

SOCW460: BSW FIELD PRACTICUM
12 Semester Hours

Department of Social Work
Ball State University

Instructor: Faculty Liaison

SPRING 2026

(see Practicum Roster)

Office Location: HP 501

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I. DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

Social Work 460 Field Practicum is one of the two final courses taken by social work majors. The course consists of an intensive field experience in which students integrate content from previously required courses in the social work curriculum. The practicum experience takes place in an approved human services agency under the supervision of a qualified field supervisor in conjunction with an assigned faculty liaison. Micro, mezzo and macro practice experiences in the field agency are educationally structured and supervised through a learning contract, and include direct work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, as well as participation in agency staff activities. The focus of the learning integration process is on the competencies required of baccalaureate level social workers, and on professional development strategies expected of beginning practitioners.

The practicum course consists of a full-time block placement (minimum of 400 clock hours) and is taken concurrently with SOCWK462 Field Seminar. The field experience provides students with the opportunity to master beginning level generalist social work practice skills.

II. TEXTS AND REQUIRED READING

Students will read agency manuals/materials in order to develop a working knowledge of the field agency. Additionally, the field supervisor may give reading assignments specifically related to the agency and population served. Faculty liaisons may suggest relevant readings. Students are required to integrate professional literature in agency-related Social Work 462 Field Seminar papers.

Literature and other relevant information related to practicum will be found on Canvas, Sonia, or distributed during seminars.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Demonstrates ethical and professional behavior
- B. Engage diversity and difference in practice
- C. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
- D. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
- E. Engage in policy practice
- F. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- G. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- H. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- I. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

IV. TEACHING METHOD / COURSE FORMAT

In contrast to the classroom method, the practicum course uses a laboratory or experiential approach to learning. The practicum placement and field learning experiences are selected and organized on an individual basis for each student. Teaching is adapted to individual learning needs and the different opportunities available in each field agency.

The assigned Faculty Liaison works closely with the student and the Field Supervisor during practicum. The Faculty Liaison schedules three conferences (see practicum calendar) with the field agency and student to structure the practicum experience and evaluate student performance.

Reflective weekly logs submitted by the student are a means by which students reflect on their learning and faculty liaisons can provide feedback.

V. CLASS ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES

A. **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Central to the field practicum experience is the student's active, full-time participation at the field placement site throughout the entire semester. Students cannot earn a grade for this course without completing the minimum (400) required number of field hours.

B. **FIELD CONFERENCES**

There are three scheduled field-based conferences completed during the practicum. (See the practicum calendar.) Although conference times may vary, students and instructors should anticipate needing to schedule one hour for each conference. Conferences are scheduled to help the student and Field Supervisor structure and evaluate the practicum experience to meet the goals and objectives of the course.

1. *Learning Contract Conference:* The Faculty Liaison, Field Supervisor, and student arrange to meet virtually during the first or second week of the semester to review the Practicum Learning Contract and Evaluation Form. The conference is used to review the student's individualized learning activities and assignments for the semester. (See the Practicum Learning Contract and Evaluation Form for further details.)
2. *Midterm Evaluation Conference:* The Faculty Liaison, Field Supervisor, and student arrange to meet in-person or virtually (dependent on the agency's preference) during midterm of the semester to evaluate the student's performance in the practicum agency. The Practicum Learning Contract and Evaluation Form is used by the student and the Field Supervisor to evaluate the student's competencies. The midterm conference includes a discussion regarding progress during the practicum; assessment of performance; re-evaluation of agency assignments; and suggestion of a midterm grade.
3. *Final Evaluation Conference:* During the final week of practicum, the Faculty Liaison, Field Supervisor, and student meet virtually to review the Practicum Learning Contract and Evaluation Form again. The purposes of the final evaluation conference are to review the student's performance; to review the student's professional strengths and weaknesses; to discuss the student's future career plans as he/she exits the University; and to assign a final grade for practicum. The final evaluation conference is also one of the opportunities for the student to give the faculty and Field Supervisor his/her evaluation of the practicum agency assignments, instructional

methods, placement process, and course requirements, and to provide recommendations for curriculum changes.

C. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Students are evaluated on their personal and professional behavior or conduct during practicum, and are expected to follow the NASW Code of Ethics, practicum site policies and procedures, and BSW competencies found in the Learning Contract and Evaluation Form.

Grading Policy

At the midterm and final evaluation conferences, the student and Field Supervisor will review the practicum evaluation with the Faculty Liaison (see Practicum Learning Contract and Evaluation Form). Based upon this review, the Field Supervisor is asked to recommend a grade which accurately assesses his or her opinion of the student's performance in relation to entry-level generalist social work practice. With the information gleaned from the practicum evaluation, agency assignments, conference discussions and recommendations, the Faculty Liaison will assign one of the following for the final SOCWK 460 grade.

- A Represents work of excellent or outstanding quality (work is consistently at the highest level of expectation for entry-level BSW generalist social worker) A-
- B+
- B Represents work of good, above average quality (generally exceeds the entry-level of professional performance expectation)
- B-
- C+
- C Represents work of average quality, but does not exceed entry-level professional performance expectations)
- C-
- D+
- D Represents work which is below average, but above failure (the lowest passing grade; in some respects meets and in other respects falls short of entry-level professional performance standards)
- D-
- F Represents work that is not of an acceptable quality (fails to meet BSW entry-level performance standards)