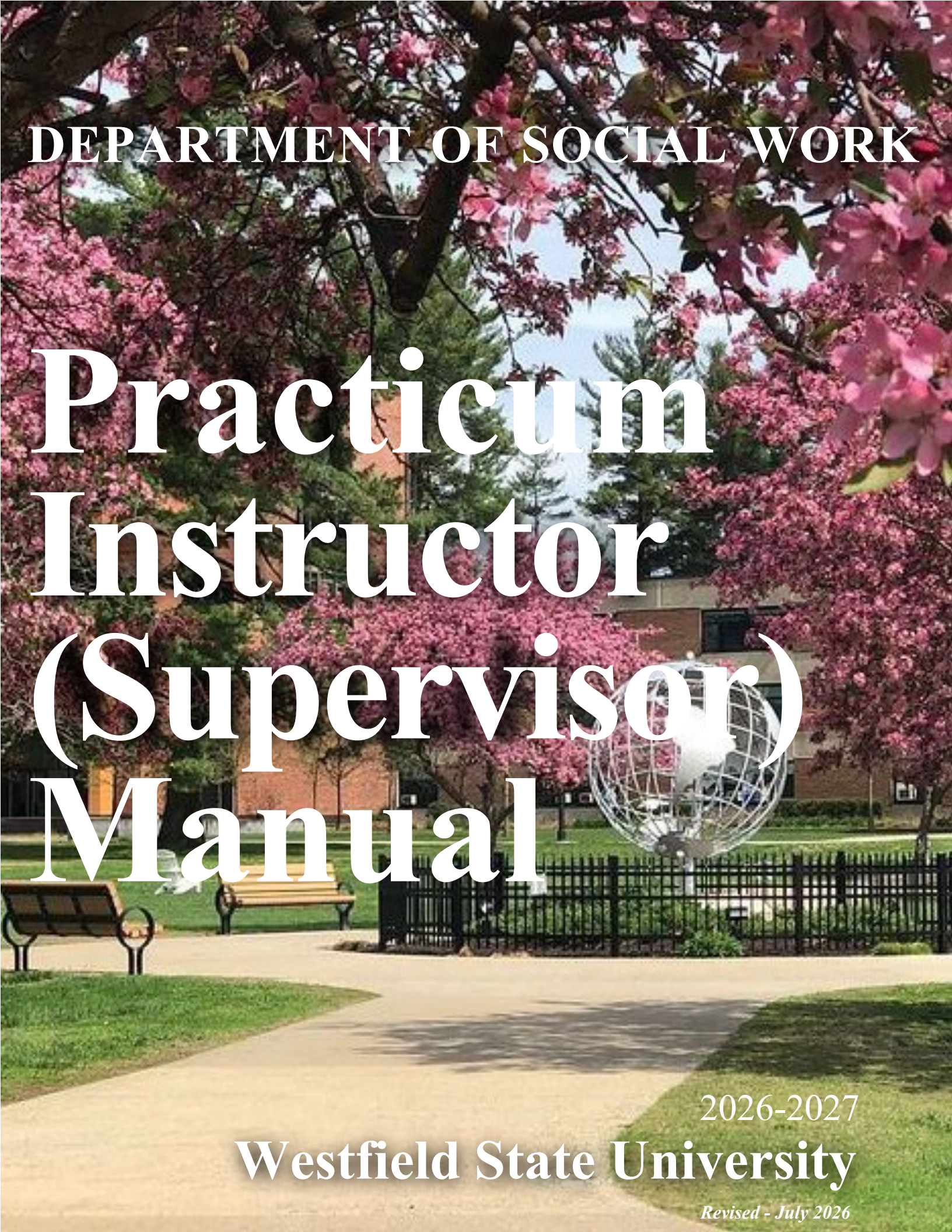


A photograph of a campus scene featuring pink cherry blossoms in the foreground, a paved walkway, wooden benches, a black metal fence, and a large globe sculpture in the background. The text is overlaid on this image.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Practicum Instructor (Supervisor) Manual

2026-2027

Westfield State University

Revised - July 2026

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**ASSIGNED FACULTY LIAISON IS BEST POINT OF
CONTACT WHILE STUDENT IS IN PLACEMENT**

“Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being”.

Social Work Practicum(s) at a Glance

A BRIEF SUMMARY:

Criteria	BSW	MSW Foundation	MSW Advanced
Practicum Placement Hour & Assignment Requirements:			
Total hour requirement for academic year	400	400	500
Total hour requirement per semester	200	200	250
Total number of process recordings due per semester	3	4	5
Weekly Integrative Practicum Seminar course per semester <i>(included in total hours)</i>	18.75	26.25	26.25
Supervision/Practicum Instructor Requirements:			
BSW or MSW from accredited school of Social Work	✓		
MSW from an accredited school of Social Work		✓	✓
Minimum 2 years post-degree Social Work experience	✓	✓	✓
Licensure requirement MA LCSW or LICSW <i>(or equivalent in another state)</i>	Preferred	Preferred	✓
LICSW Preferred			✓
Min. 1 hour/week supervision w/ primary supervisor	✓	✓	✓
1 additional hour/week task-oriented or group supervision	✓	✓	✓
Social Work Practice Focus:			
Generalist foundation competencies	✓	✓	
Advanced clinical competencies			✓
Focus on generalist Social Work services and settings	✓	✓	
Focus on clinical Social Work services and settings			✓
Miscellaneous:			
IPT online access for all required practicum documents	✓	✓	✓
Westfield Campus	✓	✓	✓
Faculty Liaison Support throughout placement	✓	✓	✓
Weekly Integrative Practicum Seminar Course <i>(student course in conjunction with field placement)</i>	Synchronous	Synchronous	Asynchronous
Site Visit per semester	✓	✓	✓
Free CEUs for Practicum Instructors	✓	✓	✓
Employment-Based Practicum Placement Option	✓	✓	✓

Practicum Education Calendar

Fall 2026 – Spring 2027

ACADEMIC YEAR VIEW:

Please refer to specific course syllabus for practicum-related course assignments and other due dates.

Fall 2026:

☐ September 2	Classes Begin
☐ October 15	Learning Agreement Due
☐ October 12	Indigenous Peoples' Day – No Classes
☐ October – November	Practicum Site Visits by Faculty Liaisons
☐ November 11	Veteran's Day – No Classes
☐ November 25 – 27	Thanksgiving Recess (begins 12:30pm 11/25; no classes 11/26, 11/27)
☐ November 30	Classes Resume
☐ December 11	Practicum Placement Evaluations & Fall Timesheets Due
☐ December 11	Classes End for the Semester

Spring 2027:

☐ January 19	Classes Begin
☐ Week of January 19	Students Continue in Practicum Placements <i>(note: most students continue in practicum placement during some portion of the semester break as negotiated and determined in individual placements)</i>
☐ February 15	President's Day – No Classes
☐ March 15 – 19	Spring Break – No Classes <i>(note: most students continue in practicum placement during some portion of the spring break as negotiated and determined in individual placements)</i>
☐ March 22	Classes Resume
☐ March – April	Practicum Site Visits by Faculty Liaisons
☐ April 19	Patriot's Day – No Classes
☐ May 3	Practicum Placement Evaluations & Spring Timesheet Due
☐ Week of May 1	Target for Completing Practicum Placement

MSW Advanced Practicum

A BRIEF SUMMARY:

Clinical Social Work Practice Focus:

- ☐ Builds on a generalist practice foundation and provides in-depth *clinical* experience.
- ☐ Includes opportunities to practice assessment, diagnosis, treatment (*including but not limited to, counseling and psychotherapy, family therapy, group work, play therapy, etc.*), client-centered advocacy, interdisciplinary teams, supervision, consultation, and evaluation.
- ☐ Placements may include mental health and addictions programs, schools, family service and child protective agencies, medical settings, forensic settings, and other settings where clinical social work services are provided.
- ☐ Some advanced placements reflect WSU program additional focus on clinical work with children and families, but are often with a different client population, particularly if the student's foundation practicum placement was child and family focused.
 - Employment-Based Practicum Placement may be developed within certain guidelines and an additional approval process.

Practicum Includes:

- ☐ Minimum of 500 hours total (*250 minimum per semester for two full semesters*).
- ☐ Hours include:
 - Practicum Placement:
 - Students work in collaboration with the placement site to determine weekly schedule and to be available for daytime meetings and trainings as required by the agency.
 - Weekly Integrative Practicum Seminar:
 - Asynchronous with WSU clinical practice course instructors.
 - Provides students with the opportunities to discuss and compare practicum experiences, learn from and teach each other, examine personal values and ethical issues in social work practice, and further integrate knowledge and experience through structured assignments and activities.

Supervision Requirement:

- ☐ Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW) from an accredited school of social work and a minimum of two years post-MSW experience.
 - Licensure requirement MA LCSW or LICSW (*or equivalent in another state*).
 - LICSW *preferred* for advanced placement.
- ☐ Minimum of 1 hour/week of individual, face-to-face, student/client-focused supervision with primary supervisor.
- ☐ 1 additional hour/week of task-oriented and/or group supervision that may or may not be provided by primary supervisor.

MSW Foundation Practicum & BSW Practicum

A BRIEF SUMMARY:

Generalist Social Work Practice Focus:

- ☐ Opportunity to practice and demonstrate mastery of the competency-based knowledge, values, and skills learned in the classroom through supervised practice with actual clients in a social service environment.
- ☐ Begin to develop a professional identity as a social worker.
- ☐ Placements may include schools, family service and child protective agencies, mental health and addictions programs, and other settings where generalist social work services are provided.
 - Employment-Based Practicum Placement may be developed within certain guidelines and an additional approval process.

Practicum Includes:

- ☐ Minimum of 400 hours total (*200 minimum per semester for two full semesters*).
- ☐ Hours include:
 - Practicum Placement:
 - Students work in collaboration with the placement site to determine weekly schedule and to be available for daytime meetings and trainings as required by the agency.
 - Weekly Integrative Field Seminar:
 - Synchronous with WSU clinical practice course instructors.
 - Provides students with the opportunities to discuss and compare practicum experiences, learn from and teach each other, examine personal values and ethical issues in social work practice, and further integrate knowledge and experience through structured assignments and activities.

Supervision Requirement:

- ☐ Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW) from an accredited school of social work and a minimum of two years post-grad experience.
 - BSW students can be supervised by someone with their BSW, 2yrs post-grad
 - Licensure *preferred* MA LCSW or LICSW (*or equivalent in another state*).
- ☐ Minimum of 1 hour/week of individual, face-to-face, student/client-focused supervision with primary supervisor.
- ☐ 1 additional hour/week of task-oriented and/or group supervision that may or may not be provided by primary supervisor.



Supervision

Supervision is a critical component of the practicum experience. Students are expected to:

- **Primary Practicum Instructor:** Every student is assigned a primary practicum instructor, who is responsible for overseeing their practicum experience. Students must meet with this supervisor at least once a week, face-to-face, for a minimum of one hour. Video conferencing may be used when approved.
- **Preparedness for Supervision:** Students should come to each supervision session prepared to discuss specific issues, cases, or questions related to their practicum. In addition, students should share relevant course materials and classroom experiences with their practicum instructor.
- **Task-Oriented and Group Supervision:** In addition to one-on-one supervision, students are required to participate in an additional hour of task-oriented or group supervision per week. This may be provided by the primary practicum instructor or another qualified staff member at the site.

Activities that count towards practicum hours include:

- Orientation
- Direct client service
- Supervision
- Shadowing staff
- Assigned tasks
- Record-keeping, meetings, and training events
- Attendance at site-sponsored seminars and workshops
- Attendance at conferences or additional training (with supervisor approval)

TROUBLESHOOTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

If issues in placement arise:

1. First, address concerns directly with student providing actionable-steps
2. Always communicate with the faculty liaison
 - To document concerns
 - To collaborate to problem solve
 - Consistent communication does not get the student in trouble, it increases collaboration and learning.
3. Address concerns in a site visit or other meeting with faculty liaison.
4. Develop and implement short-term Site Visit Form Action Plan.
5. Revisit Progress towards Site Visit Form Action Plan. If no progress is made, Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) developed by Faculty Liaison. Faculty Liaison will notify Practicum Department.
6. Practicum Department will participate in PIP review and assist in determining next steps.

We do request prior to any possible termination these steps are taken to allow the student an opportunity to learn and implement feedback provided.



External Supervisor Expectations (When Applicable)

A BRIEF SUMMARY:

External supervisors are assigned when there is valuable learning opportunity available to a student where a social worker is not on site. The purpose of the external supervisor is to ensure students are receiving supervision and guidance that meets CSWE requirements. In these scenarios, there is both an external supervisor (who meets CSWE credentials) internal supervisor (who is on site and may have a related degree) who collaborate to ensure the student has a valuable learning opportunity which meets requirements.

Below will describe the differences in roles of each supervisor.

Primary Supervisor:

- Responsible to complete all IPT documents (hours, learning agreements, evals, site visit form) with Signatures.
- Provide 1 hour of clinical supervision weekly.
- Attend site visit with faculty liaison.
- Review Process recordings (can be split between supervisors if preferred)
- Primary Supervisor is student's go-to person for all IPT documents & clinical questions.

Secondary Supervisor:

- Responsible to collaborate with primary supervisor to confirm hours logged and on site & performance prior to document due date (will have viewable access to these forms).
- Provide 1 hour of task-oriented supervision.
- Attend site visit with faculty liaison.
- Review Process Recordings (can be split between supervisors if preferred)
- **Secondary supervisor is student's go-to person for all needs while on site & program specific questions**

It is imperative that the primary and secondary supervisor are in communication to confirm hours & provide feedback for the end of semester evaluation. Collaboration is key to ensure a smooth placement process.



Practicum Documentation System – IPT

A BRIEF SUMMARY:

Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) is an Online resource the Westfield State Social Work Practicum Department utilizes to track student progress over the course of their practicum experience. Access is granted for students, practicum instructors, and faculty liaisons to ensure effective and timely collaboration and easy access to forms.

IPT:

- www.runipt.com
- All documents are “Student-driven”
- Practicum instructors receive an email notification anytime a document is ready for review/signature

Information and Documentation all in one place:

- Contact information
- Timesheets
- Learning Agreements
- Evaluations
- Site Visit Forms & Action Plans
- Access and information are secure, password-protected, and encrypted

IPT Training Document:

- ☐ Always available to view online on our WSU Social Work Practicum Education page at <https://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/social-work-department/practicum-education>
- ☐ Includes actual screen shots and demonstrations of how to use each aspect of the system
 - Introduction to Timesheet and Activities
 - Introduction to Practicum Learning Agreement & Evaluation
 - Introduction to Site Visit Form

Additional practicum materials:

- **Practicum Education Manual**
- **Employment-Based Proposals**
- **IPT Training Document**
 - And more...

All are available on the Practicum Education Website:

<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/social-work-department/practicum-education>

Learning Agreement – Key Points

A BRIEF SUMMARY:

☐ What is a Learning Agreement?

- Describes how the student will specifically develop and apply the required Social Work Competencies in *observable* ways within the internship setting and represents the student's specific objectives for the internship.

☐ How/when is the Learning Agreement Developed?

- Template provided in IPT
- Developed during the first month of the internship, by October 15
- Collaborative Process:
 - Student – overall responsibility to initiate the process; strengths, abilities, interests, areas for professional growth
 - Practicum Instructor – opportunities at the agency; expectations of student; keep the agency mission, areas of service in mind; how will you observe the student doing this? (what will you see, hear, etc.)
 - Faculty Practicum Liaison - support Practicum Instructor and Student in operationalizing the competencies, final approval of the Agreement
 - Student, Practicum Instructor, and/or Faculty Practicum Liaison may write in the Learning Agreement
- Activities should be behaviorally specific
 - Helpful verbs may include: interview, read, observe, discuss, demonstrate, take initiative, utilize, attend, distinguish between, write
- How to Acknowledge the Learning Agreement is Complete?
 - Student first signs, then Practicum Instructor, then Faculty Practicum Liaison
- What Happens if the Learning Agreement Needs to be modified after it has been signed?
 - You may use the Spring Revisions Box or contact the Practicum Department: swpracticumed@westfield.ma.edu and ask that signatures be removed – edit the form – re-sign

☐ How is the Learning Agreement Used throughout the Internship?

- This becomes the agreement about how and what the student is doing throughout the year, how the Social Work Competencies are being specifically met, and becomes the basis, the blueprint, for both the fall and spring semester evaluations.

“TELL ME AND I FORGET. TEACH ME AND I REMEMBER. INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN.”
Benjamin Franklin



Competency-Based Education

In 2008 CSWE adopted a competency-based education framework for its EPAS. As in related health and human service professions, the policy moved from a model of curriculum design focused on content (what students should be taught) and structure (the format and organization of educational components) to one focused on student learning outcomes. A competency-based approach refers to identifying and assessing what students demonstrate in practice. In social work this approach involves assessing students' ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy.

Competency-based education rests upon a shared view of the nature of competence in professional practice. Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. EPAS recognizes a holistic view of competence; that is, the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the social worker's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to unique practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. An individual social worker's competence is seen as developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning.

Competency-based education is an outcomes-oriented approach to curriculum design. The goal of the outcomes approach is to ensure that students are able to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice. In EPAS, social work practice competence consists of nine interrelated competencies and component behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.

Using a curriculum design that begins with the outcomes, expressed as the expected competencies, programs develop the substantive content, pedagogical approach, and educational activities that provide learning opportunities for students to demonstrate the competencies.

Assessment of student learning outcomes is an essential component of competency-based education. Assessment provides evidence that students have demonstrated the level of competence necessary to enter professional practice, which in turn shows programs are successful in achieving their goals. Assessment information is used to improve the educational program and the methods used to assess student learning outcomes.

Programs assess students' demonstration of competence. The assessment methods used by programs gather data that serve as evidence of student learning outcomes and the demonstration of competence. Understanding social work practice is complex and multi-dimensional, the assessment methods used by programs and the data collected may vary by context.

“Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being.”

Key Responsibilities of the Social Work Practicum Department:

(see Practicum Manual for full description)

1. Ongoing Communication and Collaboration with Practicum Sites:
2. Student-Practicum Site Matching:
3. Application and Interview Assistance:
4. Communication with Practicum Sites Regarding Student Applications:
5. Coordination of Documentation for Placement Confirmation:
6. Provision of Practicum Education Manual:
7. Structured Orientation for Practicum Supervisors:
8. Supervision in Practicum Instruction (SIPI) Course:
9. Online Resources for Practicum Supervisors:
10. Opportunities for Continuing Education:
11. Faculty Practicum Liaisons (FPLs):
12. Integrative Practicum Seminar:
13. Ethical Guidelines for Practice:
14. Safety Guidelines and Collaboration:
15. Monitoring the Quality of the Learning Experience:
16. Regular Communication with Practicum Stakeholders:
17. Practicum-Related Forms and Documents:

CEU Opportunities

- Supervisor Orientation
 - Occurs the third Friday in August prior to the start of the semester
 - Virtual
- Seminar In Practicum Instruction (SIPI)
 - Occurs the second Friday each month of the academic year
 - Virtual
- Social Work Clinical Conference
 - Occurs the first Friday in May
 - In-person at Westfield State University
- Online IBHC Modules
 - Supervisor can complete at their own pace
 - Fully online & accessible at any time
 - <https://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/social-work-department/online-ibhc-training-modules>

Support offered from Practicum Department staff

General Inbox: swpracticumed@westfield.ma.edu

Practicum Director: Ashley Torres, MSW, LICSW, aatorres@westfield.ma.edu

Assistant Practicum Director: Toni Andrews, MSW, LICSW, tandrews@westfield.ma.edu

Practicum Placement Coordinator: Nichola Hokunson, MSW, LCSW, nhokunson@westfield.ma.edu

**FACULTY LIAISON ASSIGNED TO STUDENT IS BEST POINT OF CONTACT
WHILE STUDENT IS PLACED**

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION!**