

COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTATION – MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (MSW) DEGREE PROGRAM

A background check must be completed during the first two sessions of enrollment in the Master of Social Work (MSW) degree program. Students may not register for third session courses unless the background check is cleared in the first two sessions. Certain practicum sites may also require screening including, but not limited to, a criminal background check, drug screening, a physical examination, vaccination requirements, and additional forms and trainings.

Planning for Practicum Education

Practicum is the essential component that prepares students for social work practice. Practicum provides the framework for knowledge and skill development through immediate application of theoretical knowledge presented in the classroom to real situations presented by individuals, groups, or service delivery systems.

All MSW students must complete an integrated practicum learning experience in a social work setting to earn the MSW degree. Practicum sites are carefully vetted to ensure that students receive optimum experiences in safe and nurturing learning environments. Students are required to successfully complete 504 hours for the Advanced Standing Option, or 904.8 hours for the Traditional Option, in alignment with CSWE accreditation standards.

For Students Enrolling the Program Prior to July 2025

Students must identify a placement site and submit a practicum application via the student portal. The experiential learning team processes the application and works with the site to establish a contractual agreement. The experiential learning team communicates with students to ensure all compliance tasks are complete. Students must be in good academic standing, have completed all MSW core course requirements, have a complete and approved practicum application, and have completed all compliance requirements prior to being registered for practicum courses. Students may only attend practicum during their enrollment in a practicum course.

For Students Enrolling the Program July 2025 and After

Students are matched with a practicum site by the clinical coordination team. During the admissions process, admissions representatives will obtain information from accepted students required to establish a practicum. This information includes geographic location, employment-based practicum opportunities (if applicable), schedule availability, and practice preferences. Using this information, the clinical coordination team will then (1) match the student with a partner site, (2) establish a partnership with the student's place of employment, or (3) establish a partnership with a new site if there is no existing partner site in the student's geographic area. The clinical coordination team will work to ensure all students have been assigned a practicum site and will communicate with students to ensure all compliance tasks are complete. Students must be in good academic standing, have completed all MSW prerequisite course requirements, and have completed all compliance requirements prior to being registered for practicum courses. Students

may only attend practicum during their enrollment in a practicum-integrated course.

The MSW Practicum Director is administratively responsible, under the supervision of the Dean, for planning, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of the practicum experience. Specifically, the MSW Practicum Director is administratively responsible for the design, coordination, and guidance of the practicum component of the social work curriculum, in collaboration with agencies, agency instructors, students, practicum liaisons and members of the social work faculty.

The MSW Practicum policies and procedures are outlined in further detail in the MSW Practicum Manual.

Practicum Evaluations

The evaluation of student learning is an opportunity to provide feedback to students regarding their demonstration of competency during the practicum experience. Grades are based on the student's attendance and performance in the practicum as well as their participation in the integrative practicum course. Student performance and demonstration of competencies in practicum are assessed by the agency instructor and the practicum liaison consistently during the practicum experience. There is regular communication between the practicum liaison and the MSW Practicum Director to monitor student progress.

Students are evaluated directly on the competencies, behaviors, and task/activities outlined in the learning plan. The evaluation, completed by the agency instructor, rates students on a scale of 1 to 5 for performance on each competency behavior task. The practicum evaluation includes a recommended grade of 'pass' or 'fail' by the agency instructor, based on the final numerical score. This grade recommendation will be included in the course grade. Practicum evaluation scores align with final course grades, as outlined in the course. The practicum liaison, in consultation with the MSW Practicum Director, is responsible for submitting the final grade in the integrated practicum course to the registrar.