediate employment supervisor/or designee, and the proposed practicum instructor.
- The completed EBP proposal, which is signed by all of the above as well as by the student, is submitted to the Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Practicum Education.
- The student and proposed practicum instructor then meet with the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education for final approval of the proposal.

Guidelines for Students in Employment-Based Placements

- Students must discuss with the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education their intent to request an employment-based placement. Students cannot have already accepted a practicum experience with another organization. Students must be able to have practicum assignments that offer opportunities to practice social work competencies according to CSWE's 2022 EPAS and GSSWSR's criteria for an approved employment-based practicum experience. In addition, students need to have a minimum of eight hours/week of new learning opportunities that align with the curriculum requirements.
- The student understands that there is the possibility of additional hours above the normal work week might be needed to achieve the placement requirements.
- The student must have a qualified practicum instructor who does not have a conflict of interest and is willing to provide a minimum of one hour/week of integrated social work instruction/supervision.

- The student commits to remaining in the employing organization for the duration of the academic year. If the student's employment or practicum experience is prematurely ended, the procedure for managing prematurely ended placements will be followed.

Guidelines for Employer

- The employment site will provide the student professional learning experiences that allow the student to practice social work competencies commensurate with the student's curricular level, eight hours/week of new learning opportunities, and required practicum time throughout the academic year.
- The employment site identifies a qualified practicum instructor (an MSW plus two years of post-graduate experience) who agrees to provide a minimum of one hour of educationally focused weekly supervision.
- The employment site will provide the student with flexibility to attend related classes.
- The Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education agree that the assignments provided to an EBP placement student are consistent with the educational objectives of the school, and that the assignments (client caseload, administrative duties, etc.) are designed and planned to enhance the student's professional development. This may mean lighter caseloads, planned and varied assignments for educational purposes, and/or the possibility of additional hours above the normal workweek to achieve placement requirements.
- Generalist/first-year students complete 210 hours/semester (equivalent to two full practicum days/week), and advanced-specialized year students complete 304 hours/semester (equivalent to three full practicum days/week)
- The employment site must be willing to sign an affiliation agreement between the site and GSSWSR.

Guidelines for EBP Practicum Instructors

- The practicum instructor must complete the application and submit a copy of their resume.

- As required by GSSWSR and CSWE, the practicum instructor must have an MSW from a CSWE-accredited school of social work plus a minimum of two years post-master's experience in social work practice. The minimum requirement of post-master's social work practice experience is calculated in relation to the total number of full-time and equivalent professional practice experience.
- The practicum instructor must be able to provide the student with one hour of individual instruction/supervision every week, review the student's practicum related assignments, and complete the student's evaluations.
- The practicum instructor must evaluate students as learners.
- The practicum instructor must meet at least once/semester, virtually or on-site with a designated practicum liaison from the school and their student to discuss learning objectives. The practicum instructor must be available for additional meetings if necessary for the student's learning needs.

GSSWSR Guidelines for Monitoring Employment-Based Placements

- The assigned practicum liaison will carefully monitor the EBP placement to ensure that the practicum assignments and supervision are proceeding according to the plan.
- The practicum liaison will meet virtually or in-person with the student and practicum instructor once a semester or more, if needed, to ensure that the student's learning goals are on target.
- GSSWSR will hold optional training for practicum instructors and task supervisors- including the Seminar in Practicum Instruction (SIPI) series - to support practicum instructors.
- GSSWSR provides the practicum instructor with access to the Practicum Education Manual and other pertinent information.

PRACTICUM SITE-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP AND JOINT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

- Both the GSSWSR and the practicum site have responsibilities in the education of social work students. In this joint endeavor, each makes contributions to and has expectations of the student and each other. To implement mutual accountability, the GSSWSR provides a practicum liaison for practicum education coordination, oversight of student learning, and partnership with each practicum site.
- The GSSWSR and practicum site select students, agree to expectations, student learning goals, and evaluate their learning outcomes. A grade of Satisfactory, Minimal Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, or Incomplete is assigned to the student by the practicum liaison each semester.
- The practicum site provides facilities and learning opportunities for implementing the goals of the practicum education program.
- The practicum site staff member is selected by the practicum site in cooperation with the GSSWSR to serve as practicum instructor for the student. The selected practicum instructor must have the requisite master's degree from an accredited social work program plus at least two years of post-master's social work experience. The practicum site allocates sufficient time for the practicum instructor to coordinate various learning opportunities and provide at least one hour of individual supervision to the student per week.
- The practicum site will, to the best of its ability, provide release time for the practicum instructor to attend general sessions at the GSSWSR with other practicum instructors and time to meet with the practicum liaison or another member of the practicum education team. First-time practicum instructors who have not previously supervised graduate social work students are strongly encouraged to attend the Seminar in Practicum Instruction (SIFI). All practicum instructors and task supervisors are invited to attend also.

Selection of Practicum Sites and Practicum Instructors

Practicum sites approved by the GSSWSR must meet the standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and demonstrate the capacity to provide educationally sound learning experiences that support the goals of the practicum education program.

Approved practicum sites must:

- Designate a qualified practicum instructor who holds an MSW/MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program and has a minimum of two years of post-master's social work experience. The practicum instructor must provide at least one hour of individual supervision per week (in person or virtually), review student assignments, and complete required evaluations. Individuals who do not hold an MSW/MSW degree may serve as approved task supervisors but may not serve as practicum instructors.
- Provide the practicum instructor and student time to meet at least one hour per week for weekly practicum instruction or alternating individual and group supervision.
- Provide learning opportunities and assignments that align with the student's concurrent practice coursework and support the development of the CSWE 2022 EPAS competencies. As much as possible, generalist year students should have opportunities to engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and/or communities.
- Ensure that qualified staff are available to support and consult with students in their work with clients and client systems.
- Provide adequate resources and facilities, including appropriate workspace, technology, and administrative support, and demonstrate a commitment to student learning. Unless otherwise approved, students are expected to complete at least 50% of their practicum hours onsite.
- Demonstrate a mission, values, and practice approach consistent with the ethics and values of the social work profession and adhere to principles and best practices in social work education.
- Operate in accordance with principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination and be free of conflicts of interest as outlined in the GSSWSR Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Maintain a current affiliation agreement with Bryn Mawr College GSSWSR outlining the mutual responsibilities and expectations of the practicum partnership.

Selection of Practicum Instructors

Practicum instructors are selected by the practicum site and approved by the GSSWSR Office of Practicum Education. Practicum instructors supervising a graduate social work student for the first time are strongly encouraged to participate in the Seminar in Practicum

Instruction (SIPI). All practicum instructors are invited to attend the annual Practicum Education Kick-Off Orientation, Seminars in Practicum Instruction, and other professional development opportunities offered by the GSSWSR.

External Practicum Instruction

When a practicum site is unable to provide a qualified MSS/MSW practicum instructor, the Office of Practicum Education may assign an external practicum instructor. External practicum instructors are MSS/MSW professionals with at least two years of post-degree social work experience and are selected by the Director of the Office of Practicum Education.

In these instances, the practicum site must designate an approved task supervisor to oversee the student's day-to-day activities and learning experiences. The student and external practicum instructor meet weekly for integrative social work supervision, and supervision time counts toward the student's required practicum hours. The external practicum instructor reviews student assignments and collaborates with the task supervisor in completing the student's evaluations.

Assignment of Students for Practicum Placements

Practicum education is a required component of the graduate social work curriculum and is regarded as equivalent in importance to classroom learning. The Office of Practicum Education is responsible for identifying, vetting, negotiating, and approving practicum placements. While student interests and preferences are carefully considered, placement decisions are based on the student's educational goals, experience, learning needs, and the availability of appropriate learning opportunities at practicum sites.

Students are referred to only one practicum site at a time. The length of the placement process varies and may be affected by site responsiveness, interview scheduling, competitive selection processes, affiliation agreement negotiations, and other administrative requirements. Students are expected to remain in regular communication with the Office of Practicum Education and respond promptly to placement-related communications.

Practicum Placement Process

Step 1: Practicum Education Information Session - Current students attend a practicum education information session during their Generalist Practice course. These sessions provide an overview of the placement process, timelines, and expectations for the advanced year practicum.

Step 2: Submission of Placement Materials -Students complete the Pre-Placement Questionnaire in Sonia and upload a current résumé and proof of completion of mandated reporter training.

Step 3: Individual Practicum Education Meeting -All students entering a practicum placement, including newly admitted students, meet individually with the Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Practicum Education to discuss their interests, experience, and learning goals.

Step 4: Site Matching and Referral- Following the individual meeting, the Office of Practicum Education identifies a potential practicum site that aligns with the student's experience, abilities, and professional goals. The student's résumé is shared with the site, and only one site is contacted at a time.

Step 5: Interview Scheduling - When a site expresses interest in interviewing the student, the Office of Practicum Education notifies the student. Students are expected to contact the site within 24–48 hours to schedule an interview. Students are strongly encouraged to interview in person so they can develop realistic expectations and reduce the typical anxiety of starting a new experience.

Step 6: Practicum Site Interview - The student interviews with the practicum site and encouraged to discuss learning opportunities, supervision, orientation procedures, and any onboarding requirements, such as background checks, clearances, health screenings, or immunizations.

Step 7: Interview Outcome and Follow-Up - Student notifies the Office of Practicum Education of the interview outcome. If the site does not offer a practicum placement to the student or the student does not feel that the site is a good match, the student schedules a follow-up meeting with the Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Practicum Education to discuss the next steps.

If a second practicum site interview occurs that does not result in a match, see the steps outlined under “[Practicum Site-Declined Placement](#)” and “[Student-Declined Placement](#)”.

Step 8: Placement Confirmation -When a match is confirmed, the student, practicum site, and Office of Practicum Education formalize the placement. The student submits the required confirmation documentation in Sonia and sends a confirmation email to the practicum site and the Office of Practicum Education.

Step 9: Preparation for Placement - Prior to the start of the placement, students should confirm the identity of their practicum instructor, complete any required onboarding processes and paperwork, and clarify start dates, schedules, orientation requirements,

and other expectations. Failure to complete required documentation may delay the start of the placement or result in withdrawal of the placement offer.

Step 10: Final Site Coordination - The Office of Practicum Education coordinates with the practicum site to provide all required school and placement documentation and facilitate a successful start to the practicum experience.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GSSWSR TO THE PRACTICUM INSTRUCTORS AND PRACTICUM SITES

The Office of Practicum Education will:

1. Select for placement, in consultation with the practicum site, students who are appropriate for the practicum site.
2. Assign a practicum liaison who has an MSW/MSS degree plus at least 3 years of post-graduate social work experience supporting students in the practicum experience.
3. Train, support, and supervise the assigned practicum liaison so they can educate the practicum site and practicum instructor on the curriculum and GSSWSR and policies, support the practicum instructor and student, provide mediation if needed, and monitor the educational experience.
4. Provide orientation and trainings for the practicum instructors and task supervisors.
5. Ensure access to practicum education learning tools (learning agreements and evaluations, process recording outlines, evaluations, etc.) in Sonia.
6. Provide a copy of the practicum education calendar.
7. Facilitate the execution of the affiliation agreement between GSSWSR and the practicum site.
8. Assign a qualified external practicum instructor, if the practicum site does not have a MSW/MSS with two years of post- graduate experience. Please see the section on [Selection of Practicum Instructor](#).

Role and Responsibilities of Practicum Liaison

1. Educate and support the practicum site and practicum instructor in meeting the expectations of the practicum experience. This includes, but is not limited to, the practicum educational experience, curriculum, assignments, policies, and structure.
2. Consult with the practicum site and practicum instructor in developing high quality

learning opportunities that ensure a balance between direct/indirect learning experiences that meet the curriculum requirements.

3. Address student, practicum instructor, and practicum site's inquiries and needs promptly throughout the academic year.
4. Conduct monthly virtual seminars for student cohort. The seminars are designed to support the practicum experience.
5. Meet at least once individually (in-person or visually) with the student each semester to discuss the student's learning experiences in the practicum and monitor the students' progress.
6. Meet at least once individually (in-person or visually) with the practicum instructor each semester to discuss the student's learning experiences in the practicum and monitor the students' progress.
7. Review, grade, and provide timely feedback on student assignments and evaluation. Assigning a final grade of "Satisfactory," "Minimally Satisfactory," "Unsatisfactory," or "Incomplete" to the student at the end of each semester.
8. Monitor completion of student hours.
9. Coordinate and conduct one in-person site visit in the fall semester and one virtual site visit in the spring semester to review the student's learning opportunities and progress at the practicum site.
10. Maintain consistent communication with students, practicum instructors, and the Office of Practicum Education. If concerns surface, maintain transparent documentation that is shared with the student's educational team including but not limited to the student and practicum instructor.
11. Inform the Office of Practicum Education of any changes in student assignment and/or practicum instruction, including changes in contact information for students, practicum instructors, task supervisors or practicum site.
12. Meet with the student and/or practicum instructor as needed to address any issues or concerns arising within the practicum setting.

Responsibilities of Practicum Site and Practicum Instructor

The Practicum Site will:

1. Coordinate with GSSWSR to provide a practicum education experience that

complements and augments classroom teaching.

2. Provide time for the practicum instructor to provide a minimum one hour/week of individual practicum instruction with the student, be available if student has an urgent practice related question or concern, review assignments, meet with the practicum liaison (as needed), and complete the student's evaluations.
3. Provide time for the practicum instructor to meet (in-person or virtually) at least once in each of the semesters with the practicum liaison and student together for a site visit.
4. Follow the academic calendar established by the GSSWSR for practicum education and within that framework expect the student to accommodate to practicum site hours, including evening hours and if the student works overtime, provide compensatory time.
5. Review and sign an affiliation agreement between GSSWSR and the practicum site.

The Practicum Instructor will:

1. Although completion of the learning agreement is the responsibility of the student, the practicum instructor collaborates with the student to ensure that the learning goals are realistic for the mission and setting of the site. This functions as a learning contract which outlines the student's learning goals, activities and time frames.
2. Provide the student with orientation to and information about the practicum site and community, including the mission, policies, philosophy, funding sources, populations served, strengths and weaknesses and the service delivery system.
3. Assume overall responsibility for coordination of the educational experience while encouraging practicum site staff to participate in the student's practicum experience.
4. Be selective in making assignments to ensure variety and progression in learning.
5. Be available to the student for one hour/ week in-person (on-site or virtually) individual practicum instruction or if appropriate alternating group supervision. Be available for brief conferences as needed.
6. Assist the student in meeting professional responsibilities and using time appropriately; if the student carries out practicum hours more than those required, provide compensatory time.
7. Act as an advocate for the student in gaining access to learning experiences within the practicum site and within the professional community.

8. Keep the practicum liaison informed of the student's progress; raise questions as needed and advise the practicum liaison of concerns and problems involving the student after discussing them first with the student.
9. Keep the practicum liaison informed of any changes or problems at the practicum site which may affect the practicum.
10. Support and adhere to all relevant practices, social work values, and professional standards, including the NASW Code of Ethics.
11. When possible, arrange for participation in selected practicum site activities such as committees, conferences, attendance at practicum site board meetings, and in-service training.
12. Aid in the development of the student's professional social work identity.
13. Review and comment upon student's practicum related assignments. Complete the student's evaluation at the end of each semester.
14. Provide an educational climate wherein the student and the Practicum Instructor can identify learning needs, maximize the student's learning potential, and mutually evaluate the student's progress in relation to the educational goals of the GSSWSR.

Responsibilities of the Student in the Practicum Site

Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, accountability, and active engagement in their practicum education experience. Responsibilities include:

1. Maintain Eligibility for Practicum
 - Meet all academic requirements, maintain satisfactory academic progress, and demonstrate readiness for practicum placement.
2. Complete Required Documentation and Assignments
 - Submit all required practicum forms, assignments, and learning activities by established deadlines using Sonia and other designated platforms. Failure to meet deadlines may result in a reduced grade and review by the Office of Practicum Education.
3. Adhere to Practicum Schedules and Attendance Requirements
 - Complete minimum of 210 hours per semester for the generalist year practicum and a minimum of 304 hours per semester for the advanced year practicum. The required hours do not include mealtimes unless the hours

are incorporated into work responsibilities, i.e. eating a meal with a client(s), meetings that include a meal. Missed time will need to be made up.

- Student and their practicum instructor negotiate the days and hours for the practicum. These should be consistent hours each week so the practicum instructor can plan for the student's time at the practicum. At least one day/week should be completed at the site.
- Communicate with your practicum instructor, in advance, if you need to miss a practicum day or are ill. Arrange with your practicum instructor and practicum liaison a plan to make up the missed time.
- In the event of inclement weather, use your judgement as to whether it is safe to commute to practicum. If in your judgment it is not safe to travel, inform your practicum instructor and inquire about working remotely that day.
- Follow the GSSWSR academic calendar and meet practicum site scheduling expectations, including availability during standard business hours unless otherwise approved by the Office of Practicum Education. Please note that students are not permitted to attend practicum when the university is closed the last week of December.
- Students do not have to attend practicum during spring break. The exception would be for students placed in an educational/academic (school or university) site that provides a spring recess at a different time from GSSWSR; in those situations, the student would be expected to carry out their regular practicum hours during the designated GSSWSR spring break, in order to observe the practicum site spring break schedule away from the practicum.
- Be punctual, reliable, and consistent in attendance and assigned responsibilities.
- Failure to complete the required time in practicum placement may result in an Incomplete or Unsatisfactory grade for the Practicum course.
- Cumulative planned overtime hours may not be carried over from one semester to the next.

4. Demonstrate Professional and Ethical Conduct

- Fulfill commitments to clients, practicum sites, practicum instructors, practicum liaisons and GSSWSR.

- Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics, the GSSWSR Standards of Professional Behavior, and all practicum site policies and procedures.
 - Identify oneself as a social work student in all professional interactions.
5. Actively Engage in Learning and Supervision
- Accept the dual role of learner and emerging practitioner.
 - Take responsibility for self-directed learning, including developing and updating the Learning Agreement as needed.
 - Participate fully in weekly supervision by preparing agendas, presenting cases and questions, discussing learning needs, and seeking feedback.
 - Reflect on progress, strengths, and areas for growth throughout the practicum experience.
6. Participate in Practicum Site Learning Opportunities
- Attend and engage in relevant agency activities, including staff meetings, trainings, conferences, committee work, and other educational opportunities.
7. Communicate Effectively
- Keep the practicum instructor informed of relevant coursework and integrate classroom learning into practicum activities when appropriate.
 - Maintain regular communication with the practicum liaison and promptly address any concerns or challenges affecting the practicum experience.
 - Be accessible by email, phone, and voicemail to the practicum site, practicum instructor, practicum liaison, and GSSWSR.
8. Participate in Practicum Education Meetings and Evaluations
- Meet with the practicum liaison as required and participate in conferences involving the practicum instructor and practicum liaison.
 - Complete all required evaluations and surveys, including the Student Evaluation of the Practicum Experience.
9. Maintain Confidentiality and Professional Standards
- Obtain practicum site approval before using any case material or records outside of the practicum site and ensure that all confidentiality standards are maintained.

- Follow site safety policies and protocols.

10. Driving

- The School's insurance policies do not cover students driving when traveling to/from or for a practicum placement. It also does not cover students when using a vehicle for practicum purposes, including driving clients.
- Because they are responsible if an incident should occur when driving clients, students are encouraged not to drive clients in their own vehicles.

11. Complete Placement Requirements

- Review, sign, and comply with the practicum placement attestation form.
- Complete any required background checks, child abuse clearances, health screenings, drug testing, or other onboarding requirements. Students are responsible for any associated costs.

By accepting a practicum placement, students acknowledge their responsibility to actively participate in their professional education and to uphold the standards of the social work profession, the practicum site, and the GSSWSR.

Extended Two-Day/Week Practicum for Part-time Students

During the spring semester of the first year, part-time students who are not in an employment-based placement, may choose to complete their first- and second-year practicum placements on a two-day-per-week schedule. Under this option, the first-year practicum placement concludes at the end of June, and the second-year placement begins during the last week of July. Part-time students choosing the two-day/week option may elect to reverse this decision no later than March 1st of their first year in practicum.

ACCESS SERVICES FOR STUDENTS REQUESTING ACCOMMODATION

Bryn Mawr College and the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research (GSSWSR) provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended. Accommodations are designed to ensure equal access to educational opportunities and do not alter or lower essential academic or practicum

requirements. Please refer to the GSSWSR 2026–2027 Catalog for detailed policies and procedures regarding disability accommodations.

Students who believe they may need accommodations for their practicum experience should contact Access Services as early as possible. Access Services supports students with learning, medical, physical, and psychological disabilities and can provide information regarding eligibility and required documentation. To receive accommodations, students must complete the Access Services registration process and meet all documentation requirements.

Access Services Contact Information:

Joanna Timmerman, Director of Access Services

Email: jtimmerman@brynmawr.edu

Phone: 610-526-7516

Website: www.brynmawr.edu/access-services

Location: Eugenia Chase Guild Hall, Rooms 103 and 104

Bryn Mawr College does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to its programs and activities. Consistent with this commitment, GSSWSR does not discriminate in practicum placements and expects practicum sites to provide reasonable accommodations for students with approved accommodation plans. Please note that accommodations approved for classroom settings do not automatically apply to practicum education and must be considered separately based on the essential requirements of the practicum experience. Only students who have registered with Access Services and received approved accommodations are eligible for practicum accommodations.

Reasonable accommodations consistent with the requirements of the practicum education can be implemented only for students who have registered with Access Services at Bryn Mawr College and have received verification of eligibility for accommodations. The GSSWSR will work with organizations to plan and make reasonable accommodations for students' needs. Specific information concerning students' health or disability will remain confidential and will not be reported to any practicum site unless a student requests.

All students regardless of accommodation status are held to the same criteria for a successful grade in practicum education. While at their practicum site, students must be able to meet essential requirements of the site based practicum experience, the corresponding practicum education course, GSSWSR's standards for professional behavior, and social work competencies as outlined in CSWE's 2022 EPAS. In order to receive accommodations in practicum, students will need to share a copy of a current Verification of Eligibility for Accommodations letter (obtained through Access Services) with the Director of the Office of Practicum Education, the practicum liaison serving as

instructor of the practicum education course and the assigned practicum instructor at their site.

PROLONGED ILLNESS/EMERGENCY

Occasionally, illness or other emergencies may require a student to be absent from their practicum placement for an extended period. Students must notify their practicum instructor of any illness or emergency that prevents them from attending practicum. The practicum liaison should be informed of any absence exceeding two days in a semester.

Plans for making up missed practicum time should be developed in consultation with both the practicum instructor and the practicum liaison. Students who anticipate a prolonged absence should also contact the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education and Student Services to discuss the possibility of a leave of absence.

Because the practicum course is taken concurrently with the practice course, absences totaling more than three weeks during a semester may result in a referral to the Committee for Academic Progress and Support (CAPS) and possibly a 'U' for the course unless the student has taken a temporary leave of absence approved by the Dean of the GSSWSR.

TRAINING, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES

Assignments and professional development opportunities required or requested by the practicum site may count toward a student's required practicum hours. Examples include outside reading, attendance at meetings, conferences, workshops, training sessions, and other site-related assignments or activities.

To ensure that students have adequate opportunities for direct practice and client engagement, participation in trainings and other professional development activities should be limited and should not significantly reduce time spent in client-related work.

Students must obtain prior approval from their practicum instructor before participating in such activities and receiving practicum hour credit.

PRACTICUM SITE STRIKE/WORK ACTION

Students are not expected to report to their practicum placement if any portion of the workforce is on strike or engaged in a work stoppage or other job action. Students must notify both their practicum instructor and practicum liaison of the situation and their decision not to report to the placement. Practicum time missed must be made up to meet

program requirements.

In consultation with the practicum instructor, the student should develop a plan for addressing any client emergencies that may arise during the strike or work stoppage. This plan must be shared with the Practicum Liaison.

If a strike or work stoppage extends beyond two weeks, the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education may reassign the student to an alternative practicum placement.

PRACTICUM EDUCATION ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Practicum experience is part of the Practicum Education courses. Students will complete the following and submit the documents to their practicum instructor and practicum liaison in *Sonia*:

- Reflection Journals are completed by generalist year students only. They are not shared with the practicum instructor.
- Learning Agreement – The assignment is completed in the fall semester and revised in the spring semester. When a student is replaced, they need to complete a new learning agreement for the new practicum experience.
- Three (3) process recordings/semester, signed and reviewed by practicum instructor.
- The Practicum Instructor may require additional process recordings for use in practicum supervision.
- The student portion of the Final Practicum Evaluation (The remainder of the practicum evaluation is completed by practicum instructor.)

For more information about completing assignments and due dates, students should refer to the course syllabus and Instructional Booklet for Learning Agreements and Process-Recordings.

Student Practicum Evaluation

Evaluation is an ongoing and collaborative component of practicum education that begins with the development of the learning agreement and continues throughout the placement through supervision, feedback, and formal assessment. The evaluation process promotes professional growth by helping students assess their own practice, recognize strengths and areas for improvement, and identify future learning goals.

Ongoing evaluation provides formative feedback, supports accountability in social work practice, helps identify concerns and areas of strength, and guides the student's continued development. Students and practicum instructors should regularly assess progress toward the learning objectives and social work competencies outlined in the learning agreement.

A formal Practicum Evaluation is completed at the end of each semester. This evaluation provides the student, practicum instructor, and GSSWSR with an assessment of the student's progress and achievement of learning outcomes. Evaluations should be based on the student's learning objectives, demonstrated competencies as outlined by CSWE EPAS, and other mutually agreed-upon expectations. Assessments should be supported by specific examples from practice.

The Practicum Instructor is responsible for preparing the written Practicum Evaluation and conducting an evaluation conference with the student. Students should be provided with sufficient time to review and reflect on the evaluation before meeting with the practicum instructor to discuss its content. The evaluation conference should focus on the student's learning during the semester, the supervisory relationship, and goals for future development. A brief reflection on the evaluation process itself may also be beneficial.

Students may be asked to provide input into the evaluation process; however, they are not responsible for writing their own practicum evaluations. Following submission of the final evaluation in Sonia, students are required to complete a self-assessment. A copy of the completed evaluation will be available to the student in Sonia.

Practicum Education Requirements and Grading

The final grade for the practicum education course (Satisfactory (S), Marginal Satisfactory (S-), Unsatisfactory (U), or Incomplete (I)) is given at the end of each semester. The practicum liaison, as the course instructor, is responsible for determining and assigning grades for assignments and the final course grade. Please refer to the course syllabus for more details.

In the rare event of a significant discrepancy between the assessment of the practicum instructor and the practicum liaison regarding a student's performance or course grades, the practicum instructor and practicum liaison will confer before the grade is issued. If necessary, the Director of Practicum Education may be asked to facilitate the discussion and provide recommendations. The practicum liaison retains responsibility for assigning the final practicum grade.

A student who receives an Unsatisfactory (U) grade will be referred to the Committee for Academic Progress and Support (CAPS). Since the practicum and practicum courses must be taking concurrently, if a student receives a (U) for one course, they must retake both

courses.

Addressing Issues in the Practicum

Most students adjust successfully to their practicum placement following an orientation and transition period that typically lasts four to six weeks. Open communication among students, practicum instructors, and practicum liaisons is essential to promoting learning and resolving concerns related to scheduling, work expectations, supervision, risk management, professional conduct, or other aspects of the practicum experience.

Students are encouraged to discuss concerns directly with their practicum instructor as a first step and to seek consultation and support from their practicum liaison as early as possible. Concerns involving student safety, ethical issues, legal matters, or significant risks to clients, students, or the practicum site must be reported immediately to the practicum liaison and Director of Practicum Education.

When concerns regarding a student's physical, emotional, or psychological safety and well-being become known to a practicum liaison or the Assistant Director of Practicum Education, the Director of Practicum Education must be notified immediately followed by a discussion of the situation. If the concern falls under Title IX, a Title IX report will be filed with the College's Office of Civil Rights and Title IX. Students should be aware that all information shared with any member of their educational team may be shared with other members of their educational team, if the sharing of information relates to or may impact their learning experience.

Steps for Addressing Issues in the Practicum

Open communication among students, practicum instructors, and practicum liaisons is essential to resolve concerns and support student success in practicum. When questions, conflicts, performance concerns, or professional conduct issues arise, the following process should be followed:

The student and practicum instructor should first attempt to discuss and resolve the concern directly.

If the concern cannot be resolved, either the student or practicum instructor should contact the practicum liaison.

The practicum liaison will consult with the parties involved, provide guidance, and help identify possible solutions.

The practicum liaison will notify the Director of Practicum Education immediately after becoming aware of the concern and provide relevant information.

If needed, the practicum liaison will convene a meeting with the student and practicum instructor to discuss the issue and develop a plan for resolution. The Director of Practicum Education will be informed of the outcome.

If concerns persist, the practicum liaison and Director of Practicum Education will determine appropriate next steps, which may include a formal support plan, reassignment of the placement, referral to the student's Faculty Academic Advisor, or referral to the Committee for Academic Progress and Support (CAPS). The Director of Practicum Education may consult with the Dean as needed.

If the student is asked to leave the practicum site, the policy for addressing students dismissed from practicum placement due to performance concerns will be followed.

When problems or concerns arise regarding the student's functioning or performance at the practicum site, it is always crucial for the practicum instructor to contact the practicum liaison as soon as possible. The practicum liaison is available to consult about the problem or concern and help to identify the issues and suggest steps towards a resolution. Discussing the plans involved to improve the situation is always the first step. The practicum liaison will remain involved to monitor the progress toward changes being initiated. If needed, a meeting of the practicum liaison, student, and practicum instructor – and, at times, the practicum site supervisor and/or the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum education, will be held to assess and locate areas of difficulty.

If problems persist despite the efforts of the practicum instructor, student, and practicum liaison to resolve them, a more formal step may be taken. If the concern relates to the student's performance a Practicum education Support Plan (available in *Sonia*) should be developed and monitored.

Students Dismissed from Practicum Placement Due to Performance Concerns

A student's practicum learning performance is subject to an ongoing and shared assessment by the student's practicum instructor and practicum liaison. A concern with the student's practicum learning performance may be present if a student is having difficulty meeting the learning objectives for practicum. Examples of such difficulty include, but are not limited to:

- Inability to maintain relationships with clients.
- Difficulty making active use of supervision and professional feedback.
- Limited capacity for self-reflection as it relates to work.

- Difficulty completing practicum site paperwork and related assignments.
- Difficulty sufficiently developing social work skills and knowledge.
- Difficulty observing appropriate boundaries with clients.
- Difficulty adhering to the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Difficulty maintaining professional standards of behavior, including meeting practicum site and practicum requirements.
- Unwillingness to engage with a variety of clients, client issues, and practice modalities.
- Difficulty working collaboratively with other professionals in the practicum site and community at large in one's professional social work role.
- Difficulty reflecting on the role of one's positionalities and biases as they influence the nature of one's work.

When a student is dismissed from their practicum or the student leaves the practicum after receiving feedback that they are not meeting the learning objectives of the practicum, the following process is followed:

1. Notification -Please note that practicum sites voluntarily host students. Although we encourage them to follow the notification process below, practicum sites can utilize their internal process and/or dismiss a student without previous notification.
 - When possible, prior to dismissing the student from the practicum placement, the practicum site and practicum liaison work to collaboratively create a Practicum Education Performance Plan to address identified concerns regarding the student's performance.
 - The practicum site notifies the Office of Practicum Education that the student is being dismissed from the practicum site.
 - The student is informed by the practicum site or the Office of Practicum Education within two business days of the decision to dismiss the student from the practicum site.
 - The Office of Practicum Education in collaboration with the practicum instructor completes the Dismissal from Practicum Placement Form which is then shared with the CAPS (Committee for Academic Progress and Support) team.

- After being informed of the decision to dismiss them from the practicum placement, the student must submit completed Reflection Questions for a Change in Placement Form to the Director of the Office of Practicum Education. This form will be shared with the CAPS team.

2. Initial Meeting

- The Assistant Dean of Student and Career Services contacts the student to schedule a CAPS meeting.
- Present at the CAPS meeting may include:
 - A representative of the Student Support Team
 - The student's academic advisor
 - A representative of the Office of Practicum Education
 - A representative of the Dean's Office
- During the CAPS meeting, there is:
 - A review of the practicum site's reasons for dismissal,
 - An opportunity for the student to provide their perspective of what occurred,
 - Explanation of the review and decision-making process.

3. Considerations for Assessing Whether to Replace the Student

- Professional Conduct
 - Ethical violations (NASW Code of Ethics)
 - Safety concerns endangering clients, staff, or the student
 - Boundary violations or inappropriate behavior
 - Repeated absences, lack of communication, or failure to follow agency policies
- Practice Competencies
 - Ability to integrate supervision
 - Basic practice skill development commensurate with training level
 - Documentation issues
 - Failure to meet minimum hours or core competencies
- Academic Readiness

- Performance in practice-related coursework
- Demonstrated efforts to address previously identified concerns
- Responsiveness and Accountability
 - Insight into behaviors leading to dismissal
 - Willingness to engage in remediation
 - Commitment to reflective learning and professional development
- Severity and Pattern
 - Was this a single incident or part of an established pattern?
 - Was the problem correctable?
 - Would another practicum site surface the same concerns?

4. Possible Outcomes

- Replacement
 - There is indication that the reasons for the dismissal are remediable, and
 - The student demonstrates insight and accountability for the issues that resulted in the dismissal, and
 - The student agrees to the terms of the Practicum Education Remediation Plan.
 - Even in cases where replacement is agreed upon, replacement depends on practicum site availability and timelines can vary. The Office of Practicum Education will work to place the student with a practicum that will meet the student's educational needs.
 - The student agrees to the terms of the Practicum Education Remediation Plan, or
 - The student has been dismissed from two practicum sites during the semester.
- Decision not to Replace (will result in the student receiving a 'U' for the course and a CAPS meeting to determine next steps)
 - Serious ethical breaches, or
 - Client endangerment, or

- There have been three premature dismissals (two replacements) over the course of the student's time in the program, or
- There is indication that the student is not willing to or unable to address the reasons for the dismissal, or
- The student demonstrates a lack of insight or willingness to accept accountability for the issues that resulted in the dismissal, or
- The student does not agree to the terms of the Practicum Education Remediation Plan.

5. Appeals Process

- If students want to appeal the decision, they should refer to the GSSWSR appeals process.

Withdrawal from Practicum Placement Unrelated to Student Performance

In some circumstances, a student may be withdrawn from and reassigned to another practicum placement for reasons unrelated to the student's performance. Decisions regarding reassignment are made by the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education in consultation with the Practicum Liaison and may be based on factors such as:

- Insufficient learning opportunities or resources at the practicum site, with no reasonable opportunity for improvement.
- Practicum site closure, restructuring, or other organizational changes that significantly affect supervision or learning opportunities.
- A mismatch between the educational needs of the student and the learning opportunities available at the site.
- Irreconcilable differences between the student and the practicum instructor or supervisor.
- Other circumstances that substantially interfere with the student's ability to achieve required learning objectives.

Before withdrawal from a placement is considered, reasonable efforts should be made to address and resolve concerns. The following process will generally be followed:

1. The student discusses the concern with the Practicum Liaison and, when appropriate, with the Practicum Instructor.

2. The Practicum Liaison consults with the student and Practicum Instructor to assess the situation and identify potential solutions.
3. If necessary, the Practicum Liaison convenes a meeting with the student and Practicum Instructor to develop and implement a plan to address the concern. The Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education will be informed of the situation.
4. If concerns persist, an additional meeting may be held with the student, Practicum Instructor, Practicum Liaison, and the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education to determine whether the issues can be resolved or whether withdrawal from the placement is warranted.
5. If withdrawal is approved, a plan will be developed to support a professional transition from the placement and, when appropriate, to address practicum hour requirements.

In cases where a request to change a practicum placement is made by either the student or the practicum liaison, the final decision regarding withdrawal rests with the Director of Practicum Education in consultation with the Dean. If a decision is made for the student to be replaced, exploration of an alternative practicum placement by the Office of Practicum Education will begin only after the student has formally withdrawn from the current practicum placement.

Mid-Year Practicum Placement and Reassignment

When a student requires a new practicum placement after the academic year has begun, the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education will work to identify a placement that meets curriculum requirements and supports the student's educational and professional development needs.

Because practicum opportunities are more limited after the start of the academic year, students may have fewer placement options than those available during the regular placement process. Students are therefore expected to remain flexible and open to available placement opportunities that meet program requirements.

The Practicum Education Office will make every effort to secure an appropriate educational placement; however, placement availability, supervision capacity, and agency needs may affect the options that can be offered.

Faculty Advising Responsibilities and Collaboration with Practicum Education/Practice Team

Each student is assigned an academic advisor who supports their academic, professional, and personal development throughout the program. Advisors assist students in strengthening social work knowledge and skills, developing a professional identity, achieving educational goals, and navigating concerns that may arise during their time in the program. Students are encouraged to seek guidance from their academic advisors as well as other faculty or administrative staff members when needed.

Academic advisors, practicum education staff, including practicum liaisons, student services staff and course instructors communicate regularly regarding student progress and support needs. When concerns arise about a student's performance in the classroom or practicum setting, these individuals work collaboratively to provide guidance and appropriate intervention.

Practice faculty are responsible for teaching course content and evaluating student learning. Practice faculty and practicum liaisons should notify the academic advisor when a student's academic or practicum performance falls below program expectations or may jeopardize successful progression in the program.

If practicum-related concerns emerge in the classroom setting, the course instructor should communicate those concerns to the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education to facilitate appropriate support and follow-up.

Student Termination of Practicum Placement Without Authorization

Only the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum education can authorize a premature termination of practicum placement. A student who withdraws from practicum placement without following the official process, as outlined above, will receive a grade of “Unsatisfactory” for the semester in the practicum course and be referred to the CAPS (Committee for Academic Progress and Support) team.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

All students participating in a practicum placement as required by the College's M.S.W. degree is covered by professional liability insurance through the college's Practicum and Professional Liability insurance. It covers student activities performed as part of their practicum placement and as specified as required toward the M.S.W. degree in the amount of \$1,000,000 for each claim and \$3,000,000 aggregate, with umbrella liability insurance in excess of \$30,000,000. GSSWSR does not assume liability for injury to or

caused by the student in practicum education.

DRIVING AND USING PERSONAL VEHICLE

The School's insurance policies does not cover students driving when traveling to/from or for a practicum placement. If students are expected to use their own vehicle as practicum education placement, the student and the practicum site should have a written understanding regarding reimbursement and insurance coverage.

When driving clients, students should use the practicum site's vehicle and confirm with the site that if an incident should occur, it would be covered under the practicum site's insurance. It is not recommended that students drive clients in their own vehicles as the student would be responsible if an incident occurs unless the practicum site has added the student to their insurance.

PRACTICUM SAFETY

Practicum education is a core component of social work education and takes place in community-based settings where students may encounter complex situations and potential physical, emotional, or psychological risks. Promoting student safety is a shared responsibility among students, practicum sites, and the GSSWSR.

Before beginning practicum, all students are required to participate in the **Practicum Preparation for Practice Workshop**, which includes an overview of safety considerations in social work practice. Students are expected to become familiar with the specific safety policies and procedures of their practicum site and to remain aware of potential risks both within the site and while carrying out responsibilities in the community, such as home visits or practicum-based work.

The GSSWSR expects each practicum site to maintain a written safety plan appropriate to its setting and operations and to orient students to applicable safety policies, procedures, and emergency protocols. Practicum instructors are responsible for ensuring that students receive information about site-specific safety expectations and resources.

Students who have concerns about their safety or well-being should discuss them promptly with their practicum instructor, practicum liaison, and/or the Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education. Students have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment.

When a Practicum Liaison or the Assistant Director of Practicum Education becomes aware of concerns related to a student's physical, emotional, or psychological safety, the

Director of Practicum Education must be notified within 24 hours, followed by a discussion of the situation.

Any incident involving a student that occurs during or because of the practicum placement must be reported immediately to the practicum instructor, practicum liaison, and Director or Assistant Director of Practicum Education. Appropriate support and referrals will be provided as needed. An Incident Reporting Form will be completed, and the incident will be reviewed in accordance with School and the practicum site's procedures.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICUM EDUCATION

The use of technology and social media is a widely occurring phenomenon in our daily personal and professional lives. It is expected that students and practicum sites proactively address potential concerns that may arise related to the intersection of personal life and professional roles through the use of technology (including electronic records and communication) and social media. Most importantly, students should, under no circumstances, use or share their personal contact information (including personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media accounts) for the purpose of practicum education assignments.

Because information shared on social media may be publicly accessible, students should be mindful of their online presence and the potential impact it may have on their professional roles. While social workers are ethically obligated to protect client privacy and confidentiality, clients may access publicly available information about students, including photographs, videos, comments, and other online content.

Students and Practicum Instructors should review and follow practicum site policies regarding the use of technology and social media in service delivery. Attention should be given to maintaining confidentiality including using HIPAA compliant platforms, protecting electronic records, using technology in an ethical and professional manner, and ensuring that clients are informed of the potential benefits and risks associated with technology-based services, including telehealth.

It is the expectation of the GSSWSR that students will adhere to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and the [NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice](#) when using social media as a communication tool in either their personal or professional sites.

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR FOR CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF THE GSSWSR COMMUNITY

Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research (GSSWSR) is committed to the education of Social Work professionals through the acquisition and integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills. Members of the GSSWSR community are expected to meet the following standards of behavior in the classroom, in practicum, and in the world at large. Attention to these standards is part of the official evaluation of students undertaken by faculty, practicum instructors, and practicum liaisons and are markers of excellence for all in our community.

Accountability: Inside and outside of the classroom, GSSWSR community members exhibit behaviors that are in compliance with institutional policies, academic practices, and societal laws, while practicing within the scope of the profession of social work and adhering to the profession's code of ethics. Within the classroom, practicum, and community, all responsibilities are met in a timely manner. In the classroom setting, students attend class regularly and complete assignments promptly, working independently unless otherwise instructed, and in written work properly attribute all sources of information using APA-style citations and referencing. In the practicum setting, students meet all practicum commitments including being punctual and dependable, keeping appointments, maintaining confidentiality, and knowing that appearance, dress, and general demeanor are reflective of professional behavior. Students demonstrate a willingness to fully utilize supervision and feedback to enhance their professional development and when having difficulties seek appropriate support to ensure success in completing course and practicum requirements.

Respect: Members of the GSSWSR community treat all those with whom they meet dignity and respect and approach conflict with others in a cooperative manner. Engaging in honest dialogue, GSSWSR community members are active listeners and strive to use positive and nonjudgmental language.

Confidentiality: Personal information about any member of the GSSWSR community or client is held as confidential, respecting as privileged any personal information shared in class or in the practicum. Names of clients or other client-identifying information are not disclosed in the classroom or in conversations outside of the professional setting.

Interpersonal Skills

Self-Awareness: GSSWSR community members know how their values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences affect their thought processes, behavior, and relationships.

As professional Social Workers, everyone must be willing to examine and change their behavior when it interferes with work with colleagues, clients, and others, and are able to work effectively with those in supervisee positions as well as with those in authority.

Empathy: GSSWSR community members strive to comprehend another individual's way of life and values, both in practicum and in the classroom. All members can communicate empathy and support as a basis for productive professional relationships.

Objectivity: Social Work students must be sufficiently objective to evaluate client systems systematically in an unbiased, factual way.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Adapted from UNC-CH Technical Standards for Professional and Ethical Behavior Adopted by the GSSWR Faculty: October 2020

Introduction and Purpose

GSSWSR is committed to supporting students as they prepare to become professional social workers. The Technical Standards for Professional and Ethical Behavior describe the minimum expectations each Master of Social Work (MSW) student must satisfy in order to enroll in, progress through, and graduate from the MSW program.

Because the GSSWSR is preparing students for careers as professional social workers and given the nature of professional social work practice to protect the clients and communities we serve, the GSSWSR has established requirements for student conduct that not only focus on academic performance but that also emphasize necessary skills, attributes, and competencies. These requirements apply within the traditional classroom site, in practicum placements, and in the broader community context.

Becoming a professional is a gradual process. Thus, the Technical Standards for Professional and Ethical Behavior articulate minimum expectations for students. If at any point during a student's matriculation they have questions about whether or not they can meet these Standards, they should notify the Dean. If faculty or administrators have questions about whether a student is able to meet these Standards, the Committee on

Students policy will be followed, and this document can be used as a guide to make a referral to the Committee on Academic Progress and Support (CAPS). The CAPS referral process is outlined in the next section.

A student can participate in the MSW program so long as they are able to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations. Students who seek accommodations for disabilities should contact the College's Access Services Office; this office will determine a student's eligibility for accommodations and services and will recommend them if/when appropriate. Access Services may be reached by phone at 610-526-7516 or by email at: dalder@brynmawr.edu

COMMITMENT TO NON-DISCRIMINATION

GSSWSR is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The College does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression and identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Technical Standards Address the Following Areas:

1. Communication
2. Physical and Cognitive Ability
3. Emotional Stability, Management, and Regulation
4. Self-Awareness and Reflective Listening
5. Respect for Diversity and Commitment to Social Justice
6. Ethical Conduct
7. Interpersonal Skills
8. Academic and Professional Standards

Communication

Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Express ideas and feelings clearly;
- Demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills, including the ability to listen objectively and to interpret nonverbal communication;

- Communicate responsibly and respectfully in all interactions with colleagues, faculty, Practicum Instructors, task supervisors, staff, clients, other professionals, and all others they might come into contact within their student role;
- Communicate clearly through written products at a level appropriate for graduate work, including using correct grammar, spelling, and applying the GSSWSR- designated writing style;
- Advocate for themselves in an appropriate and responsible manner that uses proper channels for conflict resolution as outlined in the Student Handbook and
- Mastery of both written and spoken English is required at matriculation into the program, although applications from students with sight, hearing, and/or speech disabilities will receive full consideration. In such cases, the use of assistive technology, a trained intermediary, or other communications aide may be appropriate if it functions only as an information conduit and does not serve integrative or interpretive functions.

Physical and Cognitive Ability

Students must have sufficient sensory, motor, and cognitive skills to meet the following requirements:

- Attend and participate in classes and practicum placements per the expectations outlined in the syllabi and in accordance with the practicum site and the Council on Social Work Education Core Competencies of Social Work Practice.
- Navigate transportation to attend practicum and classroom requirements.
- Use the technology required to engage in scholarship and effective practice including, but not limited to, the use of computers, telephones, and practicum site databases.
- Demonstrate the ability to acquire knowledge and process experiences to inform practice.
- Demonstrate the capacity to think critically and to apply effective problem-solving skills.

Emotional Stability, Management, and Regulation

In accordance with the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics (§ 4.05), social work students should not allow their personal problems or issues to interfere with their judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have professional responsibility. The social work student must demonstrate the emotional and mental stability necessary to execute sound judgment and performance in the program as well as generally to support the practice of social work. Students must be willing and able to meet the following standards:

- Demonstrate appropriate self-disclosure (the revealing of personal information) and professional boundaries in classroom and practicum sites, including all assignments.
- Maintain respectful relationships with colleagues, faculty, Practicum Instructors/task supervisors, staff, clients, and other professionals.
- Seek appropriate help when personal issues interfere with professional and scholastic performance.
- Manage stress effectively through self-care and by relying upon supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others; and
- Integrate into practice constructive criticism received in both didactic and practicum sites.

Self-Awareness and Reflective Thinking

Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrate a willingness to continually reflect on their own values, attitudes, beliefs, biases, emotions, past and current experiences, and consider how these factors affect their thinking, behavior, interactions, and relationships.
- Demonstrate the capacity to continuously reassess their own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and consider the impact of these actions on others; and
- Seek supervision and accept constructive feedback in a positive manner.

Respect for Diversity and Social Justice

Social work practice requires understanding, affirming, and respecting another individual's way of life and values. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experience may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power (Council on Social Work Education, 2022, EPAS). Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrate a willingness to examine their personal beliefs, values, and assumptions that perpetuate or counter oppression.
- Strive to relate and to work nonjudgmentally with others who differ from themselves, regardless of the person's age, class, color, culture, race or ethnicity, family structure, beliefs, religion, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ability, and/or value system.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity to diversity, oppression, and privilege.
- Approach differences with an attitude of humility and respect, acknowledging the importance of cultural differences in shaping life experiences.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop and strengthen cross-cultural proficiency sufficient to work effectively with a wide variety of diverse groups and communities; and
- Exhibit an appreciation for difference and a commitment to engage around the complex issues of diversity and social justice.

Ethical Conduct

Students are required to adhere to ethical conduct and decision-making in accordance with the values, ethics, and standards established for the social work profession, as formalized in the NASW Code of Ethics, and to abide by all applicable College's policies, including the

College's Honor Code. Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Adhere to a commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination;
- Demonstrate behavior and decisions reflecting the highest standards of honesty and personal and professional integrity;
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with colleagues, faculty, Practicum Instructors/task supervisors, staff, clients, and other professionals;
- Understand their role in practice as a learner and social work student. This includes the ability to correctly judge the limits of one's own competence and to seek help from an appropriate source when necessary;
- Disclose to GSSWSR administration any legal involvement that takes place during enrollment in the MSW program, including arrest, criminal charge, criminal conviction, plea of guilty, plea of no contact, plea of nolo contendere, Alford plea, deferred prosecution, prayer for judgment, or any other acceptance of responsibility for the commission of a crime other than a traffic-related misdemeanor or infraction;
- Disclose any discipline imposed by a state licensing board or the equivalent; and
- Follow federal and state laws and practicum site policies regarding confidentiality and mandatory reporting, including seeking permission from practicum site administrators for the use of practicum site materials, records, or audio-visual materials for academic course work.

Interpersonal Skills

Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

Demonstrate the ability to build rapport with and work effectively with colleagues, faculty, Practicum Instructors/task supervisors, staff, clients, and other professionals; and

- Demonstrate the capacity to understand the experience and perspectives of individuals or groups and use this empathy as a basis for a productive relationship; and
- Exhibit conflict resolution skills, including the ability to negotiate differing attitudes and opinions.

Academic and Professional Standards

Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrate the ability to meet the GSSWSR's requirements to remain in good academic standing and to continue in the program (i.e., cannot receive a grade of U or nine credit hours with a grade of L to remain in good academic standing). This includes following the policies and procedures of the University and the Graduate School.
- Show the capacity to successfully complete required practicum hours and demonstrate positive progress in the required competencies and behavioral indicators in the practicum and classroom sites;
- Follow the policies, procedures, and operating standards of the GSSWSR, Bryn Mawr College, and the practicum placement practicum site;
- Ensure that appearance, dress, and general demeanor are appropriate to the context;
- Be punctual and dependable, prioritize responsibilities and manage time well, attend class and practicum in accordance with relevant policy, observe deadlines, complete assignments on time, and conscientiously arrange and keep appointments; and
- Adhere to practicum site policies and practices through the learning process and supervision.