



Social Work Program Learning Contract Instructions

The heart of the learning contract is a conversation between the social work student and their agency field practicum supervisor. This instrument serves to design learning activities unique to the agency setting, the student needs and to demonstrate the competency standards established by the Council on Social Work Education. Learning contracts are a road map for student mastery of the practice behaviors necessary for competent generalist social work practice. Based on the developmental philosophy the first semester is best characterized by *breadth* and *second* semester by *depth*. **Each semester** the student develops a new learning contract with their agency field practicum supervisor that is approved by the Field Practicum Coordinator. **A copy of the student practicum job description must be attached to the leaning contract.** The learning goal is the practice behavior and the objectives are the tasks. Not only does the learning contract provide a guide to navigate the semester's learning it also serves as an agreement between the student, the agency and the Social Work Program. The final semester grade combines achievement of the learning contract with the field practicum evaluation. The program defines generalist social work practice as follows:

Generalist practice is the application of an electric knowledge base, professional values, and a wide range of skills to target any size system for change within the context of four primary processes. First generalist practice emphasizes client empowerment, the process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so that individuals can take action to improve their life situations" (Gutierrez, 2001, p 210). Second, it involves working effectively within an organizational structure and doing so under supervision. Third it requires the assumption of a wide range of professional roles. Fourth, generalist practice involves the application of critical thinking skills to the planned change process (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2006, p.7)

Learning objectives are written in SMART language - Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. Objectives are the specific actions towards competency in a practice behavior. Action language includes but *not limited* to:

To analyze	to answer	to arrange	to circulate	to collect
To define	to discuss	to develop	to discern	to demonstrate
To review	to schedule	to research	to explore	to participate in

Learning contracts are reviewed during the site visit each semester. If the student is unable to meet the objectives of the learning contract either the agency field practicum supervisor or the student should notify the field practicum coordinator to discuss alternatives.

Below is a suggested but not exhaustive list of learning activities that the Social Work Program suggests that meet the competencies as generalist practice social worker. Edit to fit the field site specific to the student.

Professional Identity

- Prepare for supervision, be responsible for bringing learning contracts and course assignments to supervision
- Prepare ethical or critical thinking questions for supervision
- Prepare a weekly agenda for supervision
- Develop and maintain a professional calendar
- Identify when personal life interferes with practice life
- Identify strengths and challenges
- Follow a referral to assess client access to the service

Ethical Principles

- Identify ethical dilemmas arising from work in the profession, agency or specific client
- Apply the NASW code of ethics to working in the agency or with a client or client population
- Identify and report on ambiguity in ethical conflicts
- Identify and report on issues of privilege as it pertains to practice

Critical Thinking

- Identify models that frame decision making
- Examine records to identify multiple sources of knowledge pertaining to a client

Engage Diversity and Difference

- Examine the agency for adherence to diversity and difference in practice
- Describe practice issues that result from diversity in practice
- Identify personal issues of diversity as it pertains to practice
- Participate in a local group that enhances or identifies diversity in practice

Advance Human Rights & Social and Economic Justice

- Identify legislation that impacts the agency and/or client base and take action
- Participate in local discussions on related issues
- Identify the source of injustice experienced by the client/or client population

Research-Informed Practice/Practice Informed Research

- Conduct a literature search on professional practices and present to the agency
- Compile research for the agency and or client
- Measure an client or agency intervention
- Meet with the CEO or agency personnel to discuss how programs evaluate success
- Identify outcome measures used with clients
- Knowledge of Human Behavior and the Social Environment
- Identify developmental issues with a client, family, community and/or organization
- Complete a eco-map and/or a social assessment

Policy Practice-Advance Social/Economic Justice

- Read and report on the agency mission, policies and standards
 - Attend court hearing/meetings with client or write a letter to another professional advocating for client's progress toward goals
 - Participate in agency or community task groups or attend advocacy group
 - Identify ways in which agency change of regulations, policies and procedures could enhance service delivery
 - Identify a local, state or national policy that impacts the agency and/or client population
 - Articulate the role of policy practitioner in an agency setting
 - Create resource list for agency
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Contexts That Shape Practice

- Create resource list for agency
- Participate in agency, community and/or neighborhood groups
- Identify the network of agencies that serve the same client base
- Identify the funding issues that impact service to clients
- Identify current trends that shape practice

Engage, Assess, Intervene & Evaluate Practice

- Develop a case plan describing engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation
- Attend, take notes on and discuss a case planning conference
- Prepare and review case documentation

Engagement

- Prepare notes prior to interviews
- Complete interviews either phone or in person
- Prepare documentation of client contacts
- Take the lead role in a home visit
- Bring agencies together to discuss provision of services and resource development or coordination of social services

Assessment

- Complete social history assessment, genogram, eco-map
- Collect information from other sources such as client records
- Develop plans with goals, objectives, and strategies
- Empower client to carry out solutions
- Evaluate interventions at agency designated interval, such as 30-assessment
- Follow up with referrals and scheduled appointments
- Provide closure activities as necessary

Intervention

- Link clients with services and resources
- Observe, design and/or facilitate individual, family, or group interventions
- Observe, design and/or facilitate a group

Evaluation

- Write student learning goals and objectives SMART language
 - Write client goals and objectives using SMART language
 - Collect and interpret data for the agency or client
 - Evaluate interventions and report on success and challenges
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