

## **PRACTICUM STUDENT TASKS as ADAPTED FROM THE LIST OF CHILD WELFARE PRACTICUM STUDENT TASKS**

### **Competencies Required for Successful Completion of Practicum Placement**

- Applied knowledge, values, and skills
- Social work practice, including, but not limited to: communication (oral and written), interviewing, relationship-building, and problem solving (engagement, assessment, developing case plans, practice evaluation, termination)

### **Beginning Tasks**

- Orientation to agency, staff and program areas
- Development of Teaching-Learning Agreement (Learning Objectives and Tasks)
- Discuss social work values and ethics and application to agency services
- Discuss student's personal values and applicability to social work practice
- Discuss professional role and previous work experience
- Discuss the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics
- Discuss student's knowledge needs and the means by which this knowledge will be acquired
- Student reading of client records and discussion of records with field instructor
- Discuss initial assumptions and expectations about client problems and professional roles
- Student shadows social workers and other agency employees
- Student observations of client-social worker interactions
- Student practices interviewing under observation of field instructor or mentor
- Initial client contacts
- Student attends staff or team meetings
- Student reviews agency policy and discusses with field instructor
- Student attends and observes multidisciplinary team meeting
- Student observes court proceedings as appropriate
- Plan with student for group experience (group as a treatment modality), which may be external to the agency

### **Intermediate Tasks**

- Case presentation by student and consultation with field instructor
- Structured problem solving and value clarification on a case
- Explore and apply relevant theoretical knowledge
- Anticipate barriers, outcomes and consequences of intervention techniques
- Case sharing with field instructor or mentor; one case should involve a family with distinct cultural, contextual, or experiential factors to consider in practice.
- Identify and visit potential community resources
- Student observes and possibly co-leads a treatment group under close supervision
- Role play case related intervention techniques
- Develop a "mock" treatment plan for learning and feedback

- Observe and complete phone intake duties
- Observe different type of client interviews
- Observe and complete collateral interviews as appropriate
- Copying records, taking legal documents to court and other limited support activities
- Attend and participate in selected agency in-service training or relevant training/workshops offered outside the agency

### **Advanced Tasks**

- Serve as the secondary worker on cases
- Participate in case review
- Complete various types of relevant visits or interviews depending on site and services offered
- Learn how to complete a family and child strength and needs assessment with the family and develop an individualized service or treatment plan.
- Provide information to the social workers on staff for updating the treatment plan or individualized service plan and the applicable report to the court, i.e., court report or progress report.
- Explore student's concerns relating to case responsibilities, values and decision making
- Identify important process components from case experience
- Provide suggestions for dealing with resources or courts, schools, law enforcement, etc.
- Provide feedback and support on task performance and skill development
- Provide relative sense of student's progress and improvement vis-à-vis agency expectations, initial skill level and student's own goals
- Use simulation exercise to overcome student resistance or to develop student confidence
- Complete strength/needs assessment of client with worker present

BSW as well as all MSW students may complete Beginning and Intermediate Tasks. Advanced Tasks are appropriate for 2nd year MSW students and BSW and 1st year MSW students who are more advanced in their social work skills. This is a judgment call made by the field instructor and/or preceptor. It is expected that 2nd year MSW students will have more intensive client involvement in their assignments. However, there are BSW and 1st year MSW students who demonstrate maturity, competency and good judgment and they are able to successfully complete more advanced and complex tasks.

The field instructor and/or preceptor should work very closely with their student during the early weeks of the practicum placement in order to make an accurate assessment of the student's ability to handle child welfare assignments.

Field instructors should carefully assess the skills of other workers from whom the students will be learning through shadowing, observation, and mentoring.

Students are not employees. They are students and at the agency to learn in an educational experience – not to fill a worker vacancy. The supervisor moves into the role of teacher, and the focus of their interaction with the student is on teaching. The field instructor can be much more flexible with the student as far as learning activities -- they can have students do professional reading on certain subjects; have them do practice writing – court reports; assessment or treatment plans, etc. – that do not become a part of the office case record or agency records. If students don't write well, the field instructor can work with the student on his or her writing.

Organization and planning by the field instructor is the most important thing that can be done to make the internship successful. Planning in advance of the student's arrival in the agency will make the experience more manageable by the field instructor and will instill confidence in the student that there is a plan for their learning and the field instructor knows what they are doing.

Students can also be assigned a special project while in the agency –something that would benefit the agency and/or client services (e.g., improve a family visitation room; develop or update a community resource guide to be used by agency staff; contact community donors for special needs for children).

Supervisors who take on the role of field instructor should structure time in their week to provide one-on-one time and teaching with the student. Our expectation is at least one full hour per week of set-aside time.

<sup>i</sup> See attribution below

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<sup>i</sup> This list of appropriate tasks was adapted from the Child Welfare Practicum Student Tasks dated January 17, 2006 and developed by the Child Welfare Professional Enhancement Program, OU School of Social Work. The final paragraph of the CWPEP document reads as follows: *This practicum task list is for students who are non-DHS employees and who are in the direct practice track. The school, practicum instructor, and student jointly develop practicum tasks for students in an administrative track. OKDHS employees' practicum is developed by the practicum instructor, OKDHS, and the student and is approved by the school. OKDHS employees must experience a practicum different from their current job responsibilities.*