Social Work Program Employer-Based Placements

Use of an Employment Agency as a Social Work Practicum Site

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Students employed in social work agencies may request that their agency be evaluated for suitability as a practicum placement site. The arrangement is initiated when the agency submits a completed **Employer-Based Practicum Proposal & Competency-Mapping Form** (Part 2). The Practicum Director, in consultation with the assigned Faculty Practicum Liaison, reviews and approves the proposal before the placement begins.

The purpose of practicum is to provide an opportunity for interns to integrate theoretical knowledge and conceptual frameworks with social work practice in an agency providing social work services. It is an educationally focused experience with clearly defined learning objectives, conducted under the supervision of an experienced MSW or BSW level social worker. The educational goal of the program is to develop a reflective, self-evaluating, knowledgeable, and relatively autonomous professional social worker.

Placement Models

The Department recognizes three employer-based placement models. The proposal must identify which model applies and demonstrate how the student will develop and demonstrate the nine social work competencies under that model.

1. **Same Work. Available only when the student has held the current employment role for less than six (6) months as of the practicum start date.** The student remains in their current role, and current work tasks are mapped to and count toward practicum hours. Approvable when each counted activity is intentionally linked to one or more competencies at the appropriate practice level and supervised as a learning experience distinct from employment supervision. **Students who have held the current role for six (6) months or more are not eligible for the Same Work model and must use Combination Work or Different Work.**
2. **Combination Work.** Some current tasks count toward practicum hours, and the student also takes on additional or different assignments (a different unit, population, or new functions) to round out competency coverage.
3. **Different Work.** The student completes 100% of practicum hours in a different department, role, or service area, performing tasks distinct from their employment.

> **Program note:** *By Department policy, the Same Work model is limited to students with less than six (6) months in their current employment role. Longer-tenured employees are presumed to have achieved routine mastery of their duties, so re-counting those duties as practicum would not provide the new and challenging learning experiences the practicum requires. Such students use Combination Work or Different Work, which introduce new functions, populations, or program areas.*

Conditions for Approval

To preserve the educational focus of the practicum, all of the following must be satisfied:

- **Same Work eligibility (employment tenure).** A Same Work placement is approved only where the student has held the current employment role for less than six (6) months as of the

practicum start date, verified on the proposal form. Students with longer tenure in the role must use the Combination Work or Different Work model.

- **One practicum year only.** A student may use their employment site for only one of the two required practicum years either the first (foundational) or the second (advanced year — not both. This ensures the student gains field experience in at least one setting outside their employer, supporting breadth of competency development.
- **Competency-driven design.** Each proposed practicum activity is intentionally designed to develop and demonstrate proficiency in one or more of the nine CSWE competencies at the appropriate level of practice. Practicum work must amount to more than routine job performance: it must create structured opportunities to expand the student's knowledge, skills, and professional values, documented on the competency-mapping grid in Part 2.
- **Protected learner role.** The student's identity as a learner is safeguarded. Practicum supervision is educationally focused and is documented separately from employment/administrative supervision, even when tasks overlap.
- **Qualified practicum instructor.** The placement provides a practicum instructor who holds an MSW from a CSWE-accredited program and at least two (2) years of post-MSW practice experience. The instructor must be available to the student during practicum hours. For BSW students, the practicum instructor must hold a BSW with at least 2 years post BSW experience.
- **Designated practicum hours.** Specific hours are designated as practicum time on a schedule that adheres to the practicum calendar. An intern is typically required to spend 12–24 hours per week in practicum, depending on the year in the program.
- **Work-hour cap.** Per the Memorandum of Understanding (Part 3), the agency provides the employee a work schedule of no more than forty (40) hours per week, structured to support completion of practicum hours.
- **Signed proposal.** The agency submits the proposal (Part 2) signed by the intern, the proposed practicum instructor, the work supervisor, and an agency representative.
- **Instructor training.** The identified practicum instructor completes Practicum Instruction Orientation when determined by the CSUEB Social Work Department (primarily Fall) and the agency ensures relevant staff understand the requirements and expectations of the practicum.
- **Task supervisor (if applicable).** If the on-site practicum instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited MSW or BSW, the program assigns a qualified social work practicum instructor to provide the social work perspective, and a task supervisor provides day-to-day oversight. The proposal must describe this arrangement in detail.

Supervision

Interns must be supervised by a qualified practicum instructor as described above. **Where the employment supervisor and the practicum instructor are the same individual, practicum supervision time must be separate and distinct from employment supervision,** with a clear focus on professional education, reflection, and development of the nine competencies. The supervision plan, including frequency, format, and the distinction from employment supervision, is documented in Part 2.

Hours and Scheduling

Intern hours are recorded from mid-May through mid-June per the practicum calendar. Interns may not accelerate the accumulation of hours, carry hours forward from month to month, or count employment hours toward required practicum hours unless an approved employer-based placement agreement is in place. Practicum hours must be scheduled in blocks of at least four (4) hours, with eight (8) hour blocks preferred, arranged to provide the best educational experience.

Procedures

1. Present your agency supervisor with this policy and the proposal requirements.
2. Ask your employer to complete the Employer-Based Practicum Proposal & Competency-Mapping Form (Part 2 / Appendix H). When completed and signed by all parties, the agency submits it to the Faculty Practicum Liaison. All sections must be complete before submission.
3. The Practicum Director, in consultation with the Faculty Liaison, reviews the proposal. Approved proposals are signed by the Practicum Director and returned to the agency. Students receive written notification in all cases where a proposal is not approved.
4. Students should maintain an alternative plan for completing practicum hours in the event a proposal is not approved or does not meet educational requirements.

Employer-Based Practicum Proposal

& Nine-Competency Mapping Form (Appendix H)

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Instructions: This form is fillable — click into any shaded field or box and type. Please complete every section and attach additional pages if you need more space.

Section A — Site & Supervisor Information

Proposed Agency / Site:	
Proposed Practicum Instructor:	
Degree / License:	
Phone / Email:	
Proposed Task Supervisor (if any):	
Is the MSW practicum instructor on-site or off-site?	

Section B — Placement Model

Length of time in current employment role:	

Identify the model (see policy, Part 1). Check one. *Note: Same Work is available only if the role has been held less than six (6) months.*

☐ **Same Work** (role held < 6 months only) · ☐ **Combination Work** · ☐ **Different Work**

Practicum year for this placement: ☐ First (Generalist) ☐ Second (Specialized)

☐ I confirm that this employment site has not been, and will not be, used for the student's other practicum year. (A student may use an employment site for only one practicum year.)

Section C — Description of the Student's Employment Role

Describe the student's regular job duties, responsibilities, and population served.

Section D — Description of the Proposed Practicum Role

Describe the practicum learning activities — educational in nature, focused on the social work competencies, and (where applicable) extending beyond routine employment duties.

Section E — Nine-Competency Mapping Grid

For **each** of the nine competencies, describe the planned practicum activity, indicate the level(s) of practice (Mi = micro, Me = mezzo, Ma = macro), and explain how the activity develops that competency. Every competency must be addressed.

CSWE Competency	Planned practicum learning activities (educational, competency-focused)	Level(s) of practice (Mi / Me / Ma)	How the activity is linked to the competency / extends beyond routine job duties
1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior			
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice			
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice			
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice			
5. Engage in Policy Practice			
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities			
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities			
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities			

CSWE Competency	Planned practicum learning activities (educational, competency-focused)	Level(s) of practice (Mi / Me / Ma)	How the activity is linked to the competency / extends beyond routine job duties
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities			

> **Tip:** *For Same Work placements especially, be sure the macro and policy competencies (4 and 5) and the justice and ADEI dimensions (2 and 3) are genuinely addressed direct-service roles tend to under-cover these. Add new or expanded assignments where needed.*

Section F — Supervision Plan

Describe how practicum supervision will occur (frequency, format) and how it is differentiated from employment supervision. If the practicum instructor and employment supervisor are the same person, explain how the two supervision streams are kept separate.

Section G — Schedule

Employment work schedule:	
Designated practicum schedule:	

Total weekly practicum hours: _____ Block length (min. 4 hrs): _____

Section H — Task Supervisor Rationale (if applicable)

If a task supervisor is proposed, state the rationale and the specific arrangement. If the on-site supervisor is an MSW, explain why a task supervisor is still needed.

Section I — Signatures

Agency RepresentativeDate

Current Employment SupervisorDate

Proposed Practicum InstructorDate

Proposed Task Supervisor (if applicable)Date

Student InternDate

FOR PRACTICUM OFFICE USE

Reviewed by — CSUEB MSW Practicum DirectorDate

☐ **Approved** ☐ **Denied** (state reason on attachment)

Memorandum of Understanding

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This Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement between the **California State University, East Bay, Department of Social Work** and **_____ (Agency)**, regarding the practicum placement of **_____ (Student Intern)**.

The above-named student is an employee of the agency and will remain in employee status during their practicum. The following conditions are approved by the agency and the Department to protect the educational integrity of the placement. Consistent with the **2022 CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), Accreditation Standard 3.3.7**, employment-based placements may be approved when the student's role as learner is protected and practicum activities are intentionally linked to the nine social work competencies at the appropriate level of practice.

1. The practicum must be designed to advance the student's development and demonstration of all nine CSWE competencies. Activities must be documented on the nine-competency mapping grid and supervised as educational experiences, not solely as routine job performance.
2. Under one of the approved models (Same, Combination, or Different Work), the student's practicum assignments are mapped to competencies at the appropriate practice level. The Same Work model is available only to students who have held the current employment role for less than six (6) months as of the practicum start date; longer-tenured employees use Combination or Different Work. Where a placement relies on existing employment tasks, the proposal demonstrates competency linkage and protection of the learner role.
3. The employment site may be used for only one of the student's two required practicum years. It may not serve as the placement site for both the generalist and the specialized practicum years.
4. If the employment supervisor and the practicum instructor are the same individual, practicum supervision time is separate and distinct from employment supervision, with a clear focus on professional education, reflection, and development of the nine competencies. The practicum instructor holds an MSW from a CSWE-accredited program and at least two (2) years of post-MSW experience.
5. The agency submits an Employer-Based Practicum Proposal (Appendix H) outlining how the placement supports competency development. The Practicum Director and Faculty Liaison review and approve the proposal prior to placement, in accordance with AS 3.3.7.
6. The agency and student agree to the schedule that designates separate work and practicum times and assignments.
7. The agency provides the student a work schedule of no more than forty (40) hours per week, designed to support completion of required practicum hours.

Signatures

Agency RepresentativeDate

Director of Practicum EducationDate

Student (print name & sign)Date