CSUEB BSW & MSW Practicum FAQ

Full Reference Guide

California State University, East Bay – Department of Social Work
Practicum Education Guide for Students, Practicum Instructors, and Agencies

Last update: September 8, 2025

This document answers common questions about field education and practicum requirements for **Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)** and Master of Social Work (MSW) students, including **Full-Time (2-Year) and Extended (3-Year) MSW programs**, as well as for **practicum instructors and partner agencies** affiliated with California State University, East Bay.

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Practicum Faculty Contact Information

For questions about field education, placements, or agency partnerships, please contact the appropriate liaison or coordinator below:

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For the most current contact list and updates, visit the CSUEB Social Work Practicum Education webpage.

This document answers common questions about field education and practicum requirements for **Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)** and Master of Social Work (MSW) students, including **Full-Time (2-Year) and Extended (3-Year) MSW programs**, as well as for **practicum instructors and partner agencies** affiliated with California State University, East Bay.

FAQs for MSW Full-Time (2-Year) Students

Q: When do practicum placements begin?
A: Students in the Full-Time (2-Year) MSW program begin practicum in the fall of their first year. Each practicum runs for two consecutive semesters (Fall and Spring), following the Practicum Academic Calendar.

Q: Can I continue my practicum and accrue hours during academic recess periods such as summer and winter breaks?
A: Students may continue their practicum during recess periods only with prior approval from the agency and their CSUEB field liaison. All practicum activity must align with university guidelines and be appropriately supervised. Completing hours during approved breaks does not accelerate completion of practicum required hours.

Q: Do my practicum hours count toward social work licensure after graduation?
A: No. Hours accrued during your MSW practicum do not count toward licensure. After graduation, students pursuing licensure must register with the Board of Behavioral Sciences as an Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW). More information is available on the BBS website.

Q: Are there internship placements available after hours or overnight shifts?
A: Practicum is typically scheduled during weekday business hours. A very limited number of placements offer evening or overnight shifts, but these are not guaranteed.

Q: How many hours are required for MSW practicum?
A: Students must complete a total of 1,080 practicum hours across two placements. Foundation Year students complete 480 hours (minimum 16 hours/week), and Advanced Year students complete 600 hours (20–24 hours/week). Advanced Standing students complete only the 600-hour advanced practicum since their BSW already includes at least 400 hours.

Q: Can I choose my practicum placement site?
A: Yes, under the guidance and approval of their liaison and Practicum Department,

students can choose their placement after following the process which includes preparing a resume, cover letter, and completing an interview with an approved agency.

Q: Is it manageable to work full-time and complete the MSW program including practicum requirements?
A: This is an individual choice. All students are required to complete the program's requirements as outlined in the CSUEB Student Handbook and Practicum Manual.

Q: Can I use my job for practicum?
A: Possibly. Students may petition to use their place of employment, but they must submit an Employer Placement Proposal clearly differentiating employment from practicum activities. The plan must be approved by the Practicum Director, agency administration, and practicum instructor. Students should also have a backup plan in case the proposal is not approved.

Q: What if I need disability accommodations?
A: Students needing accommodations should register with CSUEB Accessibility Services.

Q: Can I switch placements mid-year?
A: Placement changes are very rare and are made on a case-by-case basis. Students should consult with their Practicum Liaison to determine next steps.

Q: Do I need liability insurance?
A: Students must obtain professional liability insurance through CPH Insurance or NASW Assurance Services. The cost for student coverage is typically around $15–$30 per year. Proof of coverage is required prior to placement.

Q: Can I accept a practicum that starts after the first day of class?
A: You are still required to complete your hours before the end of the year. Remember—you cannot make up hours during class times. Reach out to your assigned Faculty Practicum Liaison as soon as possible if you are considering a late start to placement.

Q: Can I begin practicum before the academic year starts?
A: Yes. Students may participate in required onboarding or training (e.g., shadowing staff), but may not engage in direct client services.

Q: Can students shadow staff during onboarding?
A: Yes, shadowing is encouraged as part of training, provided it aligns with the agency's plan and Practicum Office guidelines.

Q: Are paid internships allowed?
A: Yes. While uncommon, some agencies offer paid internships or stipends.

Q: What days will I be in placement?
A: Foundation Year (Traditional) students attend practicum on Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays for 16 hours/week. Advanced Year (Traditional and Advanced Standing) students attend on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for 20+ hours/week. Extended Program students complete 12–20 hours/week depending on their plan. Practicum days cannot be changed without approval from the Faculty Practicum Liaison.

Q: Do practicum hours carry over from semester to semester?
A: No. Hours cannot be “banked” or carried over to the next term. Each semester’s required hours must be completed within that semester.

Q: What happens if I am struggling in my placement?
A: First, discuss concerns directly with your practicum instructor and Faculty Practicum Liaison. If problems remain unresolved, a written request can be submitted to the Practicum Director for reassignment. In some cases, remediation plans are developed; in others, a change of placement may be arranged. Students must also formally terminate with clients and the agency before starting at a new placement.

Q: What if I miss practicum hours due to illness or emergency?
A: Missed hours must be made up. Students must notify their practicum instructor immediately if absent, and within one week create a plan for making up hours. Failure to notify or make up hours may result in a **NO CREDIT** grade.

Q: Can I transport clients in my car?
A: No. Students may not transport clients in their personal vehicles. Transportation must be done in agency vehicles and only if approved by the Practicum Director.

Q: What if there is a strike at my placement site?
A: Students cannot remain at agencies during strikes or labor actions, as these settings do not provide an appropriate learning environment. The department will work with students to find a resolution that prioritizes educational goals and continuity of client care.

Q: What safety precautions are in place for students in practicum?
A: Agencies are required to orient students to safety and emergency procedures, including building security, managing violent clients, and protocols for home visits. Students should never work alone in the agency, and backup must always be available for community or home-based work.

Q: Who will be my Academic Advisor?
A: Academic Advisors are assigned at the beginning of the semester.

Q: Who do I contact if I'm interested in School Social Work or the Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPSC)?
A: Contact Michelle Charron (michelle.charron@csueastbay.edu)

Q: What clearances are required before starting practicum?
A: All students must provide proof of professional liability insurance (through CPH Insurance or NASW Assurance Services.). Some agencies may also require medical clearance, TB tests, immunization records, background checks, or drug screening. Title IV-E stipend students must complete a university-administered livescan background check. Students are responsible for meeting agency clearance requirements.

Q: Can a new agency be approved for practicum?
A: Yes. Submit a Future Placement Application by August 1. The Practicum Director will review the agency and coordinate next steps.

FAQs for MSW Extended (3-Year) Students

Q: When do practicum placements begin?
A: Students in the Extended (3-Year) MSW program begin practicum in the fall of their second year. Practicum runs for two consecutive semesters (Fall and Spring). Extended students may also have the option of participating in a summer practicum with approval from the Practicum Office.

Q: Can I continue my practicum and accrue hours during academic recess periods such as summer and winter breaks?
A: Students may continue their practicum during recess periods only with prior approval from the agency and their CSUEB field liaison. All practicum activity must align with university guidelines and be appropriately supervised. Completing hours during approved breaks does not accelerate completion of practicum required hours.

Q: Do my practicum hours count toward social work licensure after graduation?
A: No. Hours accrued during your MSW practicum do not count toward licensure. After graduation, students pursuing licensure must register with the Board of Behavioral Sciences as an Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW). More information is available on the BBS website.

Q: Are there internship placements available after hours or overnight shifts?
A: Practicum is typically scheduled during weekday business hours. A very limited number of placements offer evening or overnight shifts, but these are not guaranteed.

Q: How many hours are required for MSW practicum?
A: Students must complete a minimum total of 1,080 practicum hours across two placements. Extended students typically complete 12–20 hours per week, depending on their practicum plan.

Q: Can I choose my practicum placement site?
A: Yes, under the guidance and approval of their liaison and Practicum Department, students can choose their placement after following the process which includes preparing a resume, cover letter, and completing an interview with an approved agency.

Q: Is it manageable to work full-time and complete the MSW program including practicum requirements?
A: This is an individual choice. All students are required to complete the program's requirements as outlined in the CSUEB Student Handbook and Practicum Manual.

Q: Can I use my job for practicum?
A: Possibly. Students may petition to use their place of employment, but they must submit an Employer Placement Proposal clearly differentiating employment from practicum activities. The plan must be approved by the Practicum Director, agency administration, and practicum instructor. Students should also have a backup plan in case the proposal is not approved.

Q: What if I need disability accommodations?
A: Students needing accommodations should register with CSUEB Accessibility Services.

Q: Can I switch placements mid-year?
A: Placement changes are rare and are made on a case-by-case basis. Students should consult with their Practicum Liaison to determine next steps.

Q: Do I need liability insurance?
A: Yes, through CPH Insurance or NASW Assurance Services.

Q What if my internship starts after the first day of practicum listed on the practicum calendar?
A: Late starts are allowed based upon the site's internship program. You are still required to complete your hours before the end of the academic year. Reach out to your

assigned Faculty Practicum Liaison as soon as possible if a late start to placement is requested by the agency.

Q: Can I begin practicum before the academic year starts?
A: Yes. Students may participate in required onboarding activities, prior to the start of the academic year.

Q: Can students shadow staff during onboarding?
A: No, Onboarding is the process and being cleared to work at the program site, closely involving site human resources protocol. Shadowing is encouraged as part of training, provided it aligns with the agency's plan and Practicum Office guidelines.

Q: Are paid internships allowed?
A: Yes. While uncommon, some agencies offer paid internships or stipends.

Q: What days will I be in placement?
A: Extended students complete 12–20 hours per week across 2–3 weekdays, arranged with their agency and Practicum Liaison. Practicum days cannot be changed without approval from the Faculty Practicum Liaison.

Q: Do practicum hours carry over from semester to semester?
A: Yes, hours can roll over. However, hours cannot be "banked" to complete an internship early.

Q: What happens if I am struggling in my placement?
A: First, discuss concerns directly with your practicum instructor and Faculty Practicum Liaison. If problems remain unresolved, a written request can be submitted to the Practicum Director for reassignment. In some cases, remediation plans are developed; in others, a change of placement may be arranged. Students must also formally terminate with clients and the agency before starting at a new placement.

Q: What if I miss practicum hours due to illness or emergency?
A: Missed hours must be made up. Students must notify their practicum instructor immediately if absent, and within one week create a plan for making up hours.

Q: Can I transport clients in my car?
A: No. Students may not transport clients in their personal vehicles. Transportation must be done in agency vehicles and only if approved by the Practicum Director.

Q: What if there is a strike at my placement site?
A: Students cannot remain at agencies during strikes or labor actions, as these settings do not provide an appropriate learning environment. The department will work with

students to find a resolution that prioritizes educational goals and continuity of client care.

Q: What safety precautions are in place for students in practicum?
A: Agencies are required to orient students to safety and emergency procedures, including building security, managing violent clients, and protocols for home visits. Students should never work alone in the agency, and backup must always be available for community or home-based work when needed.

Q: Who will be my Academic Advisor?
A: Academic Advisors are assigned at the beginning of the semester.

Q: Who do I contact if I'm interested in PPSC?
A: Contact Michelle Charron (michelle.charron@csueastbay.edu).

Q: What clearances are required before starting practicum?
A: All students must provide proof of professional liability insurance through CPH Insurance or NASW Assurance Services. Some agencies may also require medical clearance, TB tests, immunization records, background checks, or drug screening. Title IV-E stipend students must complete a university-administered livescan background check. Students are responsible for meeting agency clearance requirements.

Q: Can a new agency be approved for practicum?
A: Yes. Interested agencies should complete this form on the department website.https://www.csueastbay.edu/sw/field-agency-partners.html. The Practicum Director will review the agency and coordinate next steps.

FAQs for BSW Students

Q: When do practicum placements begin?
A: BSW students begin their practicum placement in the fall semester of their senior year. The placement continues through the spring semester, following the academic calendar.

Q: Can I continue my practicum and accrue hours during academic recess periods such as summer and winter breaks?
A: Students may continue their practicum during recess periods only with prior approval from the agency and their CSUEB field liaison. All practicum activity must align with university guidelines and be appropriately supervised. Completing hours during approved breaks does not accelerate completion of practicum required hours.

Q: Do my practicum hours count toward social work licensure after graduation?
A: No. Hours accrued during your BSW practicum do not count toward licensure. Licensure requires a completed MSW and post-MSW supervised hours. More information is available on the BBS website.

Q: Are there internship placements available after hours or overnight shifts?
A: Practicum is typically scheduled during weekday business hours. A very limited number of placements offer evening or overnight shifts, but these are not guaranteed.

Q: How many hours are required for BSW practicum?
A: BSW students must complete 480 hours total across two semesters, which typically averages 16 hours per week. Hours must be completed during agency business hours.

Q: Can I choose my practicum placement site?
A: Yes, under the guidance and approval of their Faculty Practicum liaison and Practicum Department, students can choose their placement after following the process which includes preparing a resume, cover letter, and completing an interview with an approved agency.

Q: Is it manageable to work full-time and complete the program including practicum requirements?
A: This is an individual choice. All students are required to complete the program's requirements as outlined in the CSUEB Student Handbook and Practicum Manual.

Q: Can I use my job for practicum?
A: Possibly. The placement must meet all CSWE requirements and include social work–related duties supervised by a qualified BSW or MSW professional not directly supervising the student's employment. Approval by the Practicum Office is required.

Q: What if I need disability accommodations?
A: Students needing accommodations should register with CSUEB Accessibility Services.

Q: Can I switch placements mid-year?
A: Placement changes are rare and are made on a case-by-case basis. Students should consult with their Practicum Liaison to determine next steps.

Q: Do I need liability insurance?
A: Students must obtain professional liability insurance through CPH Insurance or NASW Assurance Services. The cost for student coverage is typically around $15–$30 per year. Proof of coverage is required prior to placement.

Q: Can I accept a practicum that starts after the first day of class?
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A: Yes, shadowing is encouraged as part of training, provided it aligns with the agency's plan and Practicum Office guidelines.

Q: Are paid internships allowed?
A: Yes. While uncommon, some agencies offer paid internships or stipends.

Q: What days will I be in placement?
A: BSW students typically complete 16 hours per week across 2 weekdays during agency business hours. Practicum days cannot be changed without approval from the Faculty Practicum Liaison.

Q: Do practicum hours carry over from semester to semester?
A: No. Hours cannot be "banked" or carried over to the next term. Each semester's required hours must be completed within that semester.

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Q: Can a new agency be approved for practicum?
A: Yes. Agencies should complete the Become a Practicum Agency Partner form on the Social Work Department Website. The Practicum Director will review the agency and coordinate next steps.

For Current Practicum Instructors & Agencies

Q: What are the Practicum Instructor requirements?
A: Practicum instructors must have a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree and at least two years of post-MSW experience. BSW supervisors should hold a BSW or MSW and have experience with generalist social work practice. Supervisors must provide weekly individual supervision and help students achieve competency-based learning goals.

Q: Can we decline a student after an interview?
A: Yes. Agencies may choose not to accept a student after an interview if they determine it is not a good fit. In such cases, the Practicum Office will assign the student to another placement.

Q: What if a student is struggling?
A: Practicum instructors should contact the CSUEB liaison as soon as concerns arise. The Early Concern Form can be used to formally document the issue and initiate a support or improvement plan.

Q: Are we responsible for tracking student hours?
A: Students are responsible for logging their hours and submitting them for approval. Instructors are asked to review and verify these logs regularly, preferably each month.

Q: Can we request specific student qualifications?
A: Yes. Agencies can request certain qualifications such as bilingual ability, interest in specific populations, or relevant experience. The Practicum Office will try to match students accordingly, though matches are not guaranteed.

Q: Can a student participate in practicum outside of the fall and spring semesters academic schedules?
A: Rarely. Only with prior approval from the Practicum Director and Faculty Liaison. Summer placements may be approved if CSWE standards and supervision are met.