

INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

2025-2026 Academic Year
August 18, 2025 - May 8, 2026

BSSW & MSW FOUNDATION YEAR **Generalist Social Work Experience** **13-14 hours/week (200/semester and 400/year)** **At-A-Glance**

Internship Expectations:

- Learning activities that offer exposure to all levels: micro, mezzo, and macro (individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations).
 - Does not have to be evenly split between all three levels, though there should be some opportunities in each. This can include one-time projects or assignments that connect the agency's work with that level of practice and associated competencies.
- Opportunities to practice foundational social work skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

Student Learning Focus:

- Beginning to develop professional use of self.
- Familiarity with roles social workers play and basic skills (e.g. interviewing, case management, education and outreach, resource and referral, volunteer management, navigating systems, etc.)

Supervision Expectations: See weekly supervision requirements listed below. Supervision between BSSW and MSW Foundation levels may vary slightly based on students' developmental needs and/or dependent on the agency setting. More overall support and training is key as students are developing foundational skills. Students should be shadowing and observing as part of their internship. Amount and length of scaffolding should be determined as it relates to the agency's work and internship tasks (e.g. if this is the first time the student is learning about power, privilege, and oppression, how might that impact the initial stages of their internship experience?).

CONCENTRATION YEAR **Advanced Social Work Practice** **16-17 hours/week (250/semester and 500/year)** **At-A-Glance**

Internship Expectations:

- Advanced learning activities in line with the student's identified level of specialized interest: micro, mezzo, or macro.
- Increasingly autonomous practice that reflects advanced skills and mastery of social work competencies.
 - For clinical experiences, there is not a specific number of face-to-face hours required.
 - More specialization in the activities students engage in for their learning (e.g. clinical work, policy development/advocacy, work with particularly vulnerable populations and/or more acute cases, etc.).
- Purposeful selection of interventions based on social work theories.

Student Learning Focus:

- Deeper understanding of and advocacy across service delivery systems.
 - If clinically focused: Individual, group, and family therapy, group practice, clinical case management, etc.
 - If mezzo/macro focused: Program administration and development, community organizing, etc.
- Refine professional social work identity including use of social work ethics and values.
- Capstone project to integrate social work theory into a substantive project within the agency (e.g. develop group curriculum, write a grant, evaluate a program, create social documentary, etc.)

Supervision Expectations: See weekly supervision requirements listed below. Advanced students should be able to exercise more autonomy once on-boarded and trained. Shadowing at the start is appropriate, especially for more specialized/niche practice. Students help to co-create focus of supervision sessions.

MSU Denver Department of Social Work Commitments

MSU Denver is proud to serve a non-traditional and diverse student body. Over 53.8% of our undergraduates are students of color. Of those 35.7% of students identify as Hispanic/Latinx, over 58% of our students identify as First-Generation Undergraduate Students, and 87% of our student are working while pursuing their education.

Agencies should provide social work services to “enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty” (NASW Code of Ethics, 2008).

Community partners must comply with all federal, state, and local Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws and regulations. This includes but is not limited to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, creed, religion, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation or preference, gender identity and expressions, age, marital status, disability, Vietnam-era Veteran or other Protected Veteran.

Agency Requirements

- Complete a New Affiliation Meeting with a team member from the Office of Social Work Internships
- Complete the Affiliation Agreement before students begin internship
- Complete the *New Affiliation Request Form* (Sonia Database)

Supervisor Parameters and Requirements

All students must be supervised by a qualified Social Work Supervisor (SWS). Social Work Supervisors assume a teaching role for the students. Their role in supervision is to infuse the social work perspective by helping the student to link social work knowledge, values, and skills learned in the classroom to the student’s practice. Social Work Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the student is provided with learning assignments, tasks, and experiences that align with the Council on Social Work Education competencies (see page 4).

Social Work Supervisor Minimum Qualifications:

- For BSSW students – A qualified Social Work Supervisor must have a BSW or MSW degree from an accredited social work program with at least two years of post-degree work experience.
- For MSW students – A qualified Social Work Supervisor must have an MSW degree from an accredited social work program with at least two years of post-degree work experience.
- Social Work Supervisors are NOT required to be licensed as an LCSW unless the student intern is engaging in work that is considered to be clinical and regulated by the [Department of Regulatory Agencies](#).

Additional Considerations:

- If the Social Work Supervisor is not the student’s primary supervisor, the agency must provide the student with a Task Supervisor (TS) to provide regular ongoing support and guidance on a daily basis at the agency. The Task Supervisor does not have to hold a social work degree but should have significant work experience at the agency or with a similar client population. The Task Supervisor is responsible for monitoring the day-to-day activities of the internship and focuses on skill development and supportive supervision.
- In cases where there is not anyone onsite available to serve as a Social Work Supervisor, it is the agency’s responsibility to identify an Off-Site Social Work Supervisor to provide the necessary supervision.

- This Off-Site Social Work Supervisor may be a board member, a staff member of a closely related agency, or another person with significant knowledge and understanding of the internship agency and who meets the qualifications listed above.
- Agencies are encouraged to consult with those in their network or reference other resources for connecting with Social Workers (e.g. National Association of Social Workers, Colorado Society for Clinical Social Work, LinkedIn, etc.).
- Spark the Change Colorado offers a [Mental Wellness Program](#) which may be able to assist with connecting agencies with social work supervisors although their capacity is limited.

Supervision Options Summary

Each student must receive at least one hour of supervision* every week from a qualified Social Work Supervisor.

OPTION 1: 1 hour of individual supervision each week by a qualified Social Work Supervisor

OPTION 2: 1 hour of individual supervision each week by an on-site Task Supervisor **and** 1 hour of supervision **every other week** by a qualified Social Work Supervisor

*Supervision can be comprised of a combination of individual and group supervision sessions.

Supervisor Expectations

- Attend virtual New Agency Orientation offered in the summer months
- Provide **Weekly Supervision** during the internship
- Complete the Learning Agreement and Evaluation each semester based on Social Work Competencies, listed on the next page
- Review the [Internship Manual](#) and utilize the Office of Social Work Internship Support Process if necessary
- Not mandatory but encouraged to attend FREE (CEs) Ongoing Supervisor (Agency) Trainings
- Communicate with the Office of Social Work Internships, SWKinternships@msudenver.edu with questions

Social Work Competencies

The [nine competencies](#) and related behaviors were established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the national accrediting organization for social work education. Current agency partners and those wanting to partner with MSU Denver Social Work must have capacity for students to complete the competencies listed below.

Competency #1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context; demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication; use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency #4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Social workers use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research; apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Competency #5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency #6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

Competency #7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

Competency #8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

Competency #9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.