Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT of SOCIAL WORK

LEARNING AGREEMENT GUIDE

BSW & MSW Foundation Edition

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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OVERVIEW

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Social Work education is competency-based. 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.

The framework for competency-based education includes a focus on the assessment of the student's ability to **demonstrate** the competencies rather than only on the assessment of inputs (such as coursework and resources). Social work practice competence consists of nine interrelated competencies, with specific observable behaviors for each competency. The overall objective of the practicum is to demonstrate competency for entry level generalist practice as identified in the nine social work competencies and specific observable behaviors.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and our social work program recognize a **holistic view of competence**; that is, the demonstration of competence **is informed by the holistic dimensions of 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.**

LEARNING AGREEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

The Learning Agreement is developed collaboratively by the student, field instructor, and faculty field liaison. The Agreement will describe how the student will specifically apply the competencies in observable ways within the internship setting. The completed Learning Agreement then represents the student's specific objectives for the internship.

Observable behaviors are listed below each competency. In the subsequent text boxes, please describe the specific activities the student will complete at the internship setting for each observable behavior listed. These activities should provide opportunities for mastery of each competency, demonstrated and informed by the holistic dimensions of knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with general examples of activities for the observable behaviors listed under each competency to assist in supporting your development and creation of site specific activities.

The activities associated with a specific observable behavior can look very different in working with different populations and settings. Faculty Field Liaison, Field Instructor and student should make every effort to assure a learning plan for all competencies and observable behaviors. In the rare occasion that a particular competency/observable behavior appears completely unavailable at that site, the Faculty Field Liaison should collaborate with the student and field instructor to explore the ways in which that competency may be mastered in the setting. Please consider demonstration of the behavior through simulation as a possible alternative prior to an "N/A" being utilized.

BSW & MSW FOUNDATION COMPETENCIES

Competency #1 **Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**
Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in interprofessional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 1.1	**The ability to make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW code of ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context**
	❑ Refer to the NASW Code of Ethics when encountered with an ethical issue to identify ethical dilemmas, any potential strategies to resolve those ethical dilemmas, and will demonstrate emerging knowledge of ethical decision-making models in collaboration with field instructor. ❑ Recognize ethical dilemma in practice and seek out appropriate assistance from field instructors in coming to a resolution of the dilemma and can identify all relevant ethical principles that apply to specific cases. ❑ Read and review agency Code of Ethics and compare with NASW Code of Ethics. Discuss this in supervision.

F 1.2	**The use of reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations**
	❑ Recognize the differences between a personal response to a client and a professional response during an interaction with a client and provide the rationale for your professional response. ❑ After each client interaction, reflect on what occurred and consider personal strengths and opportunities to improve when interacting with each client. During supervision time, discuss these reflections with my field instructor and identify personal values that are in agreement and/or conflict with agency and client population. ❑ Practice behaviors that demonstrate commitment to appropriate roles and boundaries, increase practice skills, increase self-awareness, and utilize feedback to develop and implement plan for self-correction (e.g. not exchanging personal contact information with clients, being mindful of use of social media, etc.).

F 1.3	**Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication**
	❑ Use professional language (verbal/nonverbal) when dealing with clients and other professionals in the workplace, and refrain from use of derogatory language in written and verbal communication. ❑ Read and follow agency policy and procedures regarding professional behavior, dress code, and communication (e.g., case notes, memos, e-mail, etc.). ❑ Exhibit a professional attitude by arriving to the Field Practicum Site dressed appropriately, with a positive outlook, prepared mentally and emotionally to engage with staff and clients, and prepare to learn.
F 1.4	**The use of technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes**
	❑ Demonstrate awareness of agency policy regarding use of technology and verbalize to Field Instructor. ❑ Use strategies of ethical reasoning to address the use of technology in all client and/or constituency settings and be cognizant of its effect on client rights. ❑ Evaluate the ethical and appropriate use of technology to facilitate practice outcomes with individuals, families and small groups.
F 1.5	**The use of supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior**
	❑ Meet weekly for individual supervision, manage and learn from constructive feedback, demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking, self-examination, insight, insight in self-awareness, and display increasing initiative and independence within the agency structure and in keeping within the lines of authority and the student role. ❑ Discuss a case with field instructor, supervisor, or other agency staff before, during and/or after client contacts/agency activities and follow up with recommendations and listen to feedback regarding strengths and opportunities to improve. ❑ Demonstrate the effective use of consultation and supervision to guide ethical decision making in one's own practice.

Competency #2
Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

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

Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 2.1	**The ability to apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity, intersectionality and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels**
	❑ Discuss barriers to services faced by clients, and when assessing client problems, considers impact of economic, racism, political, and social and institutional oppression on client functioning. ❑ Demonstrate knowledge and respect of differences in relation to age, class, color, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation in social work generalist practice. ❑ Identify structures and values that contribute to oppression and marginalization. Describe with supervisor the ways in which clients have been marginalized and the cultural and societal dynamics which promote the marginalization (i.e., ethnicity, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, rural vs. urban environment, gender, sexual orientation, ageism, etc.).
F 2.2	**Presentation of themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences**
	❑ Participate in professional development to learn about diversity issues (i.e. Refugee populations, UNI NCBI training, poverty simulation, etc.) ❑ Engage in continuing education to develop specialized knowledge and understanding of the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions of major client groups served. ❑ Sit quietly in an intake or waiting room area and observe the atmosphere, conversation and behaviors of persons entering the service delivery system, as well as of those who serve them.
F 2.3	**The ability to apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies**
	❑ Recognize when personal biases may impact/influence ability to serve client. ❑ Acknowledge negative emotions associated with difficult ethical decisions. ❑ Seek consultation and support from peers and colleagues and values differing opinions regarding ethical dilemma.

Competency #3
Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.   Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 3.1	**The ability to apply their understanding of social, economic, spiritual, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels**
	❑ Use knowledge gained in the classroom about the effects of oppression, discrimination, structural social inequality and historical trauma on clients and/or constituencies to guide intervention and/or project planning. ❑ Apply principles of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights within the scope of the organization's mission. ❑ Identify agency population being served and social policies that have created and/or continue to create oppressive circumstances for the life course of the individuals/group.

F 3.2	**The ability to engage in practices that advance social, economic, spiritual, and environmental justice**
	❑ Explore agency initiatives regarding gaps in access to services for underserved populations (e.g., attend NASW LEAD Day, attend NASW Advocacy Day, etc.). ❑ Evaluate needs of clients, barriers in meeting them, and establish creative, cost-effective solutions consistent with agency mission/goals. ❑ Attend relevant trainings, community outreach events, and public policy meetings.

Competency #4
Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

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

Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 4.1	**The use of practice experience, theory, and multiple perspectives, to investigate the social world and practice efficacy**
	❑ Use a client situation or issue to research scholarly information (i.e., domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, truancy) and begin to connect underlying issues. ❑ In consultation with field supervisor, identify an agency problem or issue that needs to be addressed and formulate a problem statement. ❑ Through observation of staff workers and field instructor, learn about planned change process and be able to understand the definition and discuss how it is implemented in helping clients achieve their goals.
F 4.2	**The ability to apply critical thinking skills to analyzing research methods and findings**
	❑ Review, evaluate, and appraise current agency services, as well as needs and trends in the communities in which services are being provided. ❑ Take initiative to locate a peer reviewed article that provides research information on population served at internship, using material learned from Research Methods class, critically analyze the findings and share thoughts with field instructor. ❑ Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings, and develop informed practice initiatives, while working with individuals, families, and small groups.
F 4.3	**The ability to use and translate research evidence and integrate evidence-based approaches to improve practice, policy, and service delivery**
	❑ Take initiative to locate peer reviewed articles that provide research evidenced-based practice interventions and share with field instructor the implications for practice on the agency, assigned clients and/or projects. ❑ Gain knowledge on state/national policies relevant to agency and discuss implications of policies with field instructor. ❑ In supervision with field instructor, discuss best practices and edivdence-based approaches used in the agency and how they could potentially be inproved or how they have evolved.

Competency #5 Engage in Policy Practice

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

Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 5.1	**Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services**
	❑ Describe social policies, laws, and practices that impact the client system or delivery of services. ❑ Review federal, state and/or local policies that impact agency services/activities and (process it during supervision and/or apply it to a case/example. ❑ Identify the evolution of social policies at the local, state, and federal level and analyze how they impact well-being, service delivery, and access to social services for individuals, families, and small groups.
F 5.2	**Assess the impact of social welfare and economic policies on the delivery of and access to social services**
	❑ Recognize the relationships between funding sources, public policies and client systems that are served by placement and discuss with supervisor the impact on client's and constituencies served. ❑ Identify and apply a framework that assesses how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services for individual, families, and small groups. ❑ Identify both the intended and unintended consequences of policies for clients and how policies impede access to services and/or service delivery.
F 5.3	**Critically analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice**
	❑ Collaborate with agency to identify tasks to help resolve an identified social problem that is impacted by policy at the agency, community, local, state or federal level. ❑ Use information from policy classes to apply critical thinking and analysis on the best way to advocate for services needed by clients and/or clientele. ❑ Anticipate development of barriers to service delivery (e.g., budget cuts, negative publicity regarding target population) and propose strategies to prevent disruption of services.

Competency #6
Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

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

Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 6.1	**The use of knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies**
	❑ Apply preparing skills prior to engagement activities at the micro, mezzo and/or macro levels and process it during a supervisory session and/or apply it to a case/example. ❑ Identify and integrate theoretical frameworks to prepare for and build relationships with individuals, families, and small groups. ❑ Read case files and any other pertinent information to prepare for engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
F 6.2	**The use of empathy, reflection, and interpersonal interviewing skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies**
	❑ Receive feedback from field instructor during supervisory sessions regarding engagement skills (attend, seek, clarify, reflect) and follow through with recommendations. ❑ Establish rapport with the client system and "start where the client is." ❑ Listen attentively to clients and work to accurately grasps feelings and understand circumstances of client.

Competency #7
Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 7.1	The collection and organization of data, and the application of critical thinking to interpret data gathered from clients and constituencies
	❑ Be aware of, and appropriately utilize, standardized measurement and diagnostic tools. ❑ Effectively articulate summaries of assessments, and auxiliary documentation to assist in the development of a tentative treatment plan for clients. ❑ Be able to display the ability to collect and organize data by utilizing tools such as genograms and Eco maps, and correctly interpret data gathered from assessment tools as evidenced by discussions during meetings with field instructor.
F 7.2	The use of knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies
	❑ Applies knowledge of multi-disciplinary theoretical frameworks (i.e., human behavior, person-and-environment, among others) in assessing information from clients and constituencies. ❑ Identify conceptual frameworks that explain development and impact on a client system. ❑ Do role-playing with the field instructor or others to try out new skills and techniques.
F 7.3	The development of mutually agreed on service plans (intervention goals and objectives) based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies
	❑ Engage client participation verbally and have client state goals and objectives. ❑ In collaboration with client system, be able to develop clear and timely service goals and develop measurable objectives designed to meet agreed upon goals. ❑ Observe, reflect, and apply practice skills that assist individuals and/or groups to enhance their well-being from a strengths-based perspective.
F 7.4	The selection of appropriate intervention strategies based on the placement agency, assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies
	❑ Select an intervention strategy. Documentation of the strategy will include an informed consent form signed by the client that defines the intervention, why it was mutually selected, and a contract that specifies a tentative duration of the treatment. ❑ Understand developmental stages of client population and integrate into the assessment. ❑ Considers possible levels of intervention (micro, mezzo, and macro) and articulates reasoning behind choice of intervention target.

Competency #8
Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

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

Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 8.1	**The ability to critically choose and implement interventions, including use of self, to achieve service plan goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies**
	❑ Selects appropriate intervention strategies based on assessment, research knowledge, values and preferences of clients and constituencies. ❑ Initiate and implement interventions to achieve client-directed goals. ❑ Identify and apply social work theories as they may apply to the process of assessment, intervention or evaluation of clients within the agency.
F 8.2	**The use of knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies**
	❑ Apply contracting phase skills during intervention activities at the micro, mezzo and/or macro levels and (select one or more) reflect on it in a summary of learning(s), process it during a supervisory session and/or apply it to a case/example. ❑ Use a strengths and empowerment perspective as well as the bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual theoretical frameworks learned in the academic classroom to collaboratively develop interventions with clients and/or constituencies. ❑ Identify and discuss with Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in practicum seminar, various theories about human behavior as may be observed when working with clients (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual).
F 8.3	**The use of interprofessional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes**
	❑ Effectively collaborate with other professionals, such as through interprofessional treatment teams, to achieve beneficial practice outcomes for individuals, families, and small groups. ❑ Connect client to community resources. ❑ Utilize collaborative relationships formed with other providers to secure beneficial services.

F 8.4	**The roles of negotiator, mediator, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies**
	❑ Help clients identify interpersonal strengths, as well as network of familial and community resources to address problems. ❑ Demonstrate knowledge of community resources and facilitate referral process of client to another agency, when appropriate. ❑ Distinguish when it is appropriate to advocate rather than broker on behalf of individuals, families, and small groups to build client capacity to negotiate and advocate for their selves.
F 8.5	**The facilitation of effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed on goals and appreciate the nature of the professional relationship**
	❑ Actively discuss with clients and/or constituencies potential transitions and terminations from the beginning of the treatment process in order to be prepared for, planned or unplanned transitions or terminations. ❑ Actively plan for termination process with clients by anticipating common responses among clients (e.g., feeling of loss, anxiety, recurrence of old problems, development of new problems). ❑ Assist clients in developing maintenance strategies (e.g., relapse prevention strategies, utilize other formal resources, utilize informal support systems).

Competency #9 **Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Students will demonstrate the following behaviors by the end of their generalist field practicum:

F 9.1	**Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes defined in service plans**
	❑ Identify specific measurements for evaluating progress for each activity on intervention plan at micro, mezzo and/or macro level. ❑ Identify alternative evaluation methods that factor in qualitative outcome measures, in addition to only quantitative measures. ❑ Apply knowledge of family and group development/dynamics to design proactive services (e.g., marital enrichment programs; parenting education, classes; social skills groups for teens, etc.).
F 9.2	**Use knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes**
	❑ Identify variables in the social context that could potentially impact evaluation process or outcomes. ❑ Apply various stage theories to assess development of strengths and psychopathology (psychodynamic, object relations, family life cycle, stages of change, group formation and process). ❑ Demonstrate knowledge of self-determination and various aspects of human behavior on evaluation and outcome measures.
F 9.3	**Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes**
	❑ Continuously evaluate intervention, not only at termination, but also throughout process, and be able to evaluate results that test the efficacy of interventions used and monitor successes, failures, and progress in achieving outcomes. ❑ During supervisory sessions, discuss and evaluate an intervention technique in an field program and identify evaluation mechanisms at agency. ❑ Evaluate results that test the efficacy of interventions used and monitor successes, failures, and progress in achieving outcomes.
F 9.4	**Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels**
	❑ Identify strengths and potential future changes with evaluation process at the agency that could lead to improved outcomes for clients and client systems. ❑ Apply data interpretation to changes at the agency at the micro, mezzo and/or macro levels. ❑ Synthesize the process and outcome data from practice with individuals, families, and small groups to improve program and agency practice.

A variety of Learning Agreements from social work programs across the country were reviewed in addition to the competencies and learning activities from our own students at WSU as part of the development of this Guide. We would like to acknowledge review of, and in some cases have adapted, documents from the publicly available websites of University of Michigan School of Social Work, Social Work Program of Ramapo College of New jersey, Whitney M. Young School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh, Warner Pacific College, Western Illinois University, University of Montana School of Social Work, University of Northern Iowa, Salem State University, University of New England, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck, and Northern Central University.