

Social Work Internship Frequently Asked Questions for Students
2026-2027 Academic Year

This document addresses many common questions that students have related to social work internships and the internship search process. For access to a comprehensive guide to all social work internship policies, students are encouraged to review the [OSWI Policy Manual](#) available on the Office of Social Work Internships [website](#).

Overview of Internship Search Steps

Below is a high-level overview of the internship search process steps. Students will receive email communications with additional information and instructions for each step as they work through the process. For any questions, students should contact SWKinternships@msudenver.edu or their assigned Internship Navigator.

- 1) Attend a mandatory virtual Internship Search Information Session.
- 2) Receive access to Sonia database and find out assigned Internship Navigator.
- 3) Complete Internship Application in Sonia.
- 4) Sign up for an individual Internship Search Meeting via Sonia to discuss internship options with your assigned Internship Navigator. *Required for BSSW, MSW Foundation and MSW Advanced Standing students. Optional for rising MSW Concentration students*.*
 - a) *Rising MSW Concentration students (those currently finishing their MSW Foundation year) may search for agencies in Sonia without a meeting. In this case, they will preference up to five agencies to apply to and email their Navigator for review and approval of these referrals.
- 5) Internship Navigator refers student to up to five approved agencies.
- 6) Student submits application materials to agencies within 10 days of having been referred to the approved agencies by their Internship Navigator.
- 7) Interview with agencies OR meet with employer to complete Employment-Based Internship Request form.
- 8) Decide on internship for upcoming year! Agency makes offer in Sonia. Student accepts the offer in Sonia.
- 9) Student completes Internship Confirmation Form. Congratulations - your internship is finalized for the upcoming year!

Document Sections:

- [General Internship Requirements](#)
- [Hours and Scheduling](#)
- [Application and Search Process](#)
- [Types of Agencies and Internships](#)
- [Other Common Questions](#)

General Internship Requirements

1. *What are the requirements for the Internship Experience course?*

Each three credit Internship Experience course is divided into two required components:

- a. Internship Experience Class – bi-weekly course facilitated by Faculty Internship Liaison. The Internship Experience class may be held on-campus, online, or in a hybrid online model (dependent on student level). All classes, regardless of course modality, will require some synchronous time with Faculty Internship Liaison. See [course catalog](#) for full information.
- b. Internship in a community-based agency

2. *When during my BSSW or MSW degree program do I take the Internship Experience course?*

In order to enroll in any Internship Experience course, students must have completed all required pre-requisites in the assigned course sequence. The Internship Experience courses follow a two-semester sequence – meaning they are designed to be completed consecutively (Fall/Spring) in the same academic year. They are designed to be completed either alongside or after the Practice courses have been completed. Please refer to the Advising Quick Links on our [website](#) for more information and to ensure you are following the prescribed course sequence. We recommend you keep in contact with your academic advisor to ensure your academic plan stays on course.

3. *What are expectations for social work internships?*

All social work internships are designed to allow social work students to apply social work knowledge, skills, values, and ethics in real-life practice settings within community-based agencies while being supervised by social workers and, in some cases, professionals from other disciplines. Internship learning opportunities are organized around the [Council on Social Work Education](#) core social work competencies:

- Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
- Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice
- Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in practice
- Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
- Engage in policy practice
- Engage with, assess, intervene with, and evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

4. *How do BSSW/MSW Foundation year internships differ from MSW Concentration year internships?*

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5. *Who will supervise my internship?*

Each student must receive at least one hour of supervision every week from a qualified Social Work Supervisor. This individual has primary responsibility for ensuring the student's internship provides appropriate learning experiences that integrate social work theory, values, and practice. An on-site Social Work Supervisor (SWS) should be a staff member at the internship agency who has direct observation of the student's performance and is responsible for supervising the day-to-day activities of the internship. If the Social Work Supervisor does not have direct observation of the student, or they are not responsible for the day-to-day activities of the internship, then they are considered an off-site SWS, and therefore an on-site Task Supervisor must be assigned. See question 6 below for more information.

- 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](#). Social Work Supervisors assume a teaching role for the students. In supervision, they assist in integrating social work knowledge, values, and skills into the student's practice. Additional details about supervision can be found in the [OSWI Policy Manual](#).

6. *Can I complete my internship at an agency that does not have a qualified Social Work Supervisor (SWS)?*

Maybe. In cases where there is not anyone onsite available to serve as a Social Work Supervisor, it is the agency's responsibility to identify a supplemental Social Work Supervisor (may be off-site) 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. 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.) who may be interested in this type of role. If agencies have exhausted all their resources and are still unable to identify a Social Work Supervisor, they may request that the MSU Denver Department of Social Work assist in providing an off-site Social Work Supervisor. In this scenario, the student's Faculty Internship Liaison would provide social work supervision for the student which would supplement the on-site supervision provided by the agency Task Supervisor.

In all cases, if the Social Work Supervisor is not the student's primary supervisor, the agency must provide the student with an on-site Task Supervisor (TS) to provide regular ongoing support and guidance daily at the agency. In these scenarios, the Task Supervisor provides weekly one hour supervision which is supplemented by every other week supervision provided by the SWS. The Task Supervisor does not have to hold a social work degree. However, this person does need to attend an orientation and become familiar with the CSWE 9 competencies. It is also highly recommended that they 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. In supervision, the Task Supervisor focuses on skill development and supportive supervision. Additional details about supervision can be found in the [OSWI Policy Manual](#).

Supervisor Options	Social Work Supervisor	Task Supervisor
Option 1:	One hour of supervision weekly from an on-site Social Work Supervisor	NO TASK SUPERVISOR
Option 2:	One hour of supervision every other week from a Social Work Supervisor AND	One hour of supervision weekly from an on-site Task Supervisor

***Note: *Supervision may be a combination of individual and group sessions, depending on the learning style and needs of the student. It is strongly recommended that at least 50% of all supervision hours should be individual. When group supervision models are used, the Social Work Supervisor and/or Task Supervisor should be available to meet individually as needed throughout the semester, depending on the student's level and learning needs, for the purposes of establishing a trusted relationship and addressing any differentiated learning needs.*

7. Does the one hour of supervision need to be a set hour, or can a Social Work Supervisor (SWS) or Task Supervisor (TS) provide a cumulative total of one hour of supervision each week?

The supervision hour must be a set hour each week. Many Social Work Supervisors/Task Supervisors provide additional “on the go” supervision throughout the week to manage administrative issues, oversee student tasks, answer questions, and debrief cases. However, structured internship supervision combines other elements of supervision including educational supervision and supportive supervision. Students should have a designated, uninterrupted time to explore the connection between their classroom work and their internship practice, and to examine how their personal biases and identities interact with the work they do. In supervision, students should be pushed to grapple with ethical dilemmas and to consider issues of power, privilege, and social justice. Students will experience a range of emotions as they move through their internship and develop into their professional self, and they need a safe, supportive space in which to do this.

8. Who else is involved in supporting my social work internship?

In addition to the Social Work Supervisor (SWS), all students are assigned a Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL). The Faculty Internship Liaison is a member of the Department's faculty who provides a link between the agency, student, and school. The Faculty Internship Liaison remains in regular contact with the student and the supervisor(s) to monitor that internship learning objectives are being met, ensure academic curriculum is infused with practice in the internship, and assist with mediating any conflicts that may occur in the internship. The FIL is also the instructor for the student's Internship Experience class and provides two or three site visits per year (in person or virtual) to each student's agency.

Additionally, the Office of Social Work Internships is comprised of faculty and staff of the Social Work Department that are responsible for securing agencies for internships, guiding students towards appropriate internships, training Social Work Supervisors and Task Supervisors, and developing all internship education policies, procedures, and evaluations. The Office of Social Work Internships may also help mediate conflicts that occur in the internship. If you have any questions, please email SWKinternships@msudenver.edu.

Hours and Scheduling

9. *How many hours will I spend in my agency internship?*

Social work students will be in their internships for two consecutive 15-week semesters commencing with the fall semester in mid-August and lasting until the end of the spring semester which concludes in early May. During this time, they must complete the required minimum number of hours per semester as listed below. Students should not be expected to begin their hours prior to the official start of the fall semester, and any agency orientation activities should consider student course schedules. Completion of the minimum number of hours does not allow a student to end their internship before the end of the semester.

BSSW Students:	Minimum 200 hours/semester (400 hours/year); approximately 13-14 hours/week
MSW Foundation Year Students:	Minimum 200 hours/semester (400 hours/year); approximately 13-14 hours/week
MSW Concentration Year Students:	Minimum 250 hours/semester (500 hours/year); approximately 16-17 hours/week

10. *How does scheduling work? Can my internship be arranged for evening/weekend hours?*

Internship schedules are developed in collaboration between the agency and student. Internships are designed to take place when the Social Work Supervisor/Task Supervisor is regularly employed and available for supervision to protect the safety of students, clients, and other stakeholders. *Note: lunch breaks do not count towards required internship hours.*

Some agencies may require specific training/work hours outside the regularly scheduled business hours for internship. It is up to the student and Social Work Supervisor/Task Supervisor to specify work hours before the internship begins. While certain agencies may have evening activities or other opportunities that allow students to complete their required hours during evenings and weekends, this is not required nor available at all sites. At all times, students must have access to their supervisor for supervision and safety reasons. It is up to the student to work with their agency supervisor to arrange their schedule to allow for completion of all required coursework and internship hours.

11. *Can my internship be fully remote?*

While a few of our agency partners offer fully remote internship opportunities, most internships are either in-person or hybrid. Agencies which do offer remote options may have limitations on the number of internships offered in any given year. A fully remote internship cannot be guaranteed. Interested students are encouraged to discuss options when meeting with their Internship Navigator. Students must always complete the hours when their supervisor is working and available for support. Students and agencies should have a clear plan for tracking internship hours completed remotely.

12. *Can I start my internship before school starts?*

Internship hours should begin with the first week of classes (week of August 17th, 2026) and spread over the course of each full 15-week semester to allow students to experience the internship in a developmental fashion concurrent with the content of classes (versus early completion of hours). Agencies shall not schedule any mandatory training or onboarding sessions that interfere with student class schedules.

Occasionally agencies may request that students begin their internship orientation or training prior to the first week of the semester. **Due to federal policy related to internship hours and academic credit and out of respect for student's time, students may not begin their internship before August 3rd, 2026. Any activities that occur prior to August 3rd must be arranged through either a volunteer or employment capacity with the agency, are not covered by MSU Denver liability insurance or Worker's Compensation, and cannot be counted towards internship hours.**

Students should discuss expectations for start dates with an agency during the interview process and ensure that they are clear before accepting an internship offer. Students who accrue hours prior to the official start of the semester are not permitted to 'bank' hours and end their internship early. Extra hours **may** be used to lighten the load during the semester at times **with agency supervisor approval**. However, generally, students are to maintain a steady accrual of required hours throughout the semester. Students are required to be in their internship until the end of each semester.

13. Will I be required to work over holidays and school breaks?

Students are expected to complete all required internship hours over the course of each 15-week semester in order to be approved for academic credit (i.e., hours must be accrued by the time grades are submitted to the university). If students have not completed all required hours by that deadline, they would need to apply for an Incomplete course notation through their Faculty Internship Liaison. See each program's policies on the [Department of Social Work website](#) for specifics on Incompletes. NOTE: Internship hours completed after the conclusion of the fall semester but before the beginning of spring semester may be applied to the Spring semester so long as the student is registered for spring Internship Experience course. However, students may not terminate from their internships before the end of the semester which may mean students could accrue more hours than required. Extra hours **may** be used to lighten the load during the semester at times **with agency supervisor approval**.

Students are not required by the university to be in internship during regularly scheduled university holidays and university breaks. University holidays may differ from agency holidays, so students should arrange their work schedule in coordination with their agency supervisor. **In order to support healthy boundaries and a respect for the multiple commitments students manage while in school, it is strongly advised that agencies build in breaks for interns especially between fall and spring semesters.** In rare cases, agencies may request that a student complete hours over winter break to ensure continuity of care, however these expectations must be discussed and agreed upon during the internship offer conversation.

Application and Search Process

14. What is the process to obtain an internship?

Students work with an Internship Navigator from the Office of Social Work Internships in the spring, before their internship begins, to identify whether they will go through a **traditional internship search**, in which students apply to up to five potential internship agencies, OR if they would like to **request an employment-based internship**.

- **Traditional Internship Search:** Students utilize the Sonia Database in consultation with their assigned Internship Navigator to assist them in selecting and being referred to up to five potential agencies.
 - o BSSW and MSW Foundation and MSW Advanced Standing students are required to meet with their Internship Navigator before being referred to agencies.
 - o Rising MSW Concentration students (those currently finishing the MSW Foundation year) who would like assistance in selecting internship options may request a meeting with their Internship Navigator from the Office of Social Work Internships. Alternately, rising Concentration students may choose to preference their top five pre-approved agencies and notify their Internship Navigator via email if they do not wish to have an individual meeting.
 - o **The student will apply to each agency requesting an interview on or after February 13, 2026, by submitting a cover letter and résumé. Students who meet with their Internship Navigator after February 13 are expected to apply to agencies within ten days of being referred.** These interviews are to be treated as professional job interviews. This is a two-way process; agencies may offer or deny an internship to a student, and a student may also determine whether the agency will be able to meet their learning requirements for a developmentally appropriate internship.
 - o Under NO circumstances may a student interview with an agency without being referred by their Internship Navigator.

- **Employment-Based Internship:** Students may request that their employer consider an Employment-Based (EB) internship, though any EB internship request is not guaranteed and requires approval from both the employer and the Office of Social Work Internships. (See questions 20 and 21 below for more information).
 - o The process to request approval for an EB internship is different than the process of interviewing for traditional internships. Students requesting EB internships need to complete additional documentation to demonstrate that their EB internship will meet all requirements related to supervision and development of social work competencies.
 - o Students are encouraged to begin the process to request an EB internship as early in the search process as possible.
 - o Students interested in requesting approval for an EB internship should indicate this on their Internship Application in the Sonia Database. They will then receive detailed instructions on the next steps, including the EB FAQ and the EB Step-By-Step Instructions. The student is expected to carefully read both documents and discuss any questions with their Internship Navigator.
- **Finalizing the Internship:** Once an agency offers a student a traditional internship and/or the employment-based internship is approved by both the agency and the Office of Social Work Internships, the agency must make the offer in Sonia. After the student accepts the offer in Sonia, the student must finalize their internship site by completing an official Internship Confirmation Form through Sonia. The internship allocation is not considered finalized until the Internship Confirmation Form is completed by both student and agency. This must be done by July 31, 2026.

15. *Can I contact agencies before February 13, 2026?*

No, you may not contact any agencies before February 13, 2026 unless you have received express permission from your Internship Navigator! This is only granted in cases where agencies require an earlier application deadline.

16. *Does the University complete a background check on me prior to entering internship?*

The University does not complete background checks on any student. Each agency is responsible for determining if and how background checks are completed for students, and what the eligibility criteria are. Each agency has different criteria for what is or is not permissible in a criminal background. If you are concerned about undergoing a background check and how it may affect your internship search, please contact your Internship Navigator or the Office of Social Work Internships to discuss this in more detail.

17. *If I accept an internship at an agency, but then another agency unexpectedly contacts me for an interview, can I switch my internship?*

No. Once you make a commitment to accept an internship at an agency, you must honor that commitment. Not honoring your commitment is unethical and reflects poorly on you as a professional, damages the relationship between the agency and the University, unfairly takes away a potential opportunity from another student, and puts the agency in a position to either lose an intern that they were planning on for the year or re-invest more time and energy into another intern search. If you have any questions about this, please contact your Internship Navigator.

Any student who does not honor a commitment (written or verbal) to an agency may be required to go through the Internship Support Process and may be required to defer their internship or may be dismissed from the program. See the [OSWI Policy Manual](#) on our [website](#) for additional details.

18. *What happens if I am unable to secure an internship within one of the agencies provided to me by the Office of Social Work Internships?*

Students have a responsibility to:

- contact **each** agency provided to them within no more than ten days of receiving the agency's contact information.
- submit a professionally crafted résumé and cover letter customized to each agency to request an interview.
- adhere to the department's Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior (see each program's policies on the [Department of Social Work website](#) for specific guidelines) in all communications with the agency.

If a student is not selected for an interview at any agency or is not offered an internship after interviewing at all provided agencies, the student **must** contact their Internship Navigator at the Office of Social Work Internships to determine next steps as soon as possible.

If a student is unable to obtain an internship due to issues with abiding by the [Department of Social Work's](#) Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior, then the student may be required to participate in the Internship Support Process and may be required to defer their internship or may be dismissed from the program.

Types of Agencies and Internships

19. Are there any paid internships?

Our office actively advocates for agencies to offer financial compensation to their interns; however, not all agencies are able to do so. While most internships are not paid, there are some agencies that provide students with a stipend or some form of compensation. Agencies are expected to provide a written outline of the stipend or payment arrangement to students upon offering the internship. **Please note that an internship in which the agency offers any type of pay or stipend to the student intern will impact the designated holder of liability coverage and Worker's Compensation policies in internship.** Please see question 29 for more information. Students are encouraged to review the [Department of Social Work's Scholarships and Stipends page](#) for additional funding opportunities.

Paid internships are not the same as Employment-Based (EB) internships. A paid internship is a traditional internship that offers some kind of payment/stipend. A traditional internship is temporary and follows the semester schedule and academic year (starts in August and ends in May). A student in an EB internship is a permanent employee who continues with the agency past the end of the internship.

20. Can I complete my internship at my place of employment?

Students may request that their employer consider an Employment-Based (EB) internship. There are many potential benefits to EB internships, including increased work/life balance and financial stability. The decision to request an EB internship should be carefully considered:

- It is important for students to note that agencies are not required to approve EB internship requests, and each agency can decide whether (and if so, under what circumstances) they allow EB internships. Students are advised to approach this conversation with their employers carefully and to reflect on the factors that might influence the employer's decision.
- There are different ways to structure EB internships, so it is best for the student and their employer to discuss openly and collaboratively what the pros/cons might be and what would work best for each student's unique situation. EB internships are most successful when the student's employer is fully willing and able to support the student's learning and provide a meaningful learning environment conducive to professional growth.
- An important consideration for students requesting an EB internship is how to balance the dual role of being both an employee and an intern within the same agency. Employers may have different expectations for their employees than their interns. Navigating this dual role can sometimes create additional complexities.

- Students should understand that by requesting an EB internship, that means making a commitment to maintain their employment until the end of the academic year (August through May). If anything changes with their employment status, this may impact their ability to complete their internship in a given academic year. Our office cannot guarantee a replacement internship if a student does not complete their EB internship.

For additional details, please see the EB Internship FAQs and/or the EB Request Step-By-Step Instructions, which will be provided to all students who indicate interest in an EB internship on their Internship Application at the beginning of the search cycle. Please direct any specific questions regarding EB internships to your Internship Navigator.

21. *Can I search for a new job in hopes that it could become an Employment-Based (EB) internship?*

On occasion students are actively job searching and/or obtain a new job offer during the internship search process. Students may consider requesting that their new employer approve an EB internship. This is possible, although it is not guaranteed. There are a few considerations for students to keep in mind:

- Not all employers allow new employees to count their job as their internship; this should be discussed upfront during the interview process and prior to accepting the job. Students should never assume that their new employer will approve an EB internship request. Students must follow all the EB Request Step-By-Step Instructions.
- There is no specific listing or database for EB internships. Students are encouraged to cross-reference a job posting with the Sonia Database to see if that agency is already an approved social work internship partner of MSU Denver. If not, the agency would need to go through the New Agency Affiliation process to be screened by the Office of Social Work Internships before the EB internship could be approved. Students should be aware that this process takes as much as three months and may cause delays in the EB internship approval process.
- It is recommended that a student starts any new job to be requested as an EB internship **at least three months** prior to the start of the semester (e.g., students should begin the new job no later than mid-May prior to the semester/EB internship starting in mid-August).

For additional details, please see the EB Internship FAQs and/or the EB Request Step-By-Step Instructions, which will be provided to all students who indicate interest in an EB internship on their Internship Application at the beginning of the search cycle. Please direct any specific questions regarding EB internships to your Internship Navigator.

22. *Can I design my own internship?*

Internships are designed to be completed in one agency. It is not acceptable to piece together learning activities from multiple agencies to comprise an internship. In very rare cases, the Office of Social Work Internships may approve an exception. Please contact your Internship Navigator if you would like to discuss a unique circumstance that may require such approval. Students are encouraged to indicate on their Internship Application if they have a request for a specific internship. The Internship Navigator will take these requests into account when providing each student with agency options. **However, not all specific requests for agency internships will be honored.**

Efforts will be made to match students with desired settings, populations, etc., but the focus of the internship experience is to foster a learning experience where a student can integrate theory and practice. Each student will be provided with internship options where they can demonstrate prescribed competencies required by the program in an approved setting.

23. *Can I complete my internship in two different agencies in one year (one agency during the fall semester, and another agency during the spring semester)?*

No. Students must complete their internship in the same agency for the entire year (30 weeks). In order to form a sound knowledge base, develop rapport with clients, establish yourself as an integral part of the agency, and complete learning objectives, longevity in one internship agency is required.

24. *I am interested in a specific agency OR an agency that is not a current partner of the Dept. of Social Work. Can I contact that agency to see if they will accept interns?*

In order to maintain the integrity of the internship search process that is used for hundreds of students, and to preserve ongoing relationships with community agencies, students are not to contact any agencies to propose internships or inquire about availability without consultation with their Internship Navigator. The Office of Social Work Internships prioritizes connecting students searching for internships with its established, pre-approved agency partners during the internship search process. To that end, students are strongly encouraged to work with their Internship Navigator to apply to existing agencies by searching through the Sonia Database.

Requests to search outside of existing, established partners are considered on a case-by-case basis and only when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- The student lives in a geographic area without established agency partners.
- The student is seeking an internship in an area/discipline of social work where there are not existing established relationships.
- The student is already employed at an agency where they would like to request to complete an Employment-Based Internship.

In cases where a student would like to apply to a specific agency that is not a current established partner of the Department of Social Work's Office of Social Work Internships but that does not meet one or more of the above parameters, students must first apply to at least two agencies within their geographic region that would offer similar learning experiences.

The process of screening and onboarding a new agency can take up to three months and approval is not guaranteed. Please note that requests to develop a new agency partnership must be initiated by July 1st at the latest to meet the July 31st deadline for students to have finalized their internship allocation with the Office of Social Work Internships. No new agency affiliations will be allowed after that date.

25. *Can I use the same internship agency for my internship in both my BSSW/MSW Foundation and MSW Concentration year?*

Sometimes. In order to ensure a wide breadth of experiences to facilitate growth and learning, internships are typically required to occur in a different agency during an MSW student's Concentration (advanced practice) year. In general, Concentration year internship may not be the same as either the Foundation year or BSSW internship. If a student is requesting an exception because they are interested in staying in the same agency for their Concentration year OR the agency has designed a longitudinal internship occurring over two years, they need to show that they will have opportunities for new learning reflecting advanced practice skills and/or that a new supervisor (Social Work Supervisor and/or Task Supervisor) can be established. Students interested in a same agency request will be required to complete a Same Agency Request form and submit it to the Office of Social Work Internships for review and approval.

26. *Are any internships available in private psychotherapy clinic settings?*

Students may learn the fundamentals of clinical skills through coursework and internships in the MSW program, though the goal of our program is to prepare students to be social workers in any agency, not just in clinical social work. While social workers may choose to work in a private clinic after obtaining their licensure, these settings are less common for internships, and training for clinical therapy practice is limited to MSW Concentration level students.

Select private psychotherapy clinics may be suitable for MSW Concentration year internships and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Office of Social Work Internships. One of the requirements of our community partnerships is providing 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) so this needs to be a focus of all agency partners.

In order to meet the goals of the internship learning experience, private practices that wish to be approved should meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrate a commitment to serving vulnerable, oppressed, marginalized, and/or diverse populations by accepting varied payment options such as Medicaid, sliding scales, etc.
- Engage with multiple external points of contact within the larger social service delivery system (e.g., schools, courts, human services, etc.).
- Articulate a defined mission and agency policies and procedures.
- Utilize a structured intake process.
- Employ at least two practitioners, one of whom is a social worker with at least 2 years of post-degree work experience and who is licensed to practice psychotherapy. **All students practicing clinical therapy as a part of their internship are required to be supervised by an on-site Licensed Social Worker (LSW or LCSW).**
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in differing treatment modalities (e.g., individual, couple, family, group).
- Serve a need in the community; address a social issue/problem affecting the community.
- Provide a learning environment where students progress on a continuum that begins with opportunities to shadow/observe social work practice and move towards more independent practice.

Other Common Questions

27. I have never worked with a client. Will I be prepared to work with clients in my internship?

As a part of your professional social work development, it may be natural to feel unprepared at various points during your educational journey. You have been admitted to the Social Work Program based on possessing certain abilities and attributes that are necessary to become a successful social worker. Your coursework will assist you in acquiring the practice knowledge necessary to work in an agency setting. Additionally, you will be able to utilize various models of supervision in your internship (e.g., observation, role-playing, co-counseling, processing, etc.) to learn and refine your skills. Remember that not all social workers practice clinical work. Your internships and professional focus may be mezzo or macro in nature. However, if you choose to pursue a clinical focus, our curriculum and your internship supervision are designed to build your competency.

28. I have several years of social work experience. Can this count towards my internship hours?

No credit will be given for prior life or work experience. In accordance with the standards of our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education, the Internship Experience courses are designed to provide a well-rounded practical educational experience that complements the academic curriculum.

29. Will I be covered under university liability insurance during my internship?

The work that students complete in any **unpaid** internship as part of the Internship Experience class will be covered under MSU Denver’s liability insurance in accordance with Colorado State Statute. **In cases where students are completing internships and receive any compensation through the agency (e.g., hourly wage, stipend, paid internship, employment-based internship), the agency assumes coverage of liability insurance and Worker’s Compensation policies.** Additional details are provided in the affiliation agreement signed between MSU Denver’s Dept. of Social Work and the agency. Rarely, an agency may require students to purchase liability insurance with limits beyond what the Colorado State Statute covers. Requirements to purchase additional liability insurance should be communicated directly to the student early in the internship search process and may impact the

coverage provided by MSU Denver's liability insurance. Information about additional social work liability insurance may be found on the National Association of Social Workers' website: <https://naswco.socialworkers.org/>.

30. *Will I need a car for my internship?*

All students are required to find their own transportation to and from their internship. Students without cars will be assisted with finding an agency that is accessible by public transportation (no more than a one-hour commute time each way). Some agencies will require that students have access to their own transportation for the purposes of home visits, community work, etc. It is up to the student to inquire about the agency's vehicle requirements during the interview process. Each agency will have its own policies regarding proof of driver's license and insurance. Students' use of personal or agency vehicles will not be covered under the University's insurance, nor will the Department reimburse students for the use of their vehicles or costs such as parking fees. All issues regarding transportation, including the transportation of clients, must be discussed between the student and the agency supervisor prior to beginning the internship. The Department of Social Work will not be responsible for any decisions regarding transportation.

31. *I utilize accommodations within my academic classes. Are accommodations available in internships and, if so, how do I begin that process?*

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and rights of equal access to programs and services. Metropolitan State University of Denver is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities or experiencing temporary impairment. Students with a diagnosed condition/disability which may impact their access, performance, attendance, or grades in Internship Education should contact the MSU Denver Access Center. Further information is available by visiting the Access Center website www.msudenver.edu/access or calling 303-615-0200.

The Access Center is the designated department responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students experiencing any type of disability (e.g., mental health, chronic health, physical, sensory, and neurological) or temporary medical condition (e.g., concussion, broken bone, pregnancy, etc.). Please note: It is the student's responsibility to decide whether to request accommodations. The student must be registered with the MSU Denver Access Center to be eligible for accommodations. Students may request accommodations for the Internship Experience class and/or for their agency internship. Accommodations within the internship setting may be different from classroom accommodations. Therefore, requests for accommodations should be determined through a collaborative process between the student, Access Center, the Office of Social Work Internships, and the internship agency (if appropriate). Students are encouraged to work with their OSWI Internship Navigator and/or Access Center Accommodations Coordinator to prepare for a conversation about accommodations with their agency and to explore steps for advocacy if needed.

We understand that not every agency may be able to provide all requested accommodations. The Office of Social Work Internships is committed to supporting students in identifying an internship setting that is supportive of student learning.

32. *What if I am not satisfied with my agency experience at any point during my internship?*

The Office of Social Work Internships is committed to ensuring that students are placed in quality learning environments to complete their internship. However, there may be times in which problems arise during an internship. It is best that these issues are addressed openly and immediately. The ability to communicate about challenges is an essential skill for social workers and so these situations prompt learning and skill-building for all involved. Issues may be brought forth by the student, Social Work Supervisor/Task Supervisor, Faculty Internship Liaison, or Office of Social Work Internships. In any circumstance, the Internship Support Process found in the [OSWI Policy Manual](#) should be followed. Students may not end an internship without going through

the Internship Support process. Students are responsible for having reviewed the full Internship Support Process in the [OSWI Policy Manual](#).

33. *Can I begin working on my hours towards licensure while I am in my internship?*

No. Hours toward licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) cannot begin until full completion of an accredited Master of Social Work program. You may find information about social work licensure in the state of Colorado through the [Department of Regulatory Agencies](#).

Our Office of Social Work Internships is excited for you to begin your internship search, and we look forward to supporting you throughout your journey in internship education! If you have additional questions, please contact the Office of Social Work Internships:

SWKinternships@msudenver.edu

303-615-1655