



Continuation of Practicum Proposal

Overview

This is an option for students wanting to do their specialization year (second year) practicum placement at the same agency as their generalist year practicum placement (first year). All continuations of practicum at the same agency must be reviewed and approved by the Field Education Program. Applications to continue practicum at the same site are due at least one month before the start of practicum in late August. Continuation proposals submitted after this due date will not be accepted, and students cannot continue at the same organization.

There are fundamental differences between the generalist and the specialization-year practicum. The first-year educational experience is designed to provide various opportunities for exposure to and application of the generalist roles of social work: broker, advocate, counselor/clinician, and teacher. Furthermore, the generalist coursework and the practicum experience should prepare the student for advanced, specialized learning in the second year. The social work curriculum for both years, including the field education curriculum, is competency-based. The competencies and behaviors differ for both years. In recognition of the ability of some practicum agencies to offer a broad range of student learning experiences, the option of a practicum placement in the same agency for both the generalist and the specialization years is possible, providing specific criteria are met.

Requirements for Continuation of Practicum

In considering whether it is appropriate for a student to continue in the same agency for a second-year placement, the student and the agency field instructor (practicum supervisor) should review the second-year competencies and specialized behaviors (see [MSW-Specialization Year Sample Learning Agreement](#)), which reflect not only a higher level of achievement in social work practice but a focus on clinical and advanced skills.

Some examples of specialized tasks and responsibilities are:

- the ability to work with a variety of clients and client situations and to locate and incorporate additional models of practice into the student's repertoire.
- the ability to resolve higher-level ethical situations.
- the ability to critically examine policy and to demonstrate leadership with other professionals at the agency and in the community.
- the ability to locate, use, and generate research toward quality practice outcomes.
- and the ability to practice independently in a variety of situations.

This is vastly different from merely increasing productivity or a caseload size. An example of a student continuing in the same agency is a student who learned the case management role at a mental health center and practiced basic problem-solving in the first year and then moved to a counseling role in the second year, providing individual and group counseling related to a variety of sensitive client issues.



Continuation of practicum in the same agency will be considered only IF:

1. the agency and the student can design an educationally based learning experience that meets the criteria for advanced placement as guided by the advanced competencies AND
2. if the practicum experience clearly offers new and unique learning experiences and responsibilities different from the generalist field experience.