SAMPLE MSW Foundation (1st year) Learning Agreement

Student: ____________________________
Semester: ____________________________ Year: ____________________________
Faculty Field Liaison: ____________________________
Agency: ____________________________
Agency Field Instructor: ____________________________
Agency Task Supervisor: ____________________________ (if applicable)

NOTE: This is a SAMPLE learning agreement that includes examples of several potential learning activities to support each competency. Sample activities are listed below each competency in italics. This is not an all-inclusive list and students and Agency Field Instructors are welcome and encouraged to identify additional activities that will help with acquisition of professional social work skills and competency.

This learning agreement serves to articulate activities that support CSWE’s competencies, school and student’s learning objectives and to be a reflection of the student’s year in the field. These activities are site-specific, measurable, and individualized with the goal of promoting the student’s successful development of professional competencies.

This plan is negotiated between the student, Agency Field Instructor, and Agency Task Supervisor (where applicable) and provides the basis for evaluating the student’s professional development. The student’s plan should be comprehensive, with activities added as the year progresses, such that by the end of the year it reflects all the student’s activities. Faculty field liaison consultation is available as needed to support the development of this plan.

This plan should be completed no later than the 3rd week after your internship begins. At the beginning of the second semester, the plan is updated to reflect changes and/or new opportunities.

Competencies, Practice Behaviors and Student Learning Activities:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly: (EP 2.1.1)

   • Advocate for client access to the services of social work;
   • Practice personal reflection & self-correction;
• Attend to professional roles and boundaries;
• Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
• Engage in career-long learning;
• Use supervision and consultation.

Learning Activities: (include at least two)

1) Determine commonly used resources for clients and most effective referral process.
2) Keep notes on own behavior and thoughts during (or after) client meeting. Reflect on how personal assumptions impact professional conduct and interactions with clients.
3) Keep reflective journal/log of professional development and challenges; discuss in supervision.
4) Discuss needed areas of growth in supervision and work on strategies toward growth.
5) Discuss appropriate roles and boundaries of a student intern with Field Instructor and other agency staff; practice behaviors that demonstrate commitment to appropriate roles and boundaries (e.g. not exchanging personal contact information with clients; being mindful of use of social media, etc.).
6) Illustrate effective communication, either in chart notes, email professional memorandum, letters, and other written correspondence, as well as verbally and non-verbally.
7) Join a professional social work organization (NASW, ISCSW or OSSW, for example) to gain familiarity with various social workers and social work roles in the community.
8) Exhibit a professional attitude by arriving to the Field Practicum Site dressed appropriately, clean, smiling with a positive outlook, prepared mentally and emotionally to solve problems with staff and clients, and prepare to learn.
9) Dress according to agency policy.
10) Participate in available workshops and trainings related to social work.
11) Present to weekly supervision meetings prepared (Bring a list of topics/cases to discuss, report back on learning activities, share reflections from week, etc.)
12) Consult with agency staff when appropriate to discuss social work related issues.

2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice: (EP 2.1.2)

• Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
• Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics;
• Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts;
• Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

Learning Activities: (include at least two)

1) Discuss personal/ethical/value dilemmas with supervisor / Field Instructor and reflect on how they influence work with clients.
2) Journal personal biases or judgments that may hinder appropriate behaviors and discuss managing the same with Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peer in practicum seminar.
3) Identify agency and client ethical dilemmas caused by external factors (funding cuts, etc.)
4) Discuss ethical behaviors and application of NASW Code of Ethics within the agency with Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers during practicum seminar.
5) Openly discuss ethical conflicts / situations with Field Instructor.
6) Review and discuss additional ethical or governing policies which may impact the way in which the agency is able to provide services to its clientele (i.e. agency rules, Idaho Code, IDAPA Rules, HIPPA, FERPA, FMLA, SSI, AHCA, etc.).
7) Use an ethical-decision making model to work through a situation that presents an ethical dilemma; discuss in supervision.

3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments: (EP 2.1.3)

- Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom;
- Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation;
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

Learning Activities: (include at least two)

1) Discuss specific cases with Agency Field Instructor, including problem, proposed solution(s), proposed plan of action, and/or proposed measurable outcomes.
2) Read professional journal articles that relate to practice and discuss with supervisor.
3) Interview members of a treatment team for varying perspectives on practice and various models/approaches used. Discuss findings with Field Instructor and strengths / appropriateness of each approach.
4) Staff cases at multidisciplinary meetings or with colleagues;
5) Maintain accurate, respectful and professional written client records (as appropriate). Be open to feedback from Field Instructor or other staff with regards to documentation.

4. Engage diversity and difference in practice: (EP 2.1.4)

- Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
- Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
- Recognize and communicate understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences;
- View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

Learning Activities: (include at least two)

1) Strive to be assigned a diverse caseload of clients.
2) Discuss cultural structure and values and their effect(s) on different clients with supervisor.
3) Utilize journaling, or some other method of reflection, to record personal beliefs, or values,
regarding clients/staff who may be different than me (age, gender, race, religious affiliation, orientation, color, cultural background, marital status, family structure, class, physical ability, etc.), and how my beliefs/values impact my interaction with various clients. Discuss the same with Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or during practicum seminar class, giving special attention to issues that may seem particularly difficult or confusing.

4) Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias, and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination, as well as equal and just treatment to all clients/patients of the agency.

5) Review and discuss NASW’s Cultural competency standards with your Field Instructor. Work to incorporate these expectations/practice behaviors into your social work practice.

6) Research and apply knowledge related to diversity to enhance client well-being.

7) Use assessments that include sections of diversity/culture/spirituality as identified by client.

8) Identify client differences using a strengths perspective.

5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice: (EP 2.1.5)

- Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
- Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice;
- Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

Learning Activities: (include at least two)

1) Identify agency population being served and social policies that have created and/or continue to create oppressive circumstances for the life course of the individuals/group.

2) Familiarize self with current political events and their impact on clients.

3) Identify forms of oppression/discrimination of a particular client group; discuss with supervisor.

4) Identify common economic barriers to care. Discuss with your Agency Field Instructor.

5) Identify the institutionally embedded barriers to an individual client’s progress. Discuss them with your Field Instructor.

6) Follow a bill promoting civil rights for a marginalized group. Educate others and encourage advocacy related to this bill.

7) Contact legislator about a current client population need.

8) Attend a public hearing or organizational meeting focused on increasing social and economic justice.

9) Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving skills by finding potential solutions and discussing the same with Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in practicum seminar.

10) Identify and review key concepts of social empowerment strategies. Discuss these strategies with field instructor and practice with clients.

11) Develop professional contacts with members of advocacy organizations that serve my client population.
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research: (EP 2.1.6)

- Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry;
- Use research evidence to inform practice.

Learning Activities: (include at least two)

1) Be open to feedback on practice from clients and supervisor to improve social work skills
2) Solicit feedback from agency staff to learn about effective forms of intervention use with client population.
3) Read professional journal articles relevant to agency population.
4) Analyze and/or acquire evidence-based methods being utilized within the agency.
5) Compare evidence-based methods employed by the agency with methods being discussed in various classes. Discuss questions with Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in practicum seminar.

7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment: (EP 2.1.7)

- Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation;
- Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Learning Activities: (include at least two)

1) Identify and apply social work theories as they may apply to the process of assessment, intervention or evaluation of clients/patients within the agency.
2) Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, termination, and follow-up as may be appropriate at either the micro (individual) level, or at the macro (community) level.
3) Become familiar with different assessment tools and the strengths/limitations of each tool.
4) Understand developmental stages of client population and integrate this understanding into assessment and intervention process.
5) Identify and discuss with Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in practicum seminar, various theories about human behaviors as may be observed when working with clients (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual).
6) Utilize specific interventions to increase understanding of client in environment.

8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services: (EP 2.1.8)

- Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being;
- Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

**Learning Activities: (include at least two)**

1) Participate in a community advocacy event.
2) Attend Advocacy Days and meet with legislators regarding policy issues.
3) Discuss laws that affect agency with supervisor.
4) Research a minimum of one policy that directly affects the well-being of client population. Discuss impact of this policy on your clients and policy change ideas with Field Instructor.
5) Identify relevant organizational and informational web sites that provide social policy information relevant to your agency’s service population, or serve as clearinghouses for legislative issues. Review them with your Field Instructor. Consider creating a web directory for your agency.
6) Research and/or otherwise observe client advocacy activities supported by the agency which promote benefits for at risk populations.
7) Participate in social work day at the Idaho Legislature.
8) Write a letter to your state or federal representative about a social policy that negatively or positively affects your client population.
9) Track legislative initiatives relevant to your agency’s client population. Create a fact sheet to educate the public about the importance of the initiative and/or issue.

9. Respond to contexts that shape practice: (EP 2.1.9)

- Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, & emerging societal trends to provide relevant services;
- Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

**Learning Activities: (include at least two)**

1) Attend agency training sessions where possible.
2) Identify and attend current community training sessions such as Continuing Education courses offered by local colleges or through NASW or other organizations offering training.
3) Assist with or participate in local trainings or workshops relevant to agency issues.
4) Develop or revise a community resource guide.

10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities: (EP 2.1.10)

- Substantively and effectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
• Use empathy and other interpersonal skills;
• Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes;
• Collect, organize, and interpret client data;
• Assess client strengths and limitations;
• Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives;
• Select appropriate intervention strategies;
• Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
• Implement interventions that enhance client capacities;
• Help clients resolve problems;
• Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients;
• Facilitate transitions and endings;
• Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Learning Activities: (include at least two)

1) Seek feedback from supervisor about ways to build rapport and trust with clients.
2) Plan, develop and carry out a support group.
3) Observe effective facilitation of groups at micro, mezzo, and/or macro levels, and facilitate, or co-facilitate groups when appropriate.
4) Identify areas of comfort and discomfort in client engagement and discuss in supervision.
5) Demonstrate ability to empathize and use appropriate interpersonal skills with clients.
6) Engage with and interview clients/families to determine strengths and challenges. Develop interviewing and rapport-building skills.
7) Review literature on relationship-building and apply concepts to my own interviewing technique.
8) Observe client assessment and write/organize/interpret client data (could be shadow process).
9) Do a family genogram and/or eco-map as part of an assessment.
10) Develop a written assessment of client that includes client’s strengths and weaknesses.
11) Observe, reflect, and apply practice skills that assist individuals and/or groups to enhance their well-being from a strengths-based perspective.
12) Work with a client or client system to develop an intervention plan.
13) Facilitate referral process of client to another agency, when appropriate.
14) Maintain communication and follow-up with client to determine client outcomes and potential success.
15) Review client progress throughout termination phase; prepare client for final sessions/meetings.
16) Continually review goals and objectives with client to monitor progress.
17) Review client file(s) to determine progress toward agreed upon goals
18) Evaluate assessments/data collection and intervention practices during supervision.

Signatures:

Student: ([Student Name]): [Click to sign Completed Document]
Field Instructor: ([Agency Field Instructor Name]): [Click to sign Completed Document]

Task Supervisor (if applicable): ([Task Supervisor Name]): [Click to sign Completed Document]

Faculty Field Liaison: ([Faculty Field Liaison Name]): [Click to sign Completed Document]