



University of Montana School of Social Work MSW Specialization Year Learning Agreement

Learning Agreement Purpose Statement

The Learning Agreement outlines the framework for the student's educational journey at the practicum agency. With support from the Agency Field Instructor (AFI), students are tasked with crafting specific, personalized learning activities that align with competency areas. These activities should incorporate four key dimensions: knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. The formulation of these tasks is influenced by the opportunities the agency offers, the student's learning needs, interests, and aspirations, as well as the practice competencies mandated by the School of Social Work and the [2022 CSWE Educational and Policy Standards](#). The activities should be measurable, tailored to the site, and aimed at fostering the student's mastery of various professional competencies.

Students should complete their Learning Agreement through their Sonia account **by the fourth week of the semester**. The Agreement undergoes review by the AFI, the Field Liaison, and the student during the practicum's three site visits. It is an essential tool for evaluating practicum performance and progress throughout the academic year and is pivotal in determining the student's final practicum grade (credit/no credit). Progress towards individual competencies is evaluated mid-term and at the end of the term. Therefore, students are encouraged to consistently revise and update their Learning Agreement and activities to mirror any new learnings or opportunities.

Rating Scale:

5 – Demonstrates Competency: The student exhibits competence and initial independence in handling complex situations with this behavior.

4 – Emerging Competency : The student shows early-stage competence in this behavior but needs continued opportunities for mastery demonstration.

3 – Developing Competency with Assistance: The student displays inconsistent competence in this behavior, necessitating assistance or coaching.

2 – Minimal Competency: The student rarely demonstrates competence in this behavior.

1 – No Competency: The student does not exhibit competence in this behavior.

Attention

This document offers guidance and ideas to students as they develop their learning agreements. **It is NOT acceptable to copy and paste these examples into the learning agreement**, and the field education team will not approve them.



Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
a. Demonstrate professionalism in interprofessional, agency, and community practice contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dress according to agency policy.• Discuss appropriate roles and boundaries of a practicum student with the supervisor and other agency staff.• Present at a staff meeting or community event (in person or virtual).• Use professional language (verbal/nonverbal) when dealing with clients and other professionals in the workplace.• Engage in effective communication, including notes, emails, letters, and other written correspondence, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication.• Maintain accurate, respectful, and professional written client records (as appropriate).• Inquire and be open to feedback from the supervisor or other staff about documentation and oral and written communication.
b. Utilize critical and anti-racist principles in assessing and evaluating complex ethical situations and decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles with the supervisor and assess how they apply to the practicum practice context.• Discuss agency policies and how they fit with the NASW Code of Ethics, UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles, and other critical theories and frameworks.• Apply the ethical decision-making model to work through a situation that presents an ethical dilemma; discuss in supervision.• Discuss with other agency professionals how they deal with ethical dilemmas.• Review and discuss additional ethical or governing policies that may impact service delivery at the agency (i.e., agency policies, HIPPA/FERPA guidelines, SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP, etc.).• Review and discuss UM's IRB process if applicable to the practicum context.• Discuss personal/ethical/value dilemmas with the supervisor.• Journal personal biases or judgments that may hinder appropriate behaviors and discuss managing the same with the supervisor,



	<p>Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peer in the seminar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss needed areas of growth in supervision and work on strategies toward growth.
<p>c. Utilize supervision and peer consultation to ensure ethical social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend weekly supervision meetings and reflect on professional behavior. • Prepare topics to discuss with the supervisor (areas for growth, personal and professional boundaries, ethical dilemmas, professional communication, clinical interventions, etc.). • Consult with supervisor regarding issues arising in practice. • Integrate feedback into practice. • Utilize the seminar to consult with peers and the field liaison. • Develop communities of practice with peers and professionals from other disciplines.
<p>d. Utilize collaborative approaches to complex ethical decision-making that follow standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, additional codes as appropriate, and relevant laws and regulations, and ensure the participation or representation of those most directly affected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss agency policies and how they fit with the NASW Code of Ethics, UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles, and other critical theories and frameworks. • Apply the ethical decision-making model to work through a situation that presents an ethical dilemma; discuss in supervision. • Discuss with other agency professionals how they deal with ethical dilemmas. • Review and discuss additional ethical or governing policies that may impact service delivery at the agency (i.e., agency policies, HIPPA/FERPA guidelines, SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP, etc.). • Review and discuss UM’s IRB process if applicable to the practicum context.



Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
<p>a. Utilize anti-racist, anti-colonial strategies to challenge racism and other forms of oppression that compromise human rights or create impediments to socially just policies, programs, and practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with current political events and their impacts on social issues and clients. • Identify forms of oppression/ discrimination against clients/ populations and discuss them with a supervisor. • Identify economic barriers to social services and care; discuss with the supervisor. • Identify and discuss institutional and systemic barriers to a client’s progress with the supervisor. • Identify and review key concepts of social empowerment strategies. • Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills by finding potential solutions and discussing the same with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in practicum seminar. • Critically evaluate service delivery to determine ways the current provision of services may.
<p>b. Advocate for trauma-informed systems of care, expanded access to effective trauma-focused interventions, and social justice for marginalized and oppressed people who are most at risk for experiencing trauma, including historical, racial, and secondary trauma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong understanding of trauma (both primary and secondary), responses to trauma, and short and long-term effects of trauma on individuals, families, and communities. • Develop a strong understanding of the principles of trauma-informed care and service delivery. • Familiarize yourself with current political events and their impacts on social issues and clients. • Advocate for low-barrier client access to agency, community, state, and national services. • Contact your elected officials to support/ oppose harmful policies and legislation. • Join and attend local, state, and national coalition meetings. • Attend a public hearing or organizational meeting focused on increasing social and economic justice.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop professional relationships with advocacy organizations serving the agency population.• VOTE! Engage in voter outreach and education.
<p>c. Engage in justice-oriented practice that integrates the critical understanding of specific environmental, social, and economic justice issues affecting rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become familiar with relevant data on poverty and economic inequality related to practicum context and geographic area of practice.• Include specific attention to poverty and economic justice in intervention planning.• Identify a policy that addresses environmental, social, and economic issues affecting your community and greater geographic region.• Research specific policies affecting clients served by practicum, program, services available, and advocacy opportunities.• Identify specific Universal Declaration of Human Rights articles relevant to the practicum context.• Use practicum case examples to show how anti-racist and anti-colonial strategies address human rights violations and inform practice.• Complete and present a case study for SW 535 that draws from practicum experience.• Participate in community education or change efforts to address ongoing oppression and discrimination.



Competency 3: Engage in Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
a. Design research and practice interventions that are anti-racist, empowering, collaborative, inclusive, equitable, and responsive to organizational and community contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review evaluative tools utilized by the agency and evaluate with an ADEI lens.• Compare the agency's practice methods with ADEI methods discussed in various classes.• Discuss ways to engage and improve ADEI in practice with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in the practicum seminar.• Summarize the empirically supported interventions available to support the population you serve in culturally relevant ways.
b. Engage in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that demonstrate cultural humility and critical understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss and document ways you engage in cultural humility within your practice setting.• Outline and discuss the challenges and opportunities of practicing in rural and Indigenous communities.• Outline and discuss the experience of Indigenous clients seeking services in your practice setting. Determine any barriers and facilitating factors to seeking services.• Identify when you have worked across differences with a client or constituency. Critically evaluate the strengths and challenges you experienced during interaction and discuss them with a supervisor.



Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
<p>a. Apply research-informed knowledge of trauma, including historical trauma and trauma-informed systems, to designing, delivering, and evaluating effective interventions at multiple levels of practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong understanding of trauma (both primary and secondary), responses to trauma, and short and long-term effects of trauma on individuals, families, and communities. • Develop a strong understanding of the principles of trauma-informed care and service delivery • Analyze and discuss evidence-informed methods and evaluative tools utilized by the agency. • Discuss theories and perspectives utilized when working with clients and their effectiveness. • Research evidence-informed policies informing agency practice and client population; discuss with the supervisor. • Read professional journal articles relevant to clients served by the agency. • Discuss trauma-informed intervention utilized with the client population with the supervisor. • Interview treatment team members for varying perspectives on practice and various models/approaches used. • Discuss specific cases with the supervisor, including problem, proposed solution(s), proposed plan of action, and/or proposed measurable outcomes.
<p>b. Apply multiple ways of knowing and skills of program evaluation (including Indigenous evaluation frameworks and decolonizing methodologies), critical participatory action research, and advocacy to address identified concerns of rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review professional literature related to best practices from various sources and perspectives. • Bring findings from readings to bear in seminar and practicum supervision. • Complete program evaluation assignment for SW 521, utilizing Indigenous evaluation frameworks and CPAR. • Learn about the evaluation process used in the practicum. Review research to learn various ways to evaluate practice in a particular context. Suggest possibilities for change as appropriate.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement one evaluation process that engages clients as evaluators (e.g., children's "satisfaction scale" for an after-school program; homeless shelter resident's perspectives on service and support priorities).
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Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
<p>a. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical and contemporary significance of the Indian Child Welfare Act in decolonizing or Indigenizing practices with families, communities, and nations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply specific knowledge from SW 532: ICWA to families, communities, and nations your practicum agency serves. • Critically evaluate how agency services can create opportunities for Indigenous clients to build/enhance cultural connectedness. Discuss with the supervisor. • Critically evaluate the ways the agency can advocate for the implementation of ICWA. For example, discuss with the supervisor how the agency advances the spirit of ICWA-keeping Indigenous youth connected to family, culture, and tribal community. • Consider applying ICWA principles to work with all children and families (e.g., proximity to family, kinship placements, offering culturally specific services to families, reunification).
<p>b. Apply frameworks for critical policy analysis that integrate a historical understanding of social policy and a commitment to social justice, intersectionality, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a policy that impacts your practice and critically evaluate its impact on the individual and/or community you serve. Consider whether this policy reinforces or resists racism, anti-LGBTQ beliefs, colonization, etc. • Critically evaluate the history behind a policy impacting services delivered at the agency. What was the intention behind the policy? Does the policy meet its intended goals? Discuss with the supervisor. • Collaborate with the supervisor to create a policy that promotes equitable delivery of services to minoritized populations.
<p>c. Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services in rural and indigenous communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize SW 531 in-class activities and assignments to demonstrate how you can utilize social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how a social welfare policy affects the delivery of and access to social services in your practice setting. Include an analysis of the considerations particular to rural and indigenous communities.
<p>d. Advocate for policies that inform and support trauma-informed systems of care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with current political events and evaluate the potential connection to trauma experienced by clients. Discuss with the supervisor.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate for low-barrier client access to agency, community, state, and national services.• Contact your elected officials to support/oppose policies that can potentially re-traumatize clients.• Join and attend local, state, and national coalition meetings and advocate for consideration of trauma-informed approaches to social issues.• Attend a public hearing or organizational meeting focused on increasing social and economic justice and trauma-informed service delivery to clients served by the agency.• Develop professional relationships with advocacy organizations serving the agency population.• VOTE! Engage in voter outreach and education.
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Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
a. Apply a critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the engagement process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practice and document your use of an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective.• Identify and discuss with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles that inform your approach to the engagement process.• Document how you engage with and interview clients/families demonstrating cultural humility.• Take reflective notes and discuss with your supervisor how your positionality may impact ethical/ value dilemmas encountered in your work with clients.• Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias, and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination.
b. Effectively address and navigate issues of difference, power, and resistance that arise in the engagement process with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document the ways that power is at play in the engagement process.• Seek feedback from the supervisor about ways to build rapport and trust and to roll with resistance with clients.• Review literature on rapport-building/ interpersonal skills and practice in various communities and apply concepts in practice.• Engage in active listening with clients, colleagues, peers, and others.• Demonstrate ability to roll with resistance and use appropriate interpersonal skills with clients.• Research and apply knowledge related to diversity to enhance client well-being.• Observe the supervisor and others in their interactions with clients.• Identify areas of comfort and discomfort in client engagement and discuss them in supervision.• Engage with and interview clients/families to determine how power (power with, power over, power to) impacts their experience in the world.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination.
<p>c. Implement culturally grounded and trauma-informed principles of engagement with clients and client systems that reflect the understanding of and sensitivity to multiple forms of trauma, including historical, intergenerational, racial, and secondary trauma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a case study to show how you can practice from a culturally grounded and trauma-informed perspective in the practicum context.• List specific engagement skills relevant to practicum context (engaging non-verbal children or adults; engaging neighborhood residents; engaging resistant clients; engaging clients who have experienced racism or other forms of trauma) and document your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles.• Identify specific opportunities to practice engagement skills and further your understanding.• Engage in ongoing assessment of learning in supervision.• Identify trauma-informed resources relevant to clients served by the practicum.• Critically evaluate how the experiences of historical, intergenerational, and racial trauma may impact the engagement process. Discuss with the supervisor.• Participate in agency, inter-agency, and community opportunities to enhance culturally-informed practice – e.g., cultural committees, trainings, community consortiums, etc.



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

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
<p>a. Apply a critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the assessment process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the developmental stages of the client population/integrate this into the assessment process. Ensure evaluation of the developmental stage is informed by an understanding of intersectionality and applies an anti-racist/anti-oppressive lens. • Critically evaluate assessment tools and the appropriateness of fit when used with minoritized client populations. • Do a family genogram/Eco map after completing the assessment. • Practice using systems theory/strengths perspective/anti-racist lens. • Utilize culturally relevant intervention strategies to increase understanding of the client in the environment. • Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar. • Engage with and interview clients/families to determine strengths (e.g., connection to culture) and challenges (e.g., experience of intergenerational trauma). • Observe client assessment and write/organize/interpret client data. • Develop a written assessment of the client that includes the client's strengths and challenges, including the impact of systems on the client's presenting issue. • Critically examine assessment tools and processes, and complete comprehensive, strengths-based, bio-psycho-social-spiritual or Just Practice assessments. • Discuss the potential for bias in the assessment process with the supervisor if utilizing the DSM. Work with clients to identify DSM diagnoses, treatment goals, and culturally relevant interventions.
<p>b. Utilize collaborative processes of assessment that honor the knowledge, expertise, and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document ways in which you involved clients/stakeholders in a teaching-learning process.



<p>experience of the participants and involve them as partners in the change process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner with clients to critically examine assessment tools and processes of assessment. Develop a culturally relevant assessment approach.• Complete comprehensive, strengths-based, bio-psycho-social-spiritual, or Just Practice assessments.• Discuss the potential for bias in the assessment process with the supervisor if utilizing the DSM. Work with clients to identify DSM diagnoses, treatment goals, and culturally relevant interventions.
<p>c. Apply knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed organizations to assess and improve organizational practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critically evaluate the organization's practices to determine the strengths and challenges of trauma-informed service delivery. Discuss opportunities for change efforts with the supervisor.• Discuss with the supervisor the organization's approach to the assessment of the experience of secondary traumatic stress amongst staff.• Discuss the agency's approach to secondary traumatic stress prevention and response with the supervisor.



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

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
<p>a. Apply a critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the intervention process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a mutually agreed upon focus of work and goals and objectives for clients. • Empower clients to identify and work on specific achievable goals. • Utilize culturally responsive interpersonal skills with clients. • Facilitate a support group or psycho-educational group • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including intervention and termination, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels. • Identify and discuss with your supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles that inform your approach to intervention. • Analyze and/or acquire evidence-informed methods being utilized within the agency. • Critically evaluate evidence-informed or other intervention strategies used with clients to determine the extent to which they are culturally relevant. Discuss with the supervisor opportunities for adaptation. • Utilize culturally relevant interventions to increase understanding of the client in the environment. • Facilitate a support group or psycho-educational group that applies an understanding of anti-racism and cultural humility. • Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar.
<p>b. Demonstrate understanding of intervention as a collaborative process of action and accompaniment with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that honor their knowledge, experience, and expertise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect clients to culturally relevant community resources. • Utilize culturally relevant interventions to increase understanding of the client in the environment.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain communication/follow-up with clients regarding outcomes and potential success.• Determine commonly used and culturally relevant client resources and the most effective referral process.• Attend and participate in community, state, and federal advocacy events (e.g., city council hearings and legislative lobby days).• Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including intervention and termination, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels.
<p>c. Advocate for the advancement of trauma-informed systems of care, expanded access to effective trauma-focused interventions, and social justice for marginalized and oppressed people who are most at risk for experiencing trauma, including historical, racial, and secondary trauma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in community forums (e.g., local needs assessments and city council meetings) to advocate for the advancement of trauma-informed systems of care related to the issues addressed by your practicum agency and document themes to share with agency staff.• Facilitate inter-agency meetings with consumers and providers to expand access to effective trauma-focused interventions.• Conduct qualitative interviews with providers, consumers, and community members to assess the effectiveness of collaboration.• Provide recommendations based on results.



Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
a. Apply a critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the evaluation process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review evaluation and data collection tools/methods used at the agency.• Evaluate assessments/data collection and intervention practices during supervision.• Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including evaluation and follow-up, as may be appropriate at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels.• Integrate research coursework into practicum learning.• Identify and discuss various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) with the supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in the practicum seminar.• Apply a strength perspective in the evaluation process and review of outcomes.
b. Design and carry out collaborative and empowering evaluation processes responsive to organizational and community contexts where those most affected are meaningful stakeholders in the decision-making and change efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify specific ways to gather and include client/stakeholder feedback to inform decision-making and change efforts (e.g., surveys, interviews, etc.).• Identify possibilities for integrating participatory approaches into your agency's evaluation process.



Competency 10: Apply Forms of Leadership to Support Collaborative, Interdisciplinary, or Transdisciplinary Relationships and Active Community Participation in Addressing the Intersection of Local and Global Issues Impacting your Community and Greater Geographic Region

Behaviors:	Suggested Learning Activities:
<p>a. Apply understanding of the relationships among local, state, federal, and Indigenous governments to inform effective advocacy for the rights and well-being of residents of one’s community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate knowledge of unique community factors, characteristics, or initiatives into agency assessments and/or interventions. • Research effective strategies for activism and advocacy and their implications for local, regional, and global practice. • Research social work issues specific to your geographic location, including American Indian topics (historical trauma, tribal history, sovereignty, cultural humility, cultural resilience), rural health care, and technology access. • Use knowledge of American Indian topics (historical trauma, tribal history and sovereignty, cultural humility, cultural resilience) to inform practice.
<p>b. Utilize inclusive, collaborative approaches to leadership to bring diverse community and organizational stakeholders into processes of organizational change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview AFI and other organizational stakeholders on their leadership styles and use of inclusive and collaborative approaches. • Engage in collaborative meetings at the agency, community, state, and national levels.
<p>c. Facilitate and/or engage in critical dialogue around diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a community change process that considers power relations. • Facilitate a dialogue process around diversity, equity, and inclusion at your practicum or in the community. • Facilitate advanced integrative seminar focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
<p>d. Apply knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed organizations to assess and improve organizational practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate trauma-informed workplace assessment tools in supervision. • Implement a workplace assessment in collaboration with your AFI. • Develop trauma-informed care presentation related to practice context and present at the agency.