



METROPOLITAN
STATE UNIVERSITYSM
OF DENVER

Department of Social Work
Office of Social Work Internships
(OSWI)
Policy Manual
Revised Summer 2026

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FOREWORD

This manual is designed to provide students, community agency partners, including Social Work Supervisors and Task Supervisors, and faculty with all the information needed to engage in a successful Internship Experience.

We would like to extend a deep thank you to all the community agencies and the respective Social Work Supervisors and Task Supervisors who have volunteered to partner with our MSW and BSSW programs to provide real-life learning opportunities for our students.

This manual may be updated throughout the year, so please check online for the most updated policies, forms, and information. This manual will be available on the [Office of Social Work Internship website](#).

We wish you all a very rewarding internship education experience!

The Office of Social Work Internships

Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM.....	7
A.	Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) Overview.....	7
B.	Social Work Program Overview.....	7
C.	Accreditation Status.....	8
D.	Social Work Program Mission and Goals.....	8
E.	Social Work Program Requirements	9
II.	INTRODUCTION TO INTERNSHIP EDUCATION	9
A.	Philosophy of Internship Education.....	9
1.	CSWE Nine Social Work Competencies.....	9
B.	Social Work Values and Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	10
1.	Definition of Anti-Racism	10
2.	Commitment to Anti-Racism.....	10
C.	Internship Education Requirements.....	10
1.	Internship Experience Course Overview	10
2.	Internship Hours Requirements	11
D.	Definitions of Roles in Internship Education.....	11
1.	Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL).....	12
2.	Social Work Supervisor (SWS)	12
3.	Task Supervisor	13
4.	Off-Site Social Work Supervisor.....	14
E.	Supervision Requirements	15
F.	Site Visits.....	16
G.	BSSW Program.....	17
1.	BSSW Internship (Generalist) Overview.....	17
2.	BSSW Internship Experience Course Learning Objectives.....	17
H.	MSW Program	18
1.	Foundation Year Internship (Generalist) Overview	18
2.	Foundation Year Internship Experience Course Learning Objectives	18
3.	Concentration Year Internship (Specialized) Overview	19
4.	Concentration Year Internship Experience Course Learning Objectives	19
5.	Capstone Class.....	20

I.	Grading, Assignments, Learning Agreement, and Evaluation	20
II.	Internship Experience Course Grading	20
III.	Learning Agreement Guidelines	21
IV.	Evaluation Guidelines	22
III.	INTERNSHIP SEARCH PROCESS	25
A.	Recruitment of New Internship Agencies (aka New Agency Affiliation).....	25
B.	Affiliation Agreement	26
C.	Criteria for New Agency Affiliation.....	26
D.	Student Internship Search Process	28
IV.	OFFICE of SOCIAL WORK INTERNSHIPS POLICIES.....	29
E.	Department of Social Work Policies.....	29
F.	General Internship Education Policies.....	30
1.	Time in the Internship (Early Starts, Extensions, & Early Completions).....	30
2.	School Breaks and Holidays	31
3.	Paid and/or Stipend Internship.....	31
4.	Employment-Based (EB) Internships	32
5.	Employment Offers During Academic Year	34
6.	Distance Internships.....	35
7.	Longitudinal (aka Same Agency) Internships.....	35
8.	Dual Roles in Internship Settings	35
9.	Safety in Internship Education.....	36
10.	Confidentiality and the Use of Technology	37
11.	Artificial Intelligence (AI)	38
12.	Social Media	38
13.	Liability Insurance	39
14.	Worker's Compensation (Internship-Related Injury or Illness)	39
15.	Use of Personal Vehicle.....	40
16.	Use of Agency Property.....	40
17.	Attire	41
18.	Internship Disruption Policy	41
19.	Internship Support Process	43
20.	Agency Review	50
21.	Accommodations in Internships (including Pregnancy).....	52
22.	Group Private Practice and Clinical Psychotherapy Internships	53

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

A. Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) Overview

Vision

We are a nationally recognized leader for social mobility – where students of all ages and backgrounds build a better, more equitable Colorado through innovative and transformative education.

Mission

MSU Denver's mission is to provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, post-graduate education and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global and technological society. To fulfill its mission, MSU Denver's diverse university community engages the community at large in scholarly inquiry, creative activity and the application of knowledge.

Values

MSU Denver's mission, vision, ongoing operations and strategic planning are informed by a [core set of values](#) ("CADRE") that define who we are – and aspire to be – as a university:

- Community
- Access
- Diversity
- Respect
- Excellence

B. Social Work Program Overview

MSU Denver's Department of Social Work educates social workers to serve the needs of individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations in a multicultural and global society. MSU Denver's program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the sole accrediting body for social work.

Our program combines academic, research, and internship experience into a rigorous curriculum that teaches ethical decision making, scientific inquiry, cultural sensitivity, and global awareness as well as clinical assessment and intervention skills, leadership and management skills, and community organizing.

BSSW Program: Students applying to the BSSW program should have completed the prerequisite liberal arts perspective courses and the introductory social work courses, or they should be enrolled with the intent to complete them before the program begins. The major requires 120 credit hours to be completed, including general prerequisites, social work prerequisites, general studies courses, graduation requirements, and required social work courses.

MSW Regular (2-year) Program: This program is for students whose undergraduate degree is not in social work. Accepted students will complete 60 credit hours of graduate social work courses. The first year (30 credits) consists of foundation year coursework, and the second year (30 credits) consists of the concentration year coursework. Full-time students will complete the program in two (2) academic years; part-time students will complete the program in four (4) academic years.

MSW Advanced Standing Program: This program is for students whose undergraduate degree is in social work from a program accredited by the CSWE. Accepted students will complete the 30 credit hours of graduate social work courses in the concentration year. Full-time students will complete the program in one (1) academic year; part-time students will complete the program in two (2) academic years.

NOTE: *Students who have Advanced Standing status have already met the foundation year (1st year of the MSW program) competencies through their BSSW coursework. Competencies for all BSSW programs nationwide are equivalent to the foundation year (1st year) competencies of all MSW programs nationwide.*

C. Accreditation Status

The social work program is accredited by the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#), the sole accrediting body for social work programs in the U.S. Accreditation ensures that professional standards are met in curriculum content and delivery. Accredited programs periodically undergo rigorous review by the CSWE in order to ensure compliance with educational standards.

D. Social Work Program Mission and Goals

Departmental Mission

MSU Denver's Department of Social Work prepares social workers to engage in skillful, ethical, justice-oriented, and effective practice in their communities. We accomplish this by:

- Educating and training students to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, including those who are members of historically excluded populations
- Building community centered and strategic partnerships with organizations, co-creating relationship-centered learning, and working environments to foster growth and collaboration
- Utilizing the NASW Code of Ethics to inform teaching and practice, while adapting to changes in the field and world, drawing from a vast knowledge base informed by multiple perspectives

BSSW Mission

Our mission is centered in our commitment to advance racial, social, economic, and environmental justice through educating and inspiring future generations of diverse social workers to positively impact the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities through direct practice, policy, advocacy, and research.

MSW Program Mission & Vision

Our mission is to shape transformative social workers who passionately promote racial, social, environmental and economic justice through culturally responsive and context relevant practice. The MSW Program focuses on nurturing diverse advocates, leaders, and clinicians who address critical social problems and enhance human and community well-being.

Our vision is to be a diverse and equitable community that prepares students for social justice work through experiential learning and anti-oppressive practice. Our program honors flexible and innovative spaces for learners, inclusive of all backgrounds, circumstances, and identities. We seek to develop learners who are competent, grounded in scientific inquiry and embrace the human dignity and worth of all people and advance the human rights of all.

E. Social Work Program Requirements

You can find social work program and individual course requirements, descriptions, and syllabi through the following links:

- [BSSW Program](#)
- [MSW Program \(Foundation, Concentration, and Part-Time Program\)](#)
- [MSW Program \(Advanced Standing\)](#)
- [Course Descriptions and Syllabi](#)

II. INTRODUCTION TO INTERNSHIP EDUCATION

A. Philosophy of Internship Education

In 2008, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) designated internship education as the “signature pedagogy” of social work. The major purpose of the internship education curriculum is to develop a social work practitioner who:

- Is grounded in the knowledge and value base of the social work profession,
- Uses the knowledge base to guide his/her/their interventions with clients and client systems, and
- Evaluates the outcome of her/his/their interventions in order to improve them.

(Adapted from www.nanfed.org).

1. CSWE Nine Social Work Competencies

It is in the internships that students get a chance to apply what they are learning in the classroom to real life practice situations. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has adopted a competency-based education framework to identify and assess what students demonstrate in practice. In the CSWE 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), social work practice competence consists of nine interrelated competencies and component behaviors that consist of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.

- **Competency #1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**
- **Competency #2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**
- **Competency #3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**
- **Competency #4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**
- **Competency #5: Engage in Policy Practice**
- **Competency #6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- **Competency #7: Assess with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- **Competency #8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- **Competency #9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

B. Social Work Values and Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. Definition of Anti-Racism

We, the MSU-Denver Social Work Office of Social Work Internships, acknowledge the presence of power and privilege and its global impact on those with marginalized identities. We recognize that the social work profession has contributed to and continues to uphold systems of oppression.

We define anti-racism as the active practice of evaluating and dismantling racism and oppression through challenging and ultimately changing the systems that preserve it. We celebrate the different identities of those on our team and those who we work with, and we center and prioritize the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and others who identify as People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized communities. We hold ourselves and each other accountable to evaluating the ways our multiple identities interact within these systems. We hold the belief that this definition will grow and change as we continue to seek out new ways of unlearning the oppressive systems we have been taught to uphold.

2. Commitment to Anti-Racism

The MSU-Denver Social Work Office of Social Work Education, in alignment with the University, (e.g. [MSU Board of Trustees Resolution](#); [MSU Denver Land and Labor Acknowledgement](#)) and our profession, (e.g. [NASW Code of Ethics](#); [NASW Report on Racial Justice](#), [CSWE Antiracism Press Release](#)) is committed to anti-racism and anti-oppression.

The Office of Social Work Internships' commitment is to provide an inclusive internship education experience in which theory and practice reflect anti-racist social work practice. Our commitment to practicing anti-racism includes but is not limited to the following actions and deliverables:

- reviewing and updating policies and practices related to better supporting the internship education experience for BIPOC students and/or students with other marginalized identities;
- engaging internship education students in becoming agents of change towards dismantling systems of oppression;
- reviewing and updating internship education curriculum with a stronger focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and culturally responsive course content;
- collaborating with community partners who have aligned values and ethics;
- supporting internship agencies to ensure their follow through with social work DEI values;
- providing opportunities for internship staff and faculty to engage in continued reflection, education, and growth around DEI and anti-racism;
- creating open feedback loops for students, faculty, staff, and community partners to collaborate and share their knowledge with us and each other to advance anti-racism social work internship education.

C. Internship Education Requirements

1. Internship Experience Course Overview

As part of the required Internship Experience courses, every student in the BSSW and MSW programs will find an internship within a community agency and complete that internship under the guidance and supervision of an experienced professional social worker, the Social Work Supervisor.

Each Internship Experience course is comprised of two (2) required components:

- Internship (applied learning experience in an approved community agency)
- Classroom (in-person or synchronous online class facilitated every other week by a Faculty Internship Liaison)

Each student will enroll in a Internship Experience course concurrently while completing their internship. This course is designed to complement their experiences in their internship. The classroom portion of the course is facilitated by their Faculty Internship Liaison, meets every other week, and is offered synchronously in either face-to-face or online formats. The purpose of the class will be for students to discuss specific content, process what is happening in their internships, and complete assignments designed to integrate social work theory into practice.

Additional resources for Internship Education can be found on the Office of Social Work Internships [website](#).

2. Internship Hours Requirements

Students will be in the internship for 30 weeks from the start of the fall semester (mid-August) until the end of the spring semester (mid-May). Students are expected to complete their internship in the same agency for the entire academic year (30 weeks). Students are not typically allowed to switch internships mid-year. The total required hours are:

BSSW (Undergraduate Seniors)	13-14 hours/week (200/semester and 400/year)
MSW Foundation (1 st year)	13-14 hours/week (200/semester and 400/year)
MSW Concentration (2 nd year)	16-17 hours/week (250/semester and 500/year)

NOTE: *The hour requirements are minimum hour requirements. Students may exceed the minimum number of hours. If an agency requests that an intern complete more than the minimum number of required hours, this should be communicated and agreed upon in advance between the student and agency, prior to the start of the internship. If students agree to complete more hours than the minimum requirement, it is expected that they will do their best to honor this commitment or utilize the Internship Support Process if they find that they need to renegotiate the agreement.*

Please see [section IV. B. 1. “Time in the Internship”](#) for further information related to requests for Early Starts, Early Completions, and/or Extensions.

D. Definitions of Roles in Internship Education

1. Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL)

University instructor who teaches the classroom portion of the Internship Experience course and assigns the student's final grade. The FIL also acts as a liaison between the student, agency and university, including regularly conducting site visits and, if/when needed, providing additional guidance and coaching through the Internship Support Process. In some cases where the agency is unable to provide a Social Work Supervisor, the FIL also serves as a student's off-site Social Work Supervisor.

2. Social Work Supervisor (SWS)

This individual has primary responsibility for ensuring the student's internship provides appropriate learning experiences that integrate social work theory, values, and practice. 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.

Social Work Supervisors must meet the following criteria:

- *For BSSW students:* Must have a BSSW or MSW degree from an accredited social work program and at least two (2) years of post-degree work experience.
- *For MSW students:* Must have an MSW degree from an accredited social work program and at least two (2) years of post-degree 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](#).

An on-site Social Work Supervisor 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.

a) Expectations of Social Work Supervisors:

- Attend and participate in the Internship Agency Orientation provided by the Office of Social Work Internships in the Department of Social Work.
- Have scheduling capacity to meet the supervision requirements outlined in this manual, including regularly scheduled supervision as well as additional consultation and debrief throughout the week. Be available for questions outside of supervision as needed and/or identify key staff student can go to.
- Create a positive learning environment with educationally focused experiences and opportunities for student learning appropriate to the student's educational level.
- Ensure the student has been appropriately onboarded and trained, including a review of agency policies and safety planning checklist.
- Monitor the student's progress toward their learning goals and their development of social work competencies.
- Provide direct and constructive performance feedback to the student on an ongoing basis throughout the internship.

- Coordinate with the student's on-site Task Supervisor (if applicable).
- Participate in site visits with FIL each semester and engage in the [Internship Support Process](#) as needed. Maintain consistent and clear communication with the Department of Social Work and/or FIL as needed.
- Review and submit all necessary student documentation in a timely manner, including Learning Agreements at the beginning of each semester and Evaluations at the end of each semester.
- Understand and support the mission, values, and goals, as well as the policies, of the University and Social Work Department.

3. Task Supervisor

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 an agency does not have a qualified Social Work Supervisor on staff, then an on-site Task Supervisor should be designated for the student. A Task Supervisor should also be assigned in cases where the Social Work Supervisor provided by the agency does not have day-to-day direct observation of the student. Additionally, even when there is a qualified on-site Social Work Supervisor, there may be times when it is beneficial to student learning to assign a Task Supervisor(s) to assist with the internship experience.

While a social work degree is not required, it is highly recommended that the Task Supervisor have a related degree (e.g. counseling, psychology, human services, public policy etc.) and/or significant relevant professional experience. The Task Supervisor must become oriented to the Internship Experience course requirements, and they must collaborate with the Social Work Supervisor on the Learning Agreement and Evaluation.

a) Expectations of Task Supervisors:

- Attend and participate in the Internship Agency Orientation provided by the Office of Social Work Internships in the Department of Social Work.
- Direct the day-to-day activities of the internship, and in coordination with the Social Work Supervisor, create a positive learning environment with educationally focused experiences and opportunities for student learning appropriate to the student's educational level.
- Ensure the student has been appropriately onboarded and trained, including a review of agency policies and safety planning checklist.
- Have scheduling capacity to meet the supervision requirements outlined in this manual, including regularly scheduled supervision as well as additional consultation and debrief throughout the week. Be available for questions outside of supervision as needed and/or identify key staff student can go to.
- Provide direct and constructive performance feedback to the student on an ongoing basis throughout the internship.
- Get to know the off-site Social Work Supervisor and be aware of the student's supervision schedule with their off-site Social Work Supervisor. Check-in regularly with the Social Work Supervisor regarding the student's progress.

- Participate in site visits with FIL each semester and engage in the [Internship Support Process](#) as needed. Maintain consistent and clear communication with the Department of Social Work and/or FIL as needed.
- Review and submit all necessary student documentation in a timely manner, in collaboration with the Social Work Supervisor, including Learning Agreements at the beginning of each semester and Evaluations at the end of each semester.
- Understand and support the mission, values, and goals, as well as the policies, of the University and Social Work Department.

4. Off-Site Social Work Supervisor

When an agency does not have a qualified Social Work Supervisor on staff, it is the agency's responsibility to attempt, if at all possible, to identify an off-site Social Work Supervisor (SWS) 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, Linked In, etc.) who may be interested in this type of role. Whenever an off-site Social Work Supervisor is utilized, it is mandatory that the agency also provide an on-site Task Supervisor as described above.

In supervision with an off-site Social Work Supervisor, the student would present what they are working on in their agency and learning in class, and the off-site Social Work Supervisor would focus on helping the student connect how the social work knowledge, values, and skills they are learning in the classroom integrate with their internship activities.

In circumstances where an agency is unable to identify an off-site Social Work Supervisor, the agency may request that the Department of Social Work provide one. However, agencies are asked to please be considerate when making these requests. The Department of Social Work will prioritize approving requests in rare and/or unique circumstances and/or where the student's educational opportunities would be restricted by not having an off-site Social Work Supervisor (e.g. in agency settings that are rural, macro, interdisciplinary, Employment-Based, etc.).

In these circumstances where an agency is unable to identify an off-site Social Work Supervisor and the Department of Social Work has approved an agency's request to provide one, then the student's Faculty Internship Liaison will serve as the off-site Social Work Supervisor.

a) Expectations of Off-Site Social Work Supervisors provided by the Agency:

- Meet all expectations for Social Work Supervisors listed above.
- Gain a thorough understanding of the agency's mission, services, and daily workings; if previously unfamiliar with the agency, commit to learning as much as possible about the agency at the beginning of academic year.
- Be responsive to students in between scheduled supervision.
- Communicate regularly with the Task Supervisor regarding the student's performance and progress towards goals.
- Assume responsibility for ensuring that a social work perspective is reinforced throughout the educational process.

- Determine if you need to carry professional liability insurance (e.g. if not already covered by the agency or if not paid or contracted employees of MSU-Denver).

b) Expectations of Off-Site Social Work Supervisors provided by the University (FIL):

- Identify yourself in your introductory FIL email to the agency as the student's Social Work Supervisor in addition to being their FIL.
- Set a regular supervision schedule within the first two weeks of fall semester. Clearly indicate to the student if supervision will be individual or group. Clarify that supervision will occur outside of class time and will count towards student's accrual of internship hours.
- Have scheduling capacity to meet the supervision requirements outlined in this manual, including regularly scheduled supervision as well as additional consultation and debrief in between scheduled supervision if needed.
- Be responsive to students in between scheduled supervision.
- Gain a thorough understanding of the agency's mission, services, and daily workings; if previously unfamiliar with the agency, commit to learning as much as possible about the agency at the beginning of academic year.
- Communicate regularly with the Task Supervisor regarding the student's performance and progress towards goals.
- Provide direct and constructive performance feedback to the student on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year.
- Maintain a neutral stance between student and agency perspectives when participating in site visits and engaging in the [Internship Support Process](#).
- Review and submit all student documentation in a timely manner, including Learning Agreements at the beginning of each semester and Evaluations at the end of each semester, as you would in your FIL role; refer to the section on "Grading, Assignments, Learning Agreement, and Evaluation" for further guidance.
- Understand and support the mission, values, and goals, as well as the policies, of the University and Social Work Department.

E. Supervision Requirements

Social Work Supervisors are social work educators and serve in the roles of teacher, guide, challenger, and role model. According to Maypole (1997), supervision is considered to have three (3) components which interact to achieve the goals of the agency and MSU Denver's BSSW & MSW internship programs:

- Administrative: To ensure the student's accountability to the agency and to MSU Denver's internship program policies and procedures;
- Educational: To support the developing professional capacity of the student as it relates to the transmission of social work knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values; and
- Supportive: To promote student self-care, personal growth, advocate for student learning needs, and provide emotional support.

Each student must receive at least one (1) hour of supervision weekly by a qualified Social Work Supervisor (see definitions above for criteria and additional details).

OR

If a student has an off-site Social Work Supervisor (whether provided by agency or University) and an on-site Task Supervisor, then the Social Work Supervisor may provide one (1) hour of supervision biweekly (every other week), as long as the Task Supervisor provides one (1) of weekly supervision.

Supervision Options:

Option 1:	One hour of supervision weekly from an on-site Social Work Supervisor AND →	NO TASK SUPERVISOR
Option 2:	One hour of supervision every other week (more if needed) from a Social Work Supervisor AND →	One hour of supervision weekly from an on-site Task Supervisor

- Supervision may be a combination of individual and group, 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 Task Supervisor and/or Social Work Supervisor should be available to meet individually as needed throughout the semester, depending on the student's level and learning needs, for the purpose of establishing a trusted relationship and addressing any differentiated learning needs.
- If the agency provides any additional/supplementary group supervision beyond what is required above and/or in addition to the weekly individual supervision provided by their SWS, then this should be disclosed in the Learning Agreement and their FIL should be made aware.
- In cases where students have multiple on-site supervisors, students should be given clarity about how feedback will be delivered and who will contribute to their Learning Agreement and Evaluation.
- As noted above, in situations where the agency is unable to provide a Social Work Supervisor, they may request that one be provided by the University. In these circumstances, Social Work Supervision will be provided by the student's FIL outside of classroom hours.
- The time that a student spends in supervision with an off-site Social Work Supervisor, whether provided by the agency or by the University, counts towards their accrual of total internship hours.

F. Site Visits

The Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL), who teaches the classroom portion of the student's Internship Experience course, is responsible for providing at least two (2) in-person or virtual site visits per year to each student's agency.

The site visits serve as a means to maintain regular contact with the student and agency supervisor(s) to monitor that placement learning objectives are being met, ensure academic curriculum is infused with practice in the internship, support safe learning environments (see [section IV. B. 8. "Safety in](#)

[Internship Education”](#)), and assist with mediating any conflict that may occur in the internship (see [section IV. B. 16. “Internship Support Process”](#)).

If a student has multiple supervisors (e.g. an on-site Task Supervisor and an off-site Social Work Supervisor) then all parties should be invited to and participate in site visits whenever possible. See the internship calendar available on the [Office of Social Work Internship website](#) for site visit dates.

G. BSSW Program

The Internship Experience courses required for the BSSW program are: SWK 4500 and SWK 4510. These two courses must be completed consecutively. SWK 4500 is a pre-requisite for SWK 4510.

Students cannot enroll in any Internship Experience course without formal written acceptance into the BSSW Program. Students must adhere to the required sequence of BSSW coursework.

1. BSSW Internship (Generalist) Overview

BSSW year internships offer opportunities for the development of **generalist** social work practice. The generalist experience is designed to orient students to foundational social work knowledge and skills. In the BSSW year, students develop a base of core social work knowledge, values, and skills and identify opportunities for exposure at all system levels (individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations). BSSW students are expected to have opportunities to demonstrate their generalist practice skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation, whether this be at the individual level or with larger client systems. Please note that because of the way the BSSW curriculum is designed and scaffolded, independently providing clinical services such as individual therapy is considered advanced social work practice and is therefore reserved for MSW-Concentration internships. The amount and length of shadowing and observation may take much of the fall semester but ultimately should be determined as needed to support student success as it relates to the agency’s work and internship tasks. For example, if this is the first time the student is working with clients or learning about power, privilege, and oppression, these nuances will impact the initial stages of their internship experience. BSSW students will be in their internships for 13-14 hours each week over the course of the fall and spring semesters.

2. BSSW Internship Experience Course Learning Objectives

The BSSW Internship Experience course objectives are identical to the [CSWE Nine Social Work Competencies](#). Upon completion of the Internship Experience course sequence, students should be able to:

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 with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

H. MSW Program

The Internship Experience courses required for the foundation year course sequence are: SWKM 5625 and SWKM 5675. These two courses must be completed consecutively. SWKM 5625 is a pre-requisite for SWKM 5675.

The Internship Experience courses required for the concentration year course sequence are: SWKM 6725 and SWKM 6775. These two courses must be completed consecutively. SWKM 6725 is a pre-requisite for SWKM 6775.

Students cannot enroll in any Internship Experience course without formal written acceptance into the MSW program. Students must adhere to required sequence of MSW coursework.

1. Foundation Year Internship (Generalist) Overview

MSW Foundation year internships offer opportunities for the development of **generalist** social work practice. The generalist experience is designed to orient students to foundational social work knowledge and skills. In the Foundation year, students develop a base of core social work knowledge, values, and skills and identify opportunities for exposure at all system levels (individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations). MSW Foundation year students are expected to have opportunities to demonstrate their generalist practice skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation, whether this be at the individual level or with larger client systems. Please note that because of the way the MSW Foundation curriculum is designed and scaffolded, independently providing clinical services such as individual therapy is considered advanced social work practice and is therefore reserved for MSW Concentration internships. The amount and length of shadowing and observation may take much of the fall semester but ultimately should be determined as needed to support student success as it relates to the agency's work and internship tasks. For example, if this is the first time the student is working with clients or learning about power, privilege, and oppression, these nuances will impact the initial stages of their internship experience. Foundation year students will be in their internships for 13-14 hours each week.

2. Foundation Year Internship Experience Course Learning Objectives

The MSW Foundation Internship Experience course objectives are identical to the [CSWE Nine Social Work Competencies](#). Upon completion of the Internship Experience course, students should be able to:

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 with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

3. Concentration Year Internship (Specialized) Overview

The MSW Concentration year internship will offer opportunities for the development of **advanced** social work practice. It will focus on learning more specialized skills, which may be at the clinical, mezzo or macro level depending on student area of interest and career goals. The Concentration year internship will also allow for increasingly autonomous practice and more purposeful selection of interventions based on application of advanced theoretical knowledge. Advanced students should be able to exercise more autonomy once onboarded and trained. Shadowing at the start is appropriate, especially for more specialized/niche practice. Students are more responsible for co-creating supervision agenda and session content.

Another notable component, specific to MSW Concentration year internships, is that MSW Concentration year students will be enrolled in a concurrent two-semester Capstone course. In the Capstone course, students develop and implement a project that is very often linked with the internship agency. There is a range of types of projects which students may identify in consultation with their agency supervisor. Examples of project types may include conducting a program evaluation, writing a grant, developing a program or curriculum to implement, creating a social documentary, or more.

Concentration year students will be in their internships for 16-17 hours each week.

4. Concentration Year Internship Experience Course Learning Objectives

The MSW-Concentration Internship Experience course objectives are based upon the [CSWE Nine Social Work Competencies](#) but modified to reflect a more advanced level of practice.

Upon completion of the Internship Experience course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate Advanced Ethical and Professional Decision Making and Behavior
2. Provide Leadership and/or Collaboration in Advancing Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage In and Collaboratively Lead Advanced Integrative Practice which reflects Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racist and Liberatory Practice
4. Utilize and Conduct Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Advanced Integrative Policy Practice
6. Engage in Advanced Integrative Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities using an Advanced Integrative Practice Lens
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities from an Advanced Integrative Practice Perspective
9. Evaluate Advanced Integrative Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

5. Capstone Class

Each concentration year student will be expected to complete an internship-based quality improvement project. The project will span the course of two semesters. Students will complete the project in the following courses:

<i>Fall Semester</i>	<i>Spring Semester</i>
SWKM 6700 Capstone I	SWKM 6750 Capstone II

In the fall Capstone course, students will learn about project options and develop a project proposal. Project options include:

- program evaluation,
- social documentary
- grant proposal or program plan
- program curriculum
- training
- public education campaign

Once the student's proposed project is approved by the Capstone professor and Department of Social Work Research Ethics Committee, students will carry out their project in the spring semester. Spring semester will conclude with a project report on the student's work.

I. Grading, Assignments, Learning Agreement, and Evaluation

II. Internship Experience Course Grading

The Internship Experience course has *two* (2) components: the internship component and the classroom component. A student must successfully complete both components in order to pass the Internship Experience course. The student's FIL will assign the student's grade based on both components. If a student does not pass EITHER the internship component OR the classroom component, then the requirements of this course have not been met, and the student will receive a failing grade for the entire course. If a student fails the Internship Experience course, then a Performance Review may take place. Students may be required to repeat the course in its entirety before continuing in the program, or complete additional requirements, or be dismissed from the program.

a. Internship Component

In order to pass this component of the class, each student is required to complete both of the following: required internship hours and an evaluation provided by the agency supervisor(s).

- **Hours:** Agency supervisors will verify completion of hours upon submission of the evaluation. Please see [Section II. C. 1. "Hours Requirements"](#) above regarding the number of hours required for each student level.
- **Evaluation:** The agency supervisor(s) will complete an evaluation for the student toward the end of each semester. Feedback provided from the agency supervisor(s) on the evaluation is a critical component in assessing whether the student has demonstrated the CSWE nine social

work competencies. This evaluation will assist in determining whether the student passes the Agency Internship component of the Internship Experience course. Please see [Section II. F. 3. "Evaluation Guidelines"](#) below for more specific details about completion of the student evaluation.

b. Classroom Component

The FIL will determine points earned for participation and assignments in the class. The grade received on this portion of the class will be what appears on the student transcript, provided the student also successfully completes the internship component of the course.

- **BSSW Students:** must successfully complete the coursework portion with a C- or better to pass the class.
- **MSW Students:** must successfully complete the coursework portion with a B- or better to pass the class.

Assignment details are outlined in each course syllabus. Assignments are subject to change.

III. Learning Agreement Guidelines

The purpose of the Learning Agreement is to provide an opportunity for the student and agency to create a detailed internship plan. It is a comprehensive planning tool that will help the student understand their primary responsibilities for the internship. In this way, the Learning Agreement ensures that both student and agency have clearly communicated and are in agreement about their expectations for what will be learned and accomplished each semester.

- The Learning Agreement is to be completed each semester (check syllabus for due date).
- The student is primarily responsible for writing and designing the learning activities, in discussion with the Social Work Supervisor and the student's Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL). The student and agency supervisor(s) should work together to identify learning activities for each of the practice behaviors associated with the CSWE competencies. The FIL is available to support with the identification of learning activities as needed.
- For students who are supervised by an on-site Task Supervisor (TS) who does not have a social work degree, the SWS and/or FIL play a key role by assisting the student and TS in brainstorming appropriate social work learning activities in the agency.
- Learning activities should provide opportunities for students to develop each of the practice behaviors listed within each competency.
- Time frames in which the learning will take place or be completed should also be included in the Learning Agreement. The Learning Agreement will be discussed during the FIL site visit each semester.
- The Learning Agreement is flexible and may be modified throughout the year. Either the student, the agency, or the FIL may request to revisit the Learning Agreement at any time throughout the

semester to ensure the student is engaged in appropriate learning experiences. The Internship Support Process may be used to clarify and/or re-negotiate the Learning Agreement if needed.

- The framework for the Learning Agreement is the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\) nine \(9\) social work competencies](#). (Please see [Section II. A. 1.](#) above for more information on the 9 competencies.)

IV. Evaluation Guidelines

Evaluations are completed at the end of each semester by the student's agency supervisor(s). Social Work Supervisor (and Task Supervisor, when applicable). If a student has more than one supervisor (e.g. on-site Task Supervisor and an off-site Social Work Supervisor), then both supervisors are expected to contribute to the student's evaluation. This evaluation is designed to assess the student's proficiency of the practice behaviors identified on the Learning Agreement for each of the nine social work competencies. The FIL will use the information in this evaluation to determine if the student has passed the Agency Internship portion of the course.

a) *Internship Evaluation Rubric*

Student evaluations are rated using the following rubric:

Rating Scale	Rating Description	Rating Definitions
N/A (FALL ONLY)	Not Yet Demonstrated – To Do In Spring	Student did not have an opportunity to demonstrate this competency during Fall Semester. This will be completed during Spring Semester. NOTE that this rating is not allowed for Competency 1.
0	No Competence Demonstrated	Student does not demonstrate competency with this behavior. <i>No demonstration of behavior</i>
1	Limited Competence	Student rarely demonstrates competency with this behavior. <i>Demonstrates this behavior 60% of the time</i>
2	Emerging Competence	Student demonstrates inconsistent competency with this behavior and/or requires additional coaching or support in practice of this behavior. <i>Demonstrates this behavior 70% of the time</i>
3	Developed Competence	Student demonstrates initial level of competency with this behavior but will benefit from additional practice. <i>Demonstrates this behavior 80% of the time</i>
4	Strong Competence	Student routinely demonstrates competency with this behavior in increasingly complex situations. <i>Demonstrates this behavior 90% of the time</i>
5	Full Competence	Student demonstrates competency with this behavior autonomously in all practice situations and/or is capable of supporting others in their use/development of this behavior. <i>Demonstrates this behavior 100% of the time</i>

NOTE: *The ratings that a student receives on this evaluation do not translate directly into a letter grade. Rather, this evaluation is primarily designed as a tool to provide constructive feedback to assist the student in growing as a social work professional while allowing the student to engage in critical self-reflection as they move through their educational journey. Therefore, the Evaluation is considered Pass/Fail.*

b) Criteria for a Passing Evaluation

The following guidelines are provided to determine if a student has successfully demonstrated competencies and is therefore considered passing. In addition to the ratings, a student must complete the minimum required hours in order for the Evaluation to be considered passing. A student must have a passing Evaluation in order to receive a passing grade in the Internship Experience course.

- **Fall Semester:**
 - **BSSW Students:** In order to pass, student may not receive a “1 or 0” rating (Limited or No Competence) on more than 30% of the total practice behaviors.
 - **MSW Students:** In order to pass, may not receive a “1 or 0” rating (Limited or No Competence) on more than 20% of the total practice behaviors.
 - *NOTE: If a student receives a “1 or 0” rating (Limited or No Competence) under **any** practice behaviors, or 5 or more N/A ratings, the student, agency supervisor, and FIL will meet at the beginning of spring semester as part of the Internship Support Process to develop an improvement plan for the remainder of the Internship (through spring semester).*
- **Spring Semester:**
 - **BSSW Students:** In order to pass, may not receive a “2, 1, or 0” rating (Emerging, Limited, or No Competence) on more than 30% of the total practice behaviors.
 - **MSW Students:** In order to pass, may not receive a “2, 1, or 0” rating (Emerging, Limited, or No Competence) on more than 20% of the total practice behaviors.
 - *NOTE: The N/A rating (Not Yet Demonstrated) is not available during spring semester because all students must be evaluated on all competencies on the final evaluation.*

c) Process for Completing Internship Evaluations

Evaluations for students in both programs (BSSW and MSW) will be completed through the Sonia database. Detailed instructions on how to complete this evaluation can be found in the Sonia Guide (linked on the OSWI website for both [students](#) and [agencies](#)) and will also be shared by the Office of Social Work Internships when the evaluation process begins.

The process for completing the Internship Evaluation is in and of itself a critical professional development skill and is designed to mirror what might be expected at annual performance review. The Evaluation process includes the student, the agency, and the FIL, and is designed according to the following steps:

- **Step 1: Student Self-Reflection**
 - The student first completes a self-evaluation, including ratings for each competency and all required comment sections, through the Sonia internship database. This is an opportunity for the student to reflect on their own growth, learning, and professional development throughout the semester.

- At this time students will enter their accrued number of hours so far, and if they have not yet met the minimum hours required, will outline a plan for completion and estimated completion date.
- The Evaluation will show in the Sonia database as completed at step 1 of 4.
- **Step 2: Agency Feedback and Evaluation Conference**
 - Agency supervisor(s) will then complete their portion of the evaluation of student via the Sonia internship database. Comments are required under each competency to ensure that the evaluation is a meaningful learning opportunity. The Evaluation should be submitted prior to the Evaluation Conference so that students have an opportunity to receive it and prepare in advance for the Evaluation Conference.
 - ***NOTE:*** *In cases where a student has multiple supervisors (e.g. TS and SWS), they must be in contact to coordinate the completion of the Evaluation. Both TS and SWS are expected to review and contribute to the student's Evaluation as they each hold different knowledge and awareness of the student's performance; the Task Supervisor has the most direct observation of the student's practice, while the SWS holds awareness of professional social work ethics and competencies. It is highly recommended that whoever has the most direct observation of the student's performance be the person to complete the numerical ratings of each practice behavior.*
 - ***When the off-site SWS is provided by the agency:*** *TS and SWS may schedule a time to complete the Evaluation together. Or they may complete it separately; in this scenario, whoever enters first would click "Save Draft" until the other has had an opportunity to enter theirs as well. Once both supervisors have entered their ratings and feedback, and they agree that the Evaluation is complete, then either one may click "Submit."*
 - ***When the off-site SWS role is provided by the University (FIL):*** *the FIL will enter their comments as "Save Draft" prior to the Evaluation Conference so that they are visible to the student and agency. At this time the FIL will also review the ratings submitted by the TS; if in disagreement with the rating, the FIL should contact the TS prior to the Evaluation Conference to discuss. The TS will be the one to click "Submit", but they should ensure the FIL has entered their comments prior to doing so.*
 - Next, a one-hour Evaluation Conference is held. This typically, but not always, happens during regularly scheduled supervision. The Evaluation Conference is intended as an opportunity for dialogue about how the internship is going, and to give the student feedback about their performance. Students and agency supervisor(s) should both explain their ratings and provide examples to support their selections. The student and agency supervisor(s) ratings and comments do not need to be in agreement.
 - ***NOTE:*** *In cases where a student has multiple supervisors (e.g. TS and SWS), it is most ideal for student learning if they all attend the Evaluation Conference if possible.*
 - ***When the off-site SWS is provided by the agency:*** *TS and SWS should schedule and facilitate the Evaluation Conference together.*

- *When the off-site SWS role is provided by the University (FIL): the FIL may join the Evaluation Conference, although the FIL is only required to attend the Evaluation Conference in situations where the agency has concerns about the student's performance and/or when constructive and/or critical feedback needs to be given to the student.*
 - The Evaluation will show in the Sonia database as completed at step 2 of 4.
- **Step 3: Student Acknowledgement**
 - After the Evaluation Conference, students will verify that they have received the feedback provided. The student may enter any additional comments or feedback into the dialogue box. They may share insights gained during the Evaluation Conference or a response to any of the areas where there is disagreement or discrepancy between the student and supervisor ratings. The student will also confirm that the Evaluation Conference has been completed and enter the date that it was held.
 - At this time, the student will enter their total accrued hours for the semester and verify that they have met the minimum hours required. The Student Acknowledgement should not be submitted until after all hours are complete for the semester.
 - Then student will then click "Student Final Submit". The Evaluation will show in the Sonia database as completed at step 3 of 4.
- **Step 4: Final Submit**
 - Lastly, the Evaluation is given a final review by the FIL. FIL will verify that the Evaluation meets criteria for passing and verify that student hours have been completed. FIL should not click submit until both items have been verified.
 - Once the FIL clicks "Submit," the Evaluation will show in the Sonia database as completed at step 4 of 4.

III. INTERNSHIP SEARCH PROCESS

A. Recruitment of New Internship Agencies (aka New Agency Affiliation)

The Office of Social Work Internships is responsible for recruiting and developing relationships with community agencies for them to become Internship sites. Internships should provide students with new educational experiences and allow students to meet the nine social work competencies at their level of practice (generalist or specialized). Each potential new agency is carefully screened through the New Agency Affiliation process.

Community agencies interested in having a student intern at their agency are welcome to contact the Department of Social Work's Office of Social Work Internships. This Office of Social Work Internships will then initiate the New Agency Affiliation process, which involves several steps:

- **NEW AGENCY AFFILIATION MEETING:**

A New Agency Affiliation meeting is scheduled between the agency and a representative from the Office of Social Work Internships. The purpose of the meeting is for the Office of Social Work Internships to learn more about the organization and to discuss social work internship expectations and accreditation requirements.

- **DATABASE SETUP:**

Each new agency needs to be set up in the Sonia internship database. Students cannot search for the new agency or be allocated to the new agency until this step is complete.

- **AFFILIATION AGREEMENT:**

This final documentation formalizes the partnership between the new agency and the Department of Social Work's Office of Social Work Internships. See section below ("Affiliation Agreements") for more information.

NOTE: *In order to maintain the integrity of the internship search process, and to preserve ongoing relationships with internship agencies, students **are not** allowed to contact new agencies to propose internships or inquire about availability without prior approval by the Office of Social Work Internships. If a student would like to suggest an agency be added to the database of affiliated internships, the first step is to contact the Office of Social Work Internships and provide contact information for the agency. When suggesting a new agency, please know that this process takes time, and there is never a guarantee that a given agency will be approved as an internship.*

B. Affiliation Agreement

All agencies must submit a signed Affiliation Agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties in order to become an internship agency. The document must be signed by appropriate agency leadership as well as the MSU Denver Department of Social Work Chair and Director of Social Work Internships. Agencies can review the Affiliation Agreement by contacting the Office of Social Work Internships at swkinternships@msudenver.edu. Any requested revisions to the MSU Denver Department of Social Work Affiliation Agreement must be reviewed by MSU Denver Contracts and Business Services and executed by the MSU Denver Dean (or designated representative) from the College of Provost.

There are two different Affiliation Agreement forms. If the student is in an unpaid internship, the regular Affiliation Agreement must be signed. If the student receives any kind of payment (a one-time stipend, employment-based internship) then the Employment-based internship form must be completed and signed by the agency and by MSU Denver Chair and the Director of Social Work Internships. This has implications for which agency will cover the student's liability insurance and worker's compensation, if needed (see Worker's Compensation section later in the document.)

C. Criteria for New Agency Affiliation

Agencies will be selected to be an affiliated internship agency for the MSU-Denver MSW and/or BSSW programs based on the following criteria:

- The agency will identify one Internship Coordinator. This is the individual at the agency responsible for establishing and maintaining the partnership between the University and the Agency. This is typically the person listed in the Sonia database as the primary contact. This is also the person who the student initially contacts to apply for an internship. This may or may not be the same person as the Social Work Supervisor.
- The agency provides 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)
- The agency is able to provide learning assignments and practice opportunities for students that allow them to achieve mastery of the CSWE nine (9) social work competencies appropriate to the student’s educational level (BSSW or MSW). Please see [Section II. A. 1.](#) above for more information on the 9 competencies. The agency must outline proposed internship activities in alignment with the learning expectations for each student level (e.g. BSSW, MSW Foundation, MSW Concentration).
- The agency is responsible for identifying a qualified Social Work Supervisor (and/or on-site Task Supervisor and off-site Social Work Supervisor) in collaboration with the MSU-Denver Office of Social Work Internships) to provide a meaningful and consistent learning experience to the student.
- The agency is responsible for ensuring that any/all Social Work Supervisors and/or Task Supervisor agree to all responsibilities set forth by the Affiliation Agreement with the University. Social Work Supervisors and Task Supervisors provided by the agency must understand and support the mission, values, and goals of the University’s educational program.
- The agency signs an Affiliation Agreement and agrees to the responsibilities set forth in the agreement.
- The agency has a commitment to active participation as a partner in professional education for social work. They demonstrate an acceptance the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and the basic mission, values, and goals of the school’s educational program. The agency aligns with social work core values around social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion.
- The agency 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.
- Some additional criteria include the following guidelines:
 - Individual private practice settings are generally not available as internship settings. Group private practice settings are screened to ensure that they pay particular attention to the needs of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and/or living in poverty and that they provide learning opportunities to engage in social justice work in an agency-based setting. See [Section IV. B. 20](#) for more detailed information about criteria for group private practices.

- An agency should have a demonstrated track record of being an established, stable organization. In general, that means that an agency should have at least two paid staff and should have been open for at least one year prior to taking on social work internships.

D. Student Internship Search Process

1. Students will attend an Internship Information Session and learn about the internship requirements and search process. Students will then be directed to the Sonia Internship Database to access the *Internship Application* in the early spring before the academic year in which their internship will take place.
2. Students submit their completed *Internship Application* through the Sonia Internship Database to Office of Social Work Internships by date listed on application. The application and attached resume will assist the Office of Social Work Internships in assessing each student's interests, goals, and background.
3. Students have the option to research internship opportunities available through our partner agencies using the Sonia database. They may preference up to five (5) agencies to discuss with their assigned Internship Navigator from the Office of Social Work Internships. Alternately, students may request to complete an Employment-Based Internship if they are already working at an agency doing social work focused tasks that may meet learning requirements. Please see [Section IV. B. 4. "EB Internships"](#) below.
4. Students meet with their assigned Internship Navigator (Office of Social Work Internships staff) to discuss their internship application and potential placement sites.
5. Students will receive options and contact information for up to five (5) potential internship agencies from the Office of Social Work Internships via the Sonia Internship Database.
6. Students contact each assigned agency to submit application materials and request internship interviews. These interviews are to be treated as professional job interviews. It is a chance for the student to learn more about the agency, potential learning activities, and Social Work Internships to determine if this will be a suitable agency for them to be placed at. Similarly, it is an opportunity for the agency and Social Work Supervisor to determine if the student will be a match for their agency.
7. Agency will determine whether to offer or decline the internship to the student. The student will decide to accept or decline the agency's internship offer.
8. Once a mutually determined Internship is agreed upon, agencies will send students a notice of acceptance, "an internship offer", through the Sonia Internship Database and then, with the agency, students will complete the Internship Confirmation Form through Sonia.

All students must have secured an approved internship with the Office of Social Work Supervisor prior to the end of the first week of the fall semester and/or the university's 100% refund deadline for dropping courses.

Once a student has accepted an internship, they are expected to follow through with that plan. Students may not accept an offer and then go back on their commitment to the agency. This is unprofessional and reflects poorly on the individual as a student and a representative of our social work program.

INTERNSHIP SEARCH CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Adherence to Search Process:** Under no circumstances are students allowed to interview with an agency without prior permission from the Office of Social Work Internships. The goal of the internship is to learn and practice social work knowledge, values, and skills in order to become a more effective social work practitioner. While we will work hard to ensure that each student's placement is in line with their future career interests, the emphasis remains on the educational value of an internship site.
- **New Agencies:** In order to suggest a new agency to add to the list of approved agency partners, please contact the Office of Social Work Internships. Providing the office with contact information may help expedite the process. The screening and approval process takes time and there are no guarantees as to an agency being approved. Please see [Section III. A. "New Agency Affiliation Process"](#) above for more information.
- **Split Internships:** Internships are designed to be completed in one agency where all competencies are evaluated holistically within that one agency. Students must complete their internship in the same agency for the entire academic year (30 weeks). Students are not allowed to split hours between multiple simultaneous internships at different agencies. It is not acceptable to design an individualized self-led internship where learning activities are pieced together from various agencies. Please contact your Internship Navigator if you have a unique circumstance and would like to request approval for an exception, but please know that such an exception would be very rare.
- **Research/Graduate/Teaching Assistant Positions:** Social work internships should be completed in a community-based agency practice setting. It is therefore **uncommon** for a Research Assistant (RA) position with a single University faculty member to be approved as a social work internship. A student may request approval on a case-by-case basis, especially if their long-term career goals include macro social work and/or the pursuit of a doctoral degree, given that internship opportunities to develop advanced research skills can be somewhat limited. In order for an RA internship to be considered, the RA position would need to offer a variety of learning activities to meet all required CSWE competencies and would need to include some kind of community-based practice (e.g. focus groups, interviews, presentations, etc.) in addition to other more independent research activities (e.g. data analysis, interview transcription, etc.). Ideally, the Faculty member who would serve as the Social Work Supervisor would be conducting research in connection with a community-based agency. A Teaching Assistant (TA) or Graduate Assistant (GA) positions are typically not allowed. If an RA position is approved, it should not include TA or GA activities such as administrative support for the faculty (e.g. grading papers, updating course shells, etc.). Please contact your Internship Navigator if you would like to discuss this further.

IV. OFFICE of SOCIAL WORK INTERNSHIPS POLICIES

E. Department of Social Work Policies

Policies are subject to change at the departmental level. For the most up-to-date policies, students should refer to the Department of Social Work website:

[BSSW Program Policies](#)

[MSW Program Policies](#)

The BSSW and MSW student handbooks can be found on these websites linked above. The student handbooks also contain relevant policies, including the attendance policies, grievance policy, Grade Appeal Policy, APA Policy, Late Assignment Policy, Online Course Policy, and Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism Policy.

F. General Internship Education Policies

1. Time in the Internship (Early Starts, Extensions, & Early Completions)

As stated in [Section II. C. 1. “Hours Requirements”](#), the expected duration of the internship is 30 weeks from the start of the fall semester (mid-August) until the end of the spring semester (mid-May). Students are expected to complete their internship in the same agency for the entire academic year (30 weeks). Students are not typically allowed to switch internships mid-year.

While students may work extended hours over winter break, they may not terminate from their internships early. This may mean students will accrue more hours than the required hours.

NOTE: *The required hours are a minimum number. Any student who wishes to terminate from internship before the official end date must gain approval in advance from the Social Work Supervisor, Faculty Internship Liaison, and the Office of Social Work Internships. Students are expected to be in their internships from the beginning of the fall semester through the end of the spring semester unless an alternative plan is negotiated. An alternative plan must be discussed between the internship agency, student, and the Office of Social Work Internships. Final approval of an alternative plan must be obtained from the Office of Social Work Internships prior to the student starting at their internship.*

Some internships require students to perform some of their internship hours serving in an on-call capacity. Students should discuss how to count the hours completed on-call with their FIL and their agency supervisor (Social Work Supervisor/Task Supervisor). All on-call hours where students are actively engaged in internship work will count towards the required minimum number of hours. For hours spent on-call but without active work, students should follow agency guidance on counting the hours.

a) Early Starts in Internships

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.

b) Agency Requests for Internship Extensions

In rare exceptions, if an agency requests that a student continue at the agency beyond the end of the semester and the successful completion of the internship, this request should be made clearly and agreed upon before the start of the internship. If a student agrees to this arrangement, they should do their best to honor the agreement. In these cases, the internship is considered complete, and the agency needs to either have the student move to a volunteer or paid position. Students will not be covered by the MSU Denver's liability insurance and Worker's Compensation coverage after a final grade has been assigned.

c) Student Requests for Early Completion

Students are expected to be in their internships from the beginning of the fall semester through the end of the spring semester. Students are not permitted to complete their internships early, even if they exceed the minimum number of required hours for the semester/year.

In rare exceptions, if a student needs to make a request to complete their internship early due to a unique circumstance, this may be considered on a case-by-case basis using the Internship Support Process to consult with the FIL and, if needed, the Office of Social Work Internships. The early completion request must be approved by the FIL and a written plan for submission of the final evaluation should be provided to the Office of Social Work Internships.

Students are advised to consult with the Access Center (SEE BELOW) if the early completion request is related to an accommodation. See [Section IV. B. 18. "Accommodations"](#) below.

2. School Breaks and Holidays

The Department of Social Work does not require students to be in placement during regularly scheduled school holidays and breaks. However, school holidays may differ from agency holidays. In this case, students must arrange their internship schedule in coordination with their agency supervisor. Some agencies may require students to continue internship hours during breaks and holidays to ensure continuity of care. Any agency requirements for the student to be in their internship during school breaks and/or holidays should be discussed during the internship interview.

Note that per federal policy, students can only accrue hours over winter break if they have an Incomplete in Fall Semester (to count towards Fall Semester hours) or if they are registered for Spring Semester (to count towards Spring Semester hours).

3. Paid and/or Stipend Internship

Agencies are allowed and even encouraged to provide compensation in the form of payment and/or stipend. For students in an internship with any kind of payment (e.g. one-time stipend or hourly wage) this should be indicated on the Confirmation Form. In this situation, the agency Director and MSU Chair and the Director of Social Work Internships will need to sign off on the Employment-Based Affiliation Agreement since this means

that the agency will cover the student's Liability Insurance and Worker's Compensation. Agencies need to adhere to all requirements of local, state and federal Labor Laws.

Paid social work internships have become more common and are supported by OSWI as an important equity tool. While OSWI encourages agencies to offer paid internships whenever possible, OSWI has no ability to require that internships are paid nor to enforce an agency's commitment to pay. Agencies are advised to provide clear payment protocol during the offer process, including the schedule of payments and amount of compensation that can be expected by the intern. If an internship has made either a verbal or written commitment to financially compensate an intern, OSWI expects them to honor that commitment. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in the agency being referred to OSWI's Agency Review process and/or the discontinuation of our agency partnership.

4. Employment-Based (EB) Internships

An Employment-Based (EB) internship is defined as an internship in an agency in which the student is also employed. To ensure an EB internship will meet CSWE accreditation requirements, there is a specialized process for students to request approval for an EB internship. EB internships are **not guaranteed** and cannot be required of an employer. Both the Office of Social Work Supervisor and the employer must agree to an EB internship in order for it to be approved. The following EB internship guidelines have been developed:

- a. Students must clearly outline a proposed plan to meet all [nine social work competencies](#). In EB internships, student assignments and employee tasks **may** qualify as internship hours when directly linked to the nine social work competencies and level of practice (generalist or specialized). Students are **not** required to differentiate between employment and internship activities **as long as** their employment duties meet the nine social work competencies. If not all nine competencies can be met through the student's existing employment duties, the student and agency will work together to develop a plan to meet the remaining competencies. Depending on the student's professional development goals and/or agency requirements, the student may request to add/create new projects to support their learning, or instead the internship role may be entirely different and separate from the employment role. Students will communicate with their employer in advance to determine the structure of their EB internship. EB internships are most commonly structured in one of the three following ways:
 - OPTION 1: The student's job meets all 9 social work competencies. Therefore, the student's job counts as their internship AS IS.
 - OPTION 2: The student's job meets some but not all of the 9 social work competencies. New learning activities (tasks/responsibilities/projects) will be identified to meet the remaining competencies. Therefore, the student's job PLUS the added new learning activities count as their internship.
 - OPTION 3: The student's internship is within the same organization but is entirely SEPARATE and different their job. The internship meets all 9 social work competencies.
- b. Students must have an appropriate internship for their student level. BSSW and MSW Foundation year students' internships should provide a generalist experience, including exposure to the three levels of work (micro, mezzo, and macro practice). MSW concentration level internships should reflect advanced/specialized social work practice.
- c. Supervision for the student's EB internship must be provided by a Social Work Supervisor who meets the requirements (a professional with a BSW or MSW from an accredited social work program [depending on

student level] that has at least two [2] years of post-graduate work experience). Preferably, the Social Work Supervisor will have been employed by the student's agency for at least one year.

- i. It is recommended but not required that the Social Work Supervisor be a different person than the student's current employment supervisor. In cases where the Social Work Supervisor is the same person as the student's employment supervisor, then weekly Social Work Supervision must be distinct from and in addition to employment supervision.
 - ii. In situations where there is no employee qualified to serve as the student's Social Work Supervisor, an off-site Social Work Supervisor (SWS) may be requested. For EB internships utilizing an off-site SWS, an on-site Task Supervisor is required. The Task Supervisor must be an agency employee and have direct observation of the student. The Task Supervisor role may be (and often is) fulfilled by the student's employment supervisor.
- d. Students will be in their internship for 30 weeks from the start of the fall semester (mid-August) until the end of the spring semester (mid-May). Students in EB internships are expected to remain in their internship for the full duration of the academic year, even if they accrue more hours than the minimum requirement. NOTE: The required hours are a minimum number and may be exceeded. Please refer to [Section II. C. 1. "Hours Requirements"](#) and [Section IV. B. 1. "Time in the Internship"](#) for additional guidance. EB interns are expected to participate in their Internship Experience course for the full duration of each semester. They will follow the same timeline, assignments, and due dates as all other students enrolled in the Internship Experience course.
- e. The employer must have an existing agency affiliation with the Office of Social Work Internships and assume all the responsibilities required of any other Internship Agency. If the employer is not already an existing partner, the New Agency Affiliation process will be initiated.
- f. The agency must attempt to provide a positive learning environment in which the student is free to explore new personal growth as well as new professional learning.

Students are responsible for becoming informed about these EB internship requirements and approval process. The approval process is designed to ensure that an EB internship meets all the guidelines listed above. The process to request approval for an EB internship includes the following steps:

- a. Communicate the request to complete an Employment-Based Internship to their assigned Internship Navigator. Complete all required EB internship forms and checks in the Sonia database. An EB Internship Request Form must be reviewed and approved by the student's Internship Navigator. The EB Internship Request Form is completed collaboratively between the agency and student in order to demonstrate that the student has developed a plan, communicated the plan with the agency, and obtained the consent and support of all parties.
- b. It is highly recommended that a student is employed at least 3 months prior to the start of the EB internship. This allows sufficient time for the EB approval process to be completed with full consideration.

Students must consider carefully the option of completing their internship in their place of employment as the Internship Experience is not about simply completing hours but is intended to be a meaningful educational experience. Because an EB internship creates a dual role (the student is both an employee and an intern),

navigating an EB internship can present unique opportunities and unique challenges. In order for EB internships to be set up for success, it is important that all parties (student, employer, Social Work Supervisor, FIL) have a shared understanding of the roles, boundaries, and expectations.

NOTE: *Students who are completing an approved employment-based internship should follow their employment agency's Worker's Compensation policies.*

NOTE: *In some cases, changes to employment could also impact the student's internship and vice versa. In situations where a student becomes unemployed in an organization where internship education has co-occurred with employment, students will go through the Internship Support Process (See [Section IV. B. 16. "Internship Support Process"](#)) to determine next steps. Students in an EB internship who receive disciplinary action related to their employment and/or whose employment is terminated should contact their FIL within 24 hours.*

5. Employment Offers During Academic Year

Students are occasionally offered employment at their internship agency during the course of their internship. If the job offer is **more than 6 weeks prior** to the completion of the internship, the student must request approval from the Office of Social Work Internships before accepting the offer and/or beginning the new job. This is to ensure that the internship will meet Employment-Based (EB) internship requirements and guidelines, as indicated in Employment-Based internships section of this Manual.

- a. The student will request that their existing internship convert to an Employment-Based (EB) internship.
- b. The student should utilize the Internship Support Process beginning with notifying their FIL.
- c. The student and agency must sign and submit an EB Internship Mid-Year Hire request form (using the template provided) in order to demonstrate that the new EB internship will meet all Employment-Based (EB) internship requirements and guidelines, as indicated in Employment-Based Internships section of this Manual. Required signatures include: the student's Employment Supervisor, assigned Social Work Supervisor, and FIL.
- d. It is highly advised that the FIL consult with the student and agency to ensure the internship is in good standing and that roles/expectations are clear prior to the EB internship conversion being approved.

In rare occasions, students might be offered a new employment opportunity from a different agency than their internship. In general, students are not permitted to switch internships mid-year. In the event that a student is requesting an exception to this policy, these requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and require careful consideration. Prior to making a decision or accepting an offer, the student is expected to utilize the Internship Support Process to seek counsel from their FIL and the Office of Social Work Internships.

1. As stated in [Section IV. B. I. "Time in Internship"](#) students are expected to complete their Internship Experience in one agency and are not allowed to switch agencies mid-year without prior approval.
2. Any student requesting a mid-year internship change for any reason will be asked to go through the Internship Support Process. This includes requests for a mid-year internship switch into a new EB internship which would require terminating their current internship.
3. If a student terminates from their internship without first notifying both their FIL and the Office of Social Work Internships, there is no guarantee that a student will be allowed to continue in the Internship Education course, and they may be referred to a full Performance Review (see: Internship Support Process).

6. Distance Internships

There may be times when a student, due to necessity or desire, completes their internship at an agency outside of the Denver-metro area or in another state. The Office of Social Work Internships will work with students to identify distance internships and to ensure that all Department of Social Work Internships policies as well as CSWE standards can be met in the distance internship. In these circumstances, students are responsible for making all travel, lodging, food, and other living arrangements, including any associated expenses. Curriculum expectations for internships outside of the Denver-metro area or in other states are the same for those within the Denver-metro area. Students, Agency Supervisors, and Faculty Internship Liaisons may be required to utilize technology (i.e. Skype or Zoom) as a part of the distance internship in order to conduct internship site visits, evaluations, supervision, or other internship requirements. See [Section IV. B. 9. “Confidentiality and the Use of Technology”](#) for more information.

7. Longitudinal (aka Same Agency) Internships

Sometimes students request to remain in the same agency between the BSSW or MSW foundation year internship and the MSW concentration year internship and this needs to be vetted using the concentration year Same Agency Internship Request which can be obtained through the student’s Sonia account managed by the Office of Social Work Internships. Through this form, students and agencies can outline how staying at their current internship is beneficial to the student’s learning and that certain criteria are met:

1. The student has the opportunity to pursue an educational experience which is new to the student and substantially different from previous internship or employment duties.
2. It is highly recommended that the student's supervisor (Social Work Supervisor, Task Supervisor, and/or off-site Social Work Supervisor) during the Concentration year internship is different from their BSSW or Foundation year supervisor.

This request is reviewed by the Office of Social Work Internships and students will be informed of the decision regarding the request.

8. Dual Roles in Internship Settings

It is important to be aware of possible dual roles within agencies which could impact the learning opportunities or environment. Some examples of dual relationships and special considerations includes when a student wants to intern in an agency where there is a relative working in a position of power, when a student is the executive director of an agency, when a student is in a supervisory role over another student, or when the intern is currently or previously has been a client of the agency. In general, these kinds of dual relationships will not be approved for a social work internship and students requesting these kinds of internships will need to work with their Internship Navigator to find other internship opportunities.

- An intern should not be placed in an internship where the leadership of the agency is a direct relative.
- When a student is requesting an Employment-based internship when they are in a position of leadership at their job such as the Executive Director of their agency, this is considered a dual role. In these situations, it is important for their supervisors to be able to give students constructive

feedback regarding their internship and this would not be possible if the student in the Executive Director role is supervised for internship by someone they lead. Therefore, these requests are not approved.

- When a student is requesting an internship in which a current student in the Social Work Department is going to be their supervisor, this would generally not be approved since it is a dual relationship. However, on a case-by-case basis, a student request regarding supervision by another student can be reviewed by the Director of Social Work Internships, in consultation with the Internship Navigator and the agency.
- When a student is requesting an internship in an agency where they are currently a client or patient, this would generally not be approved since it is a dual relationship. If a student is requesting an internship in an agency where they have previously been a client or patient, this can reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Social Work Internships, in consultation with the Internship Navigator and the agency, to determine what boundaries need to be put in place to protect the student's confidentiality and to promote a positive Internship Experience.

9. Safety in Internship Education

The safety of our students, staff, faculty, agency partners and community members is of utmost importance. The Department of Social Work recommends the following safety guidelines for students in their internship. When a student initially joins an agency for the internship, the student and agency staff should review the agency's established safety policies and procedures for handling specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as client's threat of harm to self or others, medical emergencies, evacuation or shelter-in-place plans, etc.

The Office of Social Work Internships utilizes a trauma-informed framework to prioritize student safety. We understand the importance of student safety as it impacts one's capacity for learning and growth. It is important to note that perception of safety may be a bit subjective and differ between individuals.

The safety and communications plan for telehealth and hybrid work should both align with the agencies stated policies as well as a student's identified preferences for enhancing safety. Safety and capacity to tolerate distress may change over the course of the academic year. Agency supervisors are encouraged to check-in a few times each semester to assess safety and support needs.

The following practice suggestions are intended to assist the student in developing a plan to address safety concerns:

- a. Agencies must have an accessible, available, and skilled support person during every student intern shift. While ideally this is the Task Supervisor or Social Work Supervisor, it is understood that there may be circumstances that require an alternative shift supervisor. It is the agency's responsibility to make clear who is the intern's contact during their shift(s) if other than the Task Supervisor or Social Work Supervisor.
- b. If the student has any safety concerns, such as but not limited to meeting with a client whom the student does not feel safe with, it is important to discuss the situation fully with agency staff and develop a plan for addressing safety concerns. The student may utilize the Internship Support Process to bring their safety concerns to their FIL for further support if needed.

- c. It is strongly advised that an intern is never on-site without paid agency staff.
- d. Telehealth and hybrid work cultures may present with unique safety planning needs for staff and interns. It is understood that the supervisor may be available virtually or remotely during a student's internship shift.
- e. Agencies should have safety policies in place for home visits and after-hours meetings:
 - Students should notify appropriate agency staff when community visits (i.e. home visits) are planned, and provide information about who will be visited, the address and the expected length of time for the visit.
 - Take a cell phone, if available, on home visits, especially when there are indications of a possible domestic dispute, physical violence, vicious animals, or if the client lives in an isolated or high crime area.
- f. Students should always be alert to their surroundings and of any potential factors that could put them at risk of harm.
- g. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings or left in cars, and agencies with in-person on-site internships should provide a secure place for interns to store their personal belongings such as wallet, ID, and/or cell phone.
- h. Students are expected to adhere to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and University guidelines, along with any federal, state or local recommendations and/or restrictions, regarding communicable diseases such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - If an internship is on-site, it is the expectation that the organization is observing CDC guidelines regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and, if PPE is required, that it also be provided if possible.
- i. Seek out training opportunities to identify typical responses to emergency or hostile situations and plan of action related to these types of situations.
- j. Avoid sharing personal contact information with clients or discuss with agency staff and instructors prior to distributing the number. Students are always expected to adhere to agency confidentiality and safety policies.

10. Confidentiality and the Use of Technology

In many cases, students may complete portions of their internship work remotely using technology. All students must comply with relevant laws, regulations, ethical standards, and organizational policies to ensure the confidentiality of clients. Students and agencies are encouraged to utilize the standards listed in the Technology in Social Work Practice guide to inform their use of technology. [Here is a link to NASW's technology standards.](#)

While each agency should develop their own protocols around the use of technology and confidentiality, the following best practices should be followed by all students:

- Use of personal phone numbers or other electronic communication during internship is strongly discouraged. However, if use of personal phone numbers is necessary and/or required by the agency, take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate boundaries. For example, consider temporarily hiding your caller ID when making outgoing calls, through your phone's settings.
- Do not share client identifying information (including name or photograph) with anyone outside of the agency without a written release of information by the client or guardian (if client is a minor). When sharing case presentations in class with FILs, use de-identified information only.
- Position web cameras so that others can only see your face- all visible confidential data should be removed from camera view.
- Conduct all sensitive conversations in a private space. Be mindful of the potential for family members or bystanders to overhear any portion of your discussions.

11. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Students should follow university and BSSW/MSW Policies such as:

- [University Policy on Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [BSSW Program Policy on Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [MSW Program Policy on Artificial Intelligence](#)

In internships, students are required to follow Social Work Department policy related to AI and to learn about and adhere to their internship agency's Artificial Intelligence Policies. In Internship Experience courses, students must adhere to the policies outlined by their Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL) in the course syllabus.

While use of AI norms are rapidly evolving, some basic ethical principles in are:

1. Do not input client identifying information into public AI tools.
2. Assessment and intervention regarding clients should come from the intern with oversight from their supervisor. AI can be a supportive tool for assessment procedures and case conceptualization but should not lead to final clinical decisions.
3. Informed consent is necessary if AI is used in direct client services such as making referrals, generalizing session notes, or creating a resource list.

12. Social Media

The use of social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, texting, SnapChat, etc.) can be helpful in building connections with colleagues and maintaining relationships with friends and family. As such, the boundary between personal and professional matters has become increasingly complex. It is important for students and agency staff to continually assess how the use of social media impacts ethical duties.

While social media tools may present innovative ways to service clients, the features that enable these benefits also present potentially serious challenges in a professional setting and within the context of internships. Privacy, confidentiality, and establishing professional boundaries can be hindered when the necessary precautions to protect the student/employee and clients have not been taken. Students should familiarize themselves with and follow the [NASW Technology Standards](#).

As a part of a student's orientation to the agency, agency staff should review any applicable policies on social media use. In the event an agency does not have its own formal policy, the agency should set, and

communicate to student interns, clear guidelines and expectations for social media use at the internship. Students should refrain from using personal social media during time spent at internship agencies.

Students should be mindful of any social media posts related to agency content and should refrain from posting negative content about their agency while they are currently engaged in their internship. Concerns should be brought to the student's FILs and are encouraged to be addressed using the Internship Support Process.

13. Liability Insurance

Liability insurance starts the day that the student arrives at the internship provided the internship is for credit. That coverage would remain in effect for the life of the credit seeking internship. Coverage stops the day that grades are due at the end of the semester unless the student is holding an incomplete and is still finishing up an internship.

Liability Insurance for Unpaid Internships:

Students who are completing their unpaid internship in an approved internship agency site, and who are formally enrolled in an Internship Experience course, are covered by MSU Denver's liability insurance through the State of Colorado. This includes students who are completing an Employment-Based internship where the job and internship are completely separate, and the internship is unpaid. For coverage to be in effect, the student must be:

1. enrolled in MSU Denver;
2. registered for, and currently taking, the Internship Experience course;
3. placed in an approved unpaid internship agency;
4. and practicing in accordance with agency policy and within the guidelines of the Department of Social Work as set forth in this internship manual.

MSU Denver shall provide students who participate in the program with indemnity against liability for their covered acts and omissions through the Colorado Risk Management Division, pursuant to section 24-30-1501 CRS, et seq. and in accordance with the provisions of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, section 24-10-101 CRS, et seq.

MSU Denver is an entity covered by the State of Colorado's self-insurance program pursuant to Part 101 to 120, Article 10 of Title 24, Colorado Revised Statutes. Liability for claims for injuries to persons or property arising out of acts or omissions of MSU Denver and certain covered individuals is controlled and limited by the Colorado Constitution, the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, (C.R.S. §§ 24-10-101 et seq.), and the Risk Management Act (§§ 24-30-1501 et seq.).

Liability Insurance for Employment-Based and Paid Internships:

For students who are paid any kind of compensation (including a one-time stipend, hourly wage, or Employment-Based where the student's job hours are used for their internship hours), the agency will cover the student's liability insurance.

14. Worker's Compensation (Internship-Related Injury or Illness)

All students who are enrolled in a Internship Experience course and are completing their internship in an approved agency must sign a MSU Denver Worker's Compensation Acknowledgement which is embedded in

the Internship Confirmation Form. This will indicate whether the student is in an unpaid or paid/Employment-Based internship and will have implications for who covers Worker's Compensation.

Unpaid Internships: This acknowledgement allows them to be covered under MSU Denver's Worker's Compensation Policy for internship-related injury or illness while in the internship. Except in the case of a serious or life-threatening emergency, students in unpaid and/or non-Employment-Based internships must be treated by one of MSU Denver's designated providers. Students must also notify MSU Denver Human Resources Office and the Director of Social Work Internships within 48 hours of injury.

Specific information regarding worker's compensation procedures and designated providers is available on the MSU Denver HR website found at [MSU Denver Human Resources](#). Specific information regarding worker's compensation procedures and designated providers is available on the MSU Denver HR website found at [MSU Denver Human Resources](#).

Please note that students in an out of state unpaid internship will be covered for Worker's Compensation by MSU Denver. They are not restricted to the in-state list of MSU-Denver providers, however please consult with the Director of Social Work Internships and [MSU Denver Human Resources](#).

Paid Internships: Students who are completing an approved paid internship (including a one-time stipend, hourly wage, or Employment-Based where the student's job hours are used for their internship hours) will be covered by the agency for Worker's Compensation and should follow their employment agency's Worker's Compensation policies. Students must also notify MSU Denver Human Resources Office and the Director of Social Work Internships within 48 hours of injury.

Please note that students in a paid out-of-state internship will be covered for Worker's Compensation by the agency. They should consult with their agency for a list of approved providers.

15. Use of Personal Vehicle

All students are required to find their own transportation to and from their internship. Students without cars will be placed in an agency accessible by public transportation (no more than a one-hour commute time from MSU Denver or their home, as appropriate). Many 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 MSU Denver's insurance, nor will the university or Department of Social Work reimburse students for the use of their vehicles. All issues regarding transportation, including the transportation of clients, must be discussed between the student and the Agency Supervisor prior to beginning placement. The Department will not be responsible for any decisions regarding transportation in the internship.

16. Use of Agency Property

Agencies may distribute equipment (e.g. cell phone, laptop, badge, etc.) to be utilized by the student during the internship. Students should treat agency property with respect. Agencies should make clear their expectations about whether agency property may be taken off-site for use by the student at home. Students must follow the

agency's policies about usage of agency property (e.g. some agencies may prohibit use of agency property for non-agency personal usage).

Students are expected to return agency property in accordance with agency policy, on or prior to their final day of internship. It is the agency's responsibility to communicate their expectations about how and when property should be returned. It is the student's responsibility to understand and adhere to the agency's expectations about how and when they should return the agency's property. If a student does not return an agency's property in accordance with the agency's policy, they may be subject to the agency's policy regarding missing property.

17. Attire

While expectations vary from agency to agency, students must follow the same dress code that is required of agency employees. Agency policies including, but not limited to dress, tattoos, and/or body piercings, must be adhered to. During the student's orientation to the agency, agency staff should review any pertinent policies or guidelines related to dress code.

18. Internship Disruption Policy

Students are required to complete two (2) consecutive semesters of internship at the same agency under the same Agency Social Work Supervisor. This provides students with an in-depth experience in which they can move toward more independent social work functioning over the course of the entire academic year.

However, there may be unique circumstances in which students cannot remain at the same agency. Any potential disruptions in internship require consultation with both the Faculty Internship Liaison and the Office of Social Work Supervisor.

NOTE: This section does not apply to challenges or concerns; in those cases, students must utilize the Internship Support Process. If a student encounters an issue with their internship that they are not able to resolve on their own, they must seek the support of the Faculty Internship Liaison to assist in addressing any concerns. A student who resigns from an internship without prior approval of the Office of Social Work Internships may receive a failing grade in the Internship Experience Course and a full Performance Review may be initiated. Students are not to initiate a search for a replacement internship without the approval of the Office of Social Work Internships. Any replacement internship search must be approved and initiated by the Office of Social Work Internships. (SEE: [Section IV.B.16 "Internship Support Process"](#) for more information).

a) Same Year Changes in Internship

1. In situations where disruptions in internship occur due to no fault of their own or due to circumstances beyond the student's control, efforts will be made to allow the student to secure a replacement internship in a different agency during the current academic year. Such disruptions include:
 - The student has moved to a new location that is more than a 30-mile drive from the internship agency, and switching to a hybrid or fully remote internship is not possible.
 - The agency or program closes down or relocates to a location that substantially increases a student's commute (30 minutes or more) and remote/telehealth work is not an option.
 - Agency is experiencing a period of reorganization or instability that prevents them from providing the student with a quality learning experience.

- Agency supervisor leaves the agency or is no longer able to provide supervision in keeping with University standards, and the agency is unable to identify other qualified staff who are able to serve in the supervisory role.
 - The student has experienced a family/personal crisis which makes working with the current client population or in the current setting unmanageable.
2. The student must work with their Faculty Internship Liaison to determine an appropriate plan for termination with their previous placement. Students may be required to complete additional requirements in order to facilitate student growth and learning.
 3. Any situation in which a student switches placements mid-year may require the student to complete an additional 30 hours in their new Internship for orientation purposes.
 4. If at all possible, when a mid-year internship search is unavoidable, it is highly recommended for the change of placement to happen between the end of Fall semester and the beginning of Spring semester.
 5. If a mid-year replacement internship cannot be secured, the student may need to withdraw from the Internship Experience course for the remainder of the academic year and wait until the following academic year to continue in the internship. In this case the Office of Social Work Internships may ask the student to complete additional requirements to ensure learning goals are achieved.

b) Discontinuing Internship Mid-Year and Returning the Following Year

There are some circumstances in which a student may decide to withdraw temporarily from their Social Work degree program or switch from a full-time to part-time program status due to medical or life-cycle issues.

If the student must discontinue the Internship Experience course before the end of the fall semester, and there are no performance concerns indicating the need for the Internship Support Process, then the student is eligible to resume the entire Internship Experience course sequence the following year.

If the student must discontinue the Internship Experience course after successfully completing the fall semester of the internship AND all required fall semester courses were also successfully completed, the student may return the following academic year to resume the Internship Experience course in the spring semester only.

When the student returns to resume the Internship Experience course, they may be required to complete additional hours in their one-semester spring-only internship to ensure adequate time for orientation to the agency and to resume the role of a student learner in the Internship Experience.

Any student who allows more than one academic year to pass between completion of the two consecutive Internship Experience courses will be required to complete the full two semester Internship Experience course sequence over again.

c) Removal from Internship due to Academic Performance in Other Coursework

Students who successfully complete the fall semester of their course may still be removed from the Internship Experience Course sequence due to:

- failing to complete co-requisite or pre-requisite coursework;
- falling out of line with required course sequencing; or

- failing to maintain overall required academic standing.

Students who are removed from internship for these reasons may resume the Internship Experience course sequence in the spring semester the following academic year if:

- the fall semester Internship Experience course was completed successfully AND
- students have met all other academic requirements (course requirements and GPA).

Students whose internships are disrupted for this reason may be required to complete additional hours in their agency when they resume in order allow additional time to demonstrate that classroom learning can be fully integrated with their Internship Experience.

d) MSU Denver Plan for Interruption of Internship Due to National or Local Events

MSU Denver has developed a plan to address temporary disruption to students' social work Internships due to national or local events such as communicable diseases, natural disasters, and/or civil unrest.

If students are advised by their agencies and agency supervisors, and/or government to not attend their internships, or if safety concerns warrant a temporary disruption in internships, students should immediately consult with BOTH their MSU Denver Faculty Internship Liaison and their Supervisor(s) (Task Supervisor and/or Social Work Supervisor).

In efforts to fulfill the intern's hour requirements and educational competencies during temporary internship stoppages, the Office of Social Work Internships can provide alternative internship learning activities that can be completed off-site, asynchronously, and/or remotely.

This policy is meant to address short term internship disruptions, with a maximum of 30 days. If the internship stoppage continues beyond a 30-day period, a review will be conducted by the MSU Denver Office of Social Work Internships to determine the most appropriate response to support students in completing their internship requirements.

In many cases, students may be able to continue portions of internship work remotely using technology. See [Section IV. B. 9. "Confidentiality and the Use of Technology"](#) for more information.

e) Alternate Learning Activities

A student's FIL and/or Agency Supervisor(s) may assign student's alternative internship learning activities that the student may complete in the event of a temporary internship disruption. FILs are encouraged to consult with the Office of Social Work Internships for a comprehensive list of alternative internships learning activities that build upon current student learning.

19. Internship Support Process

The Office of Social Work Internships is committed to ensuring that students intern in quality learning environments. However, there may be times in which unexpected challenges arise. The Internship Support Process is designed to ensure these issues are addressed in a timely and effective manner. The Internship Support Process is considered an extension of the Internship Experience course curriculum, in that learning how to address conflict and solve problems collaboratively are essential social work skills. The intention is to create space for reflection and growth, so that the experience can become a learning opportunity.

NOTE: The following four levels of the Internship Support Process are specifically intended to address issues related to internship. For all other issues not related to internship, such as classroom or academic issues, the Social Work Department has a separate process to provide support and/or address disciplinary issues. In both the Internship Support Processes as well as the Department's separate process, students are expected to demonstrate the Social Work Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior (found on the [BSSW Program website](#) or the [MSW Program website](#)) as well as the University's [Codes of Conduct](#).

The Internship Support Process may be used to share feedback, clarify expectations, and make agreements about a variety of issues related to the internship, including but not limited to:

- Attendance or schedule issues (e.g. timesheet documentation, missing hours, lateness)
- Communication skills and styles (verbal and written, across multiple methods including email and text)
- Onboarding and ongoing training needs
- Consistency or quality of supervision meetings
- Accommodation requests related to disability or pregnancy
- Learning activities to meet the nine social work competencies
- Differentiation of learning activities by level (generalist v. specialist)
- Career interests and long-term professional development goals of student
- Amount of workload (too much or too little)
- Timely submission of forms and documentation (e.g., Learning Agreement, Evaluation)
- Alignment and coordination of multiple parties (e.g., OSSWS) or dual roles (e.g. EB)
- Organizational culture (e.g. staff turnover impacting work environment)
- Safety concerns (including vicarious trauma)
- Issues related to diversity, inclusion, equity, and/or belonging

The Internship Support Process is designed to be reparative and restorative, with the goal of preserving internships if at all possible. It is most likely to be successful when utilized proactively and constructively. Any potential concerns should be addressed openly and directly as early as possible, and the final evaluation at the end of the semester should never be the first-time feedback is given or received.

The Internship Support Process may be initiated by the student, agency (including Social Work Supervisor[s], Task Supervisor[s] and/or off-site Social Work Supervisor), Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL), or Office of Social Work Internships.

The four levels of the Internship Support Process are outlined below. It should be noted that depending on the nature of the concern, a referral to higher levels of support is possible; if concern should be warranted, lower levels of the Internship Support Process may be waived at any point.

1. First Level of Internship Support: Student and Agency Problem Solving

At Level One, issues are openly discussed between student and agency (and OSSWS if applicable). Level One discussions are often held during regularly scheduled supervision meetings. If needed, a dedicated Level One Internship Support conference may be scheduled. The goal is to name and define the issue(s), clarify expectations, and identify strategies for improvement.

The student, agency, or OSSWS may choose to consult with the FIL at any time during Level One. The FIL must be notified by whoever initiated the Level One immediately after any Level One discussions so they can monitor and support as needed.

Level One interventions may be repeated as often as needed. In most cases, issues can be resolved at Level One. If the concern persists, then the issue may be elevated to the second level of support.

2. *Second Level of Internship Support: Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL) Intervention*

At Level Two, the FIL is brought in for additional support. The FIL will consult individually with both the student and with the agency supervisor(s) to gain an understanding of their perspectives and learn what Level One strategies have already been tried. Then the FIL will facilitate a discussion between all parties (student, agency, and/or OSSWS if applicable).

A Level Two discussion may happen during a regularly scheduled site visit. If needed, a dedicated Level 2 Internship Support conference may be scheduled.

The goal of Level Two is to gain a deeper understanding of the issues from each others' perspectives and to develop a plan for success in the internship. The FIL's role is to explore additional support and steps that might be required for repair and/or improvement of the situation.

The FIL may need to reinforce course expectations, CSWE nine social work competencies, and/or Internship Manual policy. The outcome of Level Two may include modification to the Learning Agreement, such as additional tasks that need to be accomplished. It may also include a written summary of agreements.

The FIL may choose to consult with the Office of Social Work Internships at any time during Level Two. The FIL must inform the Office of Social Work Internships about any Level Two interventions and provide a brief written summary which will be documented in the student file.

Level Two interventions may be repeated as needed. If the concerns continue to persist and/or escalate, then the issue may be elevated to the third level of support.

3. *Third Level of Internship Support: Re-evaluation and/or Termination Conference*

At Level Three, the Office of Social Work Internships becomes involved in order to provide additional support to the student, agency, and the FIL. An issue may advance to Level Three if/when Level One and Level Two strategies have been previously attempted and thoroughly exhausted.

Level Three involves a conference that is coordinated and facilitated by the Assistant Director of Social Work Internships (ADSWI).

Prior to any Level Three conference, the first step is to gather information. The ADSWI will seek to understand the issue(s) from multiple perspectives and learn what Level One and Two strategies have already been tried. With respect to student privacy, the Office of Social Work Internships may request individual consultations and/or written documentation from anyone with relevant knowledge of the specific situation as well as the student's overall performance academically and professionally in all areas of the program, including any but not limited to any of the following people:

- Student
- Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL)
- Agency Supervisor(s) and/or Off-Site Social Work Supervisor
- Agency Internship Coordinator

- Clinical Internship Faculty
- Academic and/or Faculty Advisor
- Director of Social Work Internships
- BSSW and/or MSW Program Director

Because of the number of people involved in Level Three, patience is requested from all parties, in order to allow for thoughtful reflection and due diligence on the part of the Office of Social Work Internships. The ADSWI may recommend that the internship be placed on hold during the information gathering phase and/or prior to the Level Three conference.

During information gathering, the ADSWI may determine that additional Level One or Two strategies should be attempted prior to proceeding with Level Three; if so, the ADSWI will support the FIL with a plan to implement Level One or Two strategies.

After information gathering is concluded, the ADSWI will determine who to invite to the Level Three conference. The makeup of each Level Three conference may vary depending on the situation and the type of Level Three conference.

The ADSWI will prepare a written summary of findings and provide to conference attendees 24 hours in advance of the conference.

Generally, there are two different types of Level Three conferences:

a. ***Re-evaluation Conference***

A Re-evaluation Conference is held after Level One or Two interventions have been unsuccessful thus far in resolving the existing challenges. Recognizing that an internship termination can be highly disruptive to a student's educational progress, the goal is to determine if there is any possible way for the internship to be retained. Often these are complex and sensitive situations that need careful consideration and further counsel. It can be helpful for the Office of Social Work Internships to bring new perspective and clarification of policy in order to brainstorm creative or innovative solutions.

b. ***Termination Conference***

A Termination Conference is held after a student's internship has been terminated for any reason and under any circumstance, regardless of who has initiated the termination (agency or student). A Termination Conference may or may not be held after a Re-Evaluation Conference. A Termination Conference is always held in the event that an internship is terminated unexpectedly prior to the utilization of Level 1 or 2 interventions. The goal of a Termination Conference is to determine the student's next steps regarding their Internship Experience course, given that successful completion of an internship is required to pass.

Level Three outcomes are determined jointly by a committee that consists of the ADSWI, the Clinical Internship Faculty (depending on whether the student is BSSW, MSW-Foundation, or MSW-Concentration) and the Director of Social Work Internships. Any Level Three outcomes must be jointly approved by all three members of this committee. The Level Three committee may need to convene separately after a Level Three conference to make a final decision. The panel is intended to minimize bias and emphasize equity and fairness across the program. Any policy exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In order for policy exceptions to be approved, sufficient rationale must be provided. Degree exceptions require approval from the Chair of the Social Work Department.

There are numerous possible Level Three outcomes:

- **CONTINUE INTERNSHIP & INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE COURSE**

This outcome is always prioritized if possible. The student and agency agree to continue working together to make the internship successful. The student will stay enrolled in their current Internship Experience course. A written Performance Plan will be developed including any agreed upon modifications to the internship, specific goals to be met, dates for goals to be met, dates for progress meetings. A timetable for successful completion and indicators of success will be outlined.

▪ OR

- **TERMINATE INTERNSHIP & INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE COURSE**

The student will discontinue both their internship and the Internship Experience course; they are eligible to re-enroll in the Internship Experience course when it is again offered the following academic year. This outcome is standard protocol, per Internship Manual policy, after an internship has been terminated. (As stated in [Section II. C. 1. "Hours Requirements"](#), students are not allowed to switch internships mid-year.) This outcome is especially enforced when the internship has been terminated by the agency with documented cause and/or when the internship has been self-terminated by the student without adherence to the Internship Support Process. If the termination occurs prior to the final withdrawal deadline, the student is advised to withdraw from their Internship Experience course. If the termination occurs after the final withdrawal deadline, the student will be assigned an F grade at the end of the semester. A written Performance Plan may be developed with supplemental learning activities required for the student to demonstrate readiness prior to re-enrolling the following year.

▪ OR

- **REPLACE INTERNSHIP & CONTINUE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE COURSE**

This outcome is an exception to standard protocol, approved only in rare circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. As part of a Level Three Re-Evaluation or Termination Conference, a student may petition for approval for a replacement internship, in order to allow them to stay enrolled in their current Internship Experience course. A replacement internship is never guaranteed. A replacement internship requires special approval by the Office of Social Work Internships as it is considered an exception to Internship Manual policy.

This outcome is typically only considered in cases where: a) the student has already engaged fully in lower levels of the Internship Support Process; b) the student's termination is not related to ethical violations or code of conduct; and c) this is the student's first incident with no prior documented concerns. This outcome may also be considered in circumstances where the agency has been unable to sufficiently address a student's safety concerns, and/or if the agency has terminated the student without following Internship Support Process, thereby preventing the student from having an opportunity to demonstrate improvement.

In the rare event that a replacement internship is approved, students need to be advised of the following:

- A specific Performance Plan may be created which would be a part of the replacement internship. The Performance Plan is designed by the Level 3 Committee with the

student's learning in mind. The Performance Plan may include additional assignments in order to pass the Internship Experience course and/or prior to beginning the replacement internship search. Additional hours may be assigned beyond the minimum requirement (some hours from the first internship may be honored). Adjusted timeframe and due dates for class may be needed. Alternative arrangements for the Learning Agreement (outside of Sonia) may be needed.

- Replacement internship searches happen outside of the typical timeframe. The Office of Social Work Internships will use a customized approach to find an existing agency partner with capacity to support an off-cycle intern. Students approved for a replacement internship will be assigned an Internship Navigator to support them who will meet with them regularly until a replacement internship is secured.
- Students are not allowed to begin contacting agencies or searching for a replacement internship on their own without prior approval from the Office of Social Work Internships.
- Replacement internship searches can take time (approximately 4 weeks at minimum). Students can likely expect a replacement internship search to delay their academic progress. An Incomplete will likely be assigned at the end of the semester.
- If at all possible, depending on the circumstances, it is highly recommended that replacement internships begin after the end of Fall semester when Spring semester starts.
- *Note that Internship Experience 1 is a pre-requisite for Field 2, and Field 3 is a pre-requisite for Field 4. Pre-requisites must be completed before students may proceed on to the next class. Therefore, the deadline to resolve an Incomplete in Field 1 or 3 (fall semester) before continuing in Field 2 or 4 (spring semester) is the Friday before the spring semester begins. If approved for a spring semester replacement internship, the deadline to secure the replacement internship is the Friday before the 100% refund deadline. Any policy exceptions made through the Internship Support Process (e.g. waiving completion of fall pre-requisite prior to continuing in spring semester) would require approval of the Department Chair.*

▪ OR

- **REFERRAL TO LEVEL FOUR PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The student must be terminated from the internship and their current Internship Experience course. They will be referred for a full Student Performance Review through the Social Work Department.

NOTE: A student may choose to resign from their internship and withdraw from the Internship Experience course at any point prior to the final drop deadline (approximately at the end of Week 10 out of 15 each semester). Students should consult university policy regarding withdrawal deadlines. See [Section IV.B.15.2. "Discontinuing Internship Mid-Year and Returning the Following Year"](#) for more information.

NOTE: Any time a student or agency is considering a termination for any reason, it is required that they contact their FIL and/or the Office of Social Work Supervisor prior to proceeding. A student who self-terminates their internship without following the Internship Support Process will be referred to a Level Three Termination Conference and is at risk of failing their Internship Experience course. An agency who terminates a student without following the Internship Support Process will be referred to the Agency Review process and is at risk of discontinuing their partnership with the Office of Social Work Supervisor. (See [Section IV.B.17 "Agency Review"](#) for more information.)

After a Level 3 conference, a written letter will be provided to indicate the outcome and/or decision of the Level 3 committee. The Level Three letter will include the student's Performance Plan if applicable. Completion of the Performance Plan (if applicable) will be monitored by OSWI. A copy of the final Level Three letter will be sent to the student, FIL, the Level Three committee members, and the student's Academic Advisor. A copy will also be saved in the student file.

4. Fourth Level of Internship Support: Full Student Performance Review

At Level Four, a full Performance Review is held by the Program Directors of the Social Work Department. A student will be referred to Level Four if the Level Three Performance Plan has not been completed successfully. A student may also be referred to Level Four if they exhibit concerns at Level Three before, during, or after the conference. Depending on the nature and/or severity of the concerns, and/or if there has previously been a documented pattern of concerns, lower levels of the Internship Support Process may be waived and instead the student may be referred directly to a Level Four Performance Review. The procedure for a Level Four Performance Review is outlined in the [Social Work Department's website](#) and/or can be requested by contacting the Program Director or your Academic Advisor.

Internship Support Issues Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Office of Social Work Internships is committed to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice (see full statement in the official Internship Manual). The Internship Support Process can be used to provide support for navigating Internship issues related to diversity, equity, belonging, and/or inclusion, such as microaggressions or dynamics of structural oppression. An intersectional framework to understanding identity and power dynamics will be applied throughout this process, with special sensitivity if/when those involved identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQI+, and/or other marginalized identities. In these circumstances the following additional steps may be taken:

- The Office of Social Work Internships or student may consult with the Social Work Department's Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This consultation may occur at any/all of the four levels of the Internship Support Process.
- The student may invite an advocate (such as a BIPOC or LGBTQI+ faculty member or an Access Center representative) as an additional support person throughout the process.

Metropolitan State University of Denver is committed to maintaining environments that are welcoming, safe, and accessible, where all students, staff, faculty, visitors, guests, vendors, contractors, and others can study, work, and/or recreate free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, consistent with University policies, and relevant State and Federal Law. Allegations of discrimination should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 303-615-0036, Student Services Building, 306. Complaints about student conduct and concerns about student welfare also may be submitted to the Dean of Students. Allegations of sexual or interpersonal violence shall not be subject to informal resolution. Alternatively, you may call the Dean of Students Office at office at 303-615-0220 or file a report online by visiting <https://www.msudenver.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/>.

Internship Support Process Documentation

The outcomes of the Internship Support Process, including any Performance Plan, if applicable, shall be documented by sending an email to the student's university email address and to a representative from the Office

of Social Work Internships (Faculty Internship Liaison, Assistant Director and/or, Director) and any other relevant individuals who need to be informed. All written documentation will be saved in the student file.

Confidentiality

All procedures related to the performance review must be carried out in a manner which assures protection of the student's rights in line with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Information related to the Internship Support Process is to remain confidential and should be shared only with those persons involved with the student in an educational capacity.

20. Agency Review

Whenever a concern related to an internship is identified, the Internship Support Process should be engaged as proactively as possible. As a summary of the [Internship Support Process](#): the student may attempt to resolve issues on their own (Level 1), the Faculty Internship Liaison (FIL) may work with the student and agency to resolve issues (Level 2), or the Office of Social Work Internships may provide further support (Level 3).

However, occasionally serious, or systemic challenges may arise related to an agency or a supervisor that need to be addressed directly by the Office of Social Work Internships. In such situations, the Internship Support Process may have already been initiated but was not successful in reaching resolution through Levels 1-3. Or in rare circumstances, the Internship Support Process may not be initiated at all, if the issues are deemed to be beyond the scope of what is considered appropriate to address through the Internship Support Process. These may be sensitive situations involving higher-level concerns, multiple reports from multiple parties, and/or repeated concerns year after year. In these sensitive situations, the Office of Social Work Internships will initiate the Agency Review process to provide additional intervention directly with the agency. An agency may also be placed under review if, through the Internship Support Process, it is determined that a student needs to be removed from an agency for any reason.

Concerns related to an agency may be raised by students, FILs, agency supervisors (including off-site SWS if applicable), or the Office of Social Work Internships. Concerns may become known in a variety of ways: as a result of an FIL's observation of the student and the internship; from a student's report of their experience while at the agency; through feedback from other Social Work Department faculty or staff involved with the agency; or based on information shared in year-end surveys (completed by both students and FILs).

Perceived concerns may include but are not limited to:

- Inadequate onboarding/training or supervision of interns,
- Inadequate or inappropriate learning activities, tasks, or responsibilities,
- Safety concerns,
- Ethical concerns,
- Lack of adherence to requested ADA accommodations,
- Identity-based micro-aggressions or other issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI),
- Whistleblower reports or anything else seriously impacting the learning environment.

Once a concern has been raised, the Office of Social Work Internships will take steps to address and resolve as appropriate. The goal of the Agency Review process is always to assess accurately and work collaboratively in a fashion that maintains the quality of the professional relationship between the agency and MSU Denver, if possible. The steps of the Agency Review process are outlined in detail below.

Steps of the Agency Review Process

The Office of Social Work Internships will take the following steps to resolve concerns with agencies under review:

1. The Office of Social Work Internships Leadership Team (consisting of the Director of Undergraduate and Graduate Social Work Internships and Associate and Assistant Directors of Social Work Internships) monitors and assesses agency issues in the following ways:
 - a. The Social Work Internships Team meets regularly to review new or ongoing agency-related concerns. A designated lead will be assigned to each agency to ensure consistency and follow-up.
 - b. The designated lead from the Social Work Internships Team will gather information to accurately and thoroughly assess the nature of the concern and what would be needed for resolution. The designated lead will begin by gathering information about what, if any, attempts have been already made to address the concerns through the Internship Support Process or other interventions. The designated lead may consult with and/or request written statements from any/all of the following:
 - i. The FILs or OSSWSs assigned to the agency
 - ii. Other members of the Office of Social Work Internships (including Clinical Internship Faculty)
 - iii. Any directly involved student(s), if appropriate
 - iv. The Social Work Department DEI Coordinator
 - v. The Social Work Department Chair and/or Directors
 - vi. Other campus resources (CARE Team, ACCESS Center, Office of Equal Opportunity, etc.)
 - c. The designated lead will use a comprehensive approach to assess whether this is a new concern or if there has been a pattern of concerns with previous attempts to resolve. Assessment will be done through an intersectional approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Power dynamics and differentials will be taken into consideration. Assessment of student safety will always be a priority.
 - d. The agency of concern will be flagged as “Under Review” until the following steps have been completed.
2. After thoroughly assessing the situation, and in consultation with the other members of the Internship Leadership team, the designated lead will identify a plan with any necessary next steps that may include any of the following steps or outcomes:
 - a. The Internship Support Process may be re-initiated. The FIL may be asked to coordinate a Level 2 meeting between the student and agency, or a Level 3 conference may be facilitated with all parties in order to address and repair any harm done and identify agreements and solutions to continue the student’s internship.
 - b. An Agency Review meeting may be held between members of the Internship Leadership Team and appropriate individuals at the agency (without students present) to discuss the concerns and to work towards a solution. This meeting may or may not include the FIL, Clinical Internship Faculty, or other Social Work Department members with specific knowledge of the agency and/or issues.
 - c. A written plan for resolution may be developed, mutually agreed upon, and implemented by the agency and the Office of Social Work Internships. Specifics of this plan will be documented in the agency’s file and in the “Notes” section of the Sonia internship database. Resolution plans

could potentially include any of the following and/or any other adjustments that would respond to the presenting concerns:

- i. Adjusting the supervisory plan to meet the needs of students and the requirements of CSWE and/or MSU Denver
 - ii. Adjusting the tasks and responsibilities students will be given so as to be able to meet the expected competencies
 - iii. Reducing the number of students at an agency
 - iv. Adjusting the level (BSSW, Foundation, Concentration) of students placed at an agency
 - v. Requiring agency supervisors to participate in further orientation and/or training
- d. A note may be added in the Sonia database to provide nuanced guidance for potential intern applicants interested in the agency in the future.
- e. The agency partnership may be temporarily paused while “under review.” The agency would remain active in the Sonia Internship Database, but the status would be adjusted to not be visible to students searching for future internships. This would allow further time to resolve the concern prior to another student accepting an internship there.
- f. If the concern is serious enough to warrant an urgent response, in situations related to safety concerns or significant compromises to the learning goals or learning environment, any current student internship(s) may be temporarily paused or immediately terminated.
- g. In the event that a concern is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the Office of Social Work Internships policy, CSWE accreditation requirements, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics, and said concerns would seriously impact the quality of the learning or safety for a student, it may be decided to “close” an agency for future students unless or until a satisfactory solution can be agreed upon. The agency would be fully inactivated in the Sonia Internship Database. It will also be assessed whether further actions are necessary.
3. If/when a satisfactory resolution has been reached:
- a. The agency will be made “Active” for other students to explore as an internship site.
 - b. Documentation will include both a brief note in Sonia as well as a detailed written summary of the issue(s), strategies used to address the issue(s), and the outcome.
 - c. Ongoing evaluation will occur to assess the efficacy of the plan. This will occur in consultation with the agency, the FIL, and the Office of Social Work Internships Leadership Team.

21. Accommodations in Internships (including Pregnancy)

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 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. OSWI is committed to supporting students in identifying an internship setting that is supportive of student learning.

Information pertaining to a student's disability is treated in a confidential manner. Students have a right to privacy in disability matters. It is up to the student to choose to disclose information regarding their disability and/or accommodations to their Agency Supervisor(s). Students will need to provide an Accommodation Notification Letter obtained from the Access Center to their faculty and/or agency supervisor, as appropriate, to activate their accommodations.

Any student who is requesting accommodations without an Accommodation Letter or requesting additional accommodations not included in their Accommodation Letter will be referred to the Access Center.

a. Pregnancy and Other Temporary Medical Conditions

Although temporary medical conditions are not covered as disabilities under the ADA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the institution recognizes that such injuries/illnesses can occur during the school year that may adversely affect a student's ability to fully participate in classes. Examples of temporary medical conditions may include, but are not limited to: broken limbs, hand injuries, or short-term impairments following surgery or medical treatments. Students seeking temporary accommodations should be referred to the Access Center for consultation.

Students seeking accommodations because of medically related complications due to pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery should contact the Access Center office to discuss their needs. Please review the [Guidelines Concerning Pregnant Students](#) for more details.

22. Group Private Practice and Clinical Psychotherapy Internships

The Office of Social Work Internships includes group private practice settings in our array of community partnerships. Below are the guidelines for group private practices to be considered appropriate partners. These include requirements for orientation, training, and billing procedures.

Guidelines for Eligibility: In order to meet the goals of the Office of Social Work Internships and our CSWE accreditation requirements, group/private practices must meet the following criteria.

- Demonstrate a commitment to serving vulnerable, oppressed, marginalized, and/or diverse populations by one or more of the following criteria:

- Accepting varied payment options such as Medicaid, sliding-scales, and/or low or no-cost; and/or
- Providing specialized identity-based services to a specific marginalized population;
- NOTE: Exceptions to these criteria may be considered on a case-by-case basis for agencies which offer training in a highly specialized therapeutic treatment modality.
- Articulate a defined mission, and agency policies and procedures, that align with social work values.
- Offer opportunities for learning activities across multiple system levels (micro/mezzo/macro), such as one or more of the following:
 - Engage with multiple external points of contact within the larger social service delivery system (e.g. schools, courts, human services, etc.)
 - Offer case management and resource referral services if requested by client
 - Engage in mental health policy advocacy
 - Utilize a structured intake process which screens for client acuity. Scaffold the assignment of clients to build confidence towards higher acuity clients. Discuss how it is determined what kinds of clients are appropriate for interns.
 - Utilize a process to assess the interns' prior experience and readiness to work with clients, which takes into account the student's self-perception of readiness.
- Employ at least two practitioners, one of whom is a social worker with at least 2 years of post-degree work experience from an accredited university. 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 (ex- individual, couple, family, group).
- 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 over the course of the internship.

Expectations for Orientation, Training, Supervision, and Learning Activities in Group/Private Practice Settings: This section reviews the orientation and training expectations for interns in these settings.

- Provide a clear orientation and onboarding process for all interns.
- Provide a safety protocol which includes who they are to contact in a client crisis and a back-up person at the agency if that person is not available. Utilization of the Safety protocol (see page 31 of the Internship Manual) is required.
 - If the student is working in a face-to-face capacity, a supervisor or designated back-up clinician needs to be present while the student is on site.
 - If the student is working remotely, they must have access to an on-call supervisor and/or a back-up person at the agency to provide support during the student's internship hours. (See [section IV.B.8. "Safety in Internship Education"](#) for more information.)
- Review and provide access to the agency's policy and procedure manual to students.
- Provide a template for the student's written disclosure statement which includes their status as an intern.
- In all cases, student learning must be oriented around the nine competencies as established by the Council on Social Work Education. Agencies must outline a plan which supports learning in all of these domains and includes learning activities outside of direct client-facing (or billable) hours. Agencies must differentiate between generalist and specialist practice as follows:
 - BSSW Students and MSW Foundation Year (Generalist Practice) students will have learning activities such as: case management; agency referrals; community outreach; skill building, facilitation of psychoeducational workshops; co-facilitation of group therapy; discharge planning; billing; program development; advocacy and/or policy work.

- Concentration Year Students (Specialized Practice) can have all of the same learning activities as the Generalist students, with increased autonomy, and also can independently engage in advanced practice activities such as: therapy (individual, couples, family, and group) and training in advanced clinical skills.
- Agency should have a clearly defined plan for assessing and evaluating the practice of any Concentration Year students providing psychotherapy. Interns should have an opportunity to shadow clinicians at the agency and to have their sessions observed by supervisors to scaffold learning and work towards more autonomous practice with clients with oversight by their supervisor(s). Observation of at least one session a month is recommended.
- Agencies are expected to set a reasonable limit on MSW-Concentration interns' client caseload, in order to prioritize time for learning, integration, and skill development.
 - There must be a process to determine the number of clients assigned and their level of acuity, which is based on the student's level of training and experience throughout the semester/year. There should be ongoing caseload reviews and check-ins with students throughout the year which inform client assignments. Agencies need to be willing to adjust the amount of clients based on student and FIL feedback.
 - The total number of clients may vary depending on the frequency of sessions (e.g. weekly versus every other week), as well as student skill level and prior experience.
 - For each hour of direct client-facing time, it is recommended that the intern have approximately an hour for preparation, notes, and debrief/reflection.
 - A general guideline for an MSW-Concentration student completing 16-17 hours per week would be an upper limit of approximately 8 hours of direct client-facing (billable) hours per week.
- Agencies are expected to provide high quality supervision to interns providing psychotherapy to clients.
 - In settings where group supervision is utilized, there also needs to be sufficient opportunities for supervisors to connect individually with interns.
 - As part of supervision, agencies are expected to support interns in developing self-care and containment strategies to prevent burnout, mitigate exposure to vicarious trauma, and support the development of a sustainable long-term clinical practice.
 - If an intern is engaging in work that is considered to be clinical and therefore regulated by the [Department of Regulatory Agencies](#), then it is required that their supervisor be licensed.
 - Therefore, it is considered best practice for the agency to provide a Social Work Supervisor who is licensed as an LCSW. It is not recommended that interns providing therapy in clinical or group private practice settings utilize an off-site Social Work Supervisor (SWS).

Billing for Interns: This section outlines policies related to the advertising of student intern services and billing practices.

- The NASW Code of Ethics section 3.02 (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>) requires that students identify themselves as student interns to the agency constituents and clients. This should be clearly indicated on the agency website and/or any provider profiles as well as included in client disclosure statements.
- It is strongly recommended that agencies who bill for interns provide some compensation to those interns for the hours they are engaging in billable, direct client services.

NOTE: In order to ensure alignment with social work ethics and values, MSU-Denver Office of Social Work Internships commits to monitoring best practice around billing for interns and to updating our agency partners if our Internship Manual policies change in the future. Agencies are encouraged to consider social work ethics and values in regards to providing mental health services to low-income clients, especially if the client is being charged or billed full price for a pre-licensed social work intern who is still at a relatively early stage of their clinical learning and professional development.