



# Field Instructor Training

Faculty of Social Work



**The University of Regina is located on Treaty 4 Territory and Homeland of the Métis, with a presence in Treaty 6 Territory. We strive to understand and honour the truth and history of this land, and build respectful relationships with the ancestors of this place and the land.**

# Today we'll talk about...



## SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

### The BSW Program

- Roles
- Course format
- Dates and hours
- Evaluation
- FAQs

### Supervision & Learning Styles

- Relationship between learning and teaching styles
- What can supervision “look” like?

### Integrating Theory + Practice

- Why?
- How?



# Field Education in the URegina BSW Program

# The URegina BSW Program



## **nationally accredited**

- program standards are set by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE)
- in terms of practicum, this includes total hours in field, roles and responsibilities, and training/ ongoing learning for Field Instructors



## **our BSW is a generalist degree**

- students are trained with foundational knowledge, skills, and abilities for entry-level SW practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities
- electives allow students to focus their learning on particular populations, practice settings, and/or social issues



## **field education is a critical part of the program**

- all students must engage in field-based learning
- students come to practicum with a variety of experiences, backgrounds, knowledge, and skills
- the focus of field education is integrating theory and practice - this is different than a work placement

# Field Placements in the URegina BSW Program

1

## Practicum I (SW 348 - AKA “mini practicum”)

Students must have completed SW 100 (Foundations of SW), SW 346 (SW Practice 1), SW 390 (Communication Skills), SW 202 (Critical Issues/ Critical Thought), SW 460 (Ethics) **AND** have a minimum of 70% GPA in their SW Courses

6 credit hours (equivalent to 2 courses) - students may take other courses alongside

2

## Practicum II (SW 448 - AKA “major practicum”)

Students must have completed all required SW courses **AND** have a minimum 70% GPA in the SW portion of their BSW program

Option to complete full-time (one term) or part-time (two terms, beginning in Fall)

15 credit hours (equivalent to full-time, 5-course load if taken over 1 term) - students must apply for permission to take other courses alongside

# Field Education Roles

## Practicum Placement Coordinators

- Matt Jacobs (based in Regina) and Tyra Smith (based in Saskatoon) work with BSW students and community agencies to set up field placements
- your primary contact **up to the point of a student beginning their practicum** (or for planning your next field placement)

## Field Liaison

- a student's instructor for practicum courses, and your **primary contact during practicum** (name & contact info provided by student)
- participates in ongoing learning support and evaluation of the practicum (placement and course)
- sets out and reviews course assignments and assigns the final grade
- facilitates field seminars

# Field Education Roles

## Field Instructor

- the agency supervisor, and **student's primary contact for practicum- and agency-specific matters**
- responsible for student learning and support, supervision, and ongoing evaluation of the practicum placement

## Field Coordinator

- Emily Alston O'Connor, who oversees the BSW field program
- often also a Field Liaison (so might play a dual role with your student's practicum)
- supports and assists with Field Instructor training and development, ethical consultations, and conflict resolution
- reviews and approves final evaluations

# The Practicum Placement Process

- **The practicum placement process is facilitated by Placement Coordinators, Matt Jacobs and Tyra Smith**
  - this process is a months-long, complex 'dance' where the focus is on balancing needs (and wants) of students and needs community agencies - within the context of BSW program requirements
  - Matt and Tyra work with students to get a sense of the interests, needs, experiences of each student to ensure the best match possible
- **Students are not always placed in their first, or even second, choice of placements**
  - student factors considered include learning goals, previous experience, learning style, availability/scheduling, location, and others (drivers license, accessibility needs, etc.)
  - community agency factors considered include availability of placement, learning opportunities, supervision style, scheduling, accessibility, specific requirements (access to vehicle, availability to travel, etc.)
  - interviews between agencies and students are encouraged to ensure placement is a good fit

**Students are not allowed to approach agencies for placements, and agencies should not approach students.**

# SW 348 (Practicum I)



## 230 placement hours

- about 2 days per week, or equivalent (15.5 hours/wk) - details are up to student and Field Instructor
- no midterm break
- stat holidays don't count as hours
- no formal sick time



## 19.25 seminar hours

- seminar engagement (not just attendance) is required - students are not to be scheduled at their placements during seminar time
- assignments must be completed on time and to an adequate standard



## pass/fail final grade

- competencies on evaluation form link back to learning goals
- final grade assigned by Field Liaison, based on a combination of field evaluation and field seminar performance (including assignments)

# SW 448 (Practicum II)



## 470 placement hours

- FT is about 4 days per week, or equivalent (**30** hours/wk); PT is about 2 days or 15 hours/wk - details are up to student and Field Instructor
- no midterm break
- stat holidays don't count as hours
- no formal sick time



## 19.25 seminar hours

- seminar engagement (not just attendance) is required - students are not to be scheduled at their placements during seminar time
- assignments must be completed on time and to an adequate standard



## pass/fail final grade

- competencies on evaluation form link back to learning goals
- final grade assigned by Field Liaison, based on a combination of field evaluation and field seminar performance (including assignments)
- **NOTE:** P/F criteria on Practicum II field evaluation form (pg. 1-2)

# Core BSW Field Competencies

understanding  
field  
placement's  
service delivery  
system and  
demonstrating  
an ability to work  
within it

navigating  
formal and  
informal  
community  
resources

working with  
various client  
systems  
(individual,  
family, group,  
community)

use of  
social work  
principles,  
values,  
ethics and  
knowledge

engaging in  
supervision  
and ability  
to work with  
colleagues

managing  
assigned  
workload,  
and doing  
accurate  
and efficient  
written work

demonstrating an  
open, reflective  
approach  
to learning,  
self-awareness,  
and professional  
development

# Practicum Evaluation Process

## ① midterm evaluation

- student will take lead in scheduling and confirming midterm meeting (45 - 60 minutes by Zoom/phone) with Field Liaison and Field Instructor around the midway point of their placement
- Field Instructor will complete midterm evaluation form and review with student **prior to** midterm meeting
- student will email completed evaluation form to Field Liaison **prior to** midterm meeting

## ② final evaluation

- Field Instructor will complete final evaluation form (same form as midterm) near end of placement and review with student
- Field Liaison may be included in this meeting
- student will submit final, signed copy of evaluation form to their Field Liaison



## students are responsible for...

- tracking their time/hours (format of their choosing, or as requested by their Field Instructor/agency)
- ongoing communication with their agency and/or Field Instructor
- documenting their learning process and reflections
- engaging in supervision, evaluation, and responding to feedback
- asking for help or clarification if they need it
- submitting paperwork - including checking for accuracy and completion (comments, dates, signatures)
- participating in seminars



## Field Instructors/agencies are responsible for...

- completing and submitting practicum-related paperwork
- providing/facilitating safe and appropriate learning experiences for students
- supporting the student in creating a learning plan (including a Learning Agreement and Remote Learning Plan, as applicable) and approving the final plan(s)
- documenting and providing regular supervision, support, and feedback
- completing the midterm and final evaluations and participating in evaluation meetings
- if questions or concerns come up, reach out to the student's Field Liaison as early as possible

# Practicum Responsibilities



## Field Liaisons are responsible for...

providing support to students and Field Instructors, including information about field education policies and processes, conflict resolution, ethics consultations, and wellbeing/fitness for practice resources/supports

participating in evaluation meetings (and other meetings as required/appropriate)

facilitating seminars

reviewing student assignments and evaluations, and assigning the final grade for the course

# Frequently Asked Questions about BSW Practicum



## Can students transport people who access services?

- students **do not** have insurance to transport clients
- students must obtain liability insurance themselves **if driving their own vehicle**, or be provided insurance through the practicum organization



## Have students completed a criminal record check?

- the Faculty of Social Work does not require a criminal record check to be admitted to the program
- agencies who require criminal record checks and/or other screening prior the beginning of practicum must make this request to students directly
- the only exception to this is placements with Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) - we collect criminal record checks from students matched with SHA

# Frequently Asked Questions about BSW Practicum



## When do placements start and end (Fall 2026)?

- Practicum I placements start on August 28<sup>th</sup> (or later) and end by December 11<sup>th</sup> (or sooner); students are in orientation all day August 28<sup>th</sup>
- Practicum II placements start on August 27<sup>th</sup> (or later) and end by December 18<sup>th</sup> (or sooner); students are in orientation the morning of August 27<sup>th</sup>
- Students can't start before the first official day of placement listed above (no insurance/WCB coverage)



## Can students finish their hours early?

- field-based learning is a process; in general, learning should be gradual and well-paced throughout the term
- practicum is about more than completing the required number of hours
- details of student hours are negotiated between agency and student - some students need lots of lead time in terms of scheduling, so expectations about this should be discussed as early as possible
- it's okay if students finish hours before the end of placement date - but the intent or plan shouldn't be to finish by an earlier date

# Frequently Asked Questions about BSW Practicum



## When can practicum students become paid employees?

- students are discouraged from applying for paid positions within their placement organization **before their placement is completed and final grades are approved**
- if a student is hired by the agency where they did their practicum, there must be a clear boundary and transition plan between roles and relationships
- students may not receive payment (other than expense reimbursement) from their placement agency while they are doing practicum



## Do you need a SW degree to supervise a practicum student?

- CASWE accreditation standards for a BSW Field Instructor are a BSW/BISW or higher SW degree, plus 2 years post-bachelor degree practice experience
- an equivalent or related combination of education and experience will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- students who do not have on-site/in-agency SW supervision will be provided with regular SW supervision and support by their Field Liaison or the Field Education Coordinator - this time counts toward practicum hours

# Frequently Asked Questions about BSW Practicum



## Where do I find practicum forms?

- field education forms are in the 'Guide and Forms' section of our BSW practicum webpage (see URL at bottom of this slide)
- when in doubt, ask your student to provide you with copies of required forms/paperwork



## What's covered at student orientation?

- most of what we've covered so far, with an emphasis on important details (dates, processes, program requirements) and roles/responsibilities
- integrating theory and practice
- professionalism, relationships, and ethics
- important contacts

# Expanding Learning during Practicum



## professional development opportunities

- Activities which fit within SASW policy on Continuing Professional Education (CPE) **may be counted as practicum hours if they align with a student's learning goals and their Field Instructor agrees to this use of their time.**
- Learn more at <https://www.sasw.ca/site/member/cpe>
- Students are encouraged to develop these ongoing learning practices as part of practicum!



## informal learning opportunities

- Activities such as staying engaged with community groups and events, reading non-academic articles, and gathering SW-related resources **do not typically count toward practicum hours, unless they have been assigned by the Field Instructor, align with learning goals, and are completed during your regular/planned placement hours.**
- Students are encouraged to share their informal learning with their agency colleagues and peers in their seminar.

# Professional Responsibilities and Practicum



## students are held to the standard of the *Code of Ethics* (CASW, 2024) and the *Student Professional Performance Policy* (URegina Faculty of SW)

- at all times during the BSW program - including practicum (even if their Field Instructor isn't a Registered SW)
- concerns during practicum typically fit under the "non-academic performance" section of the Faculty of SW policy



## non-academic performance issues:

- not adhering to the *Code* and/or *Standards*
- concealing or distorting the facts in applying to the program
- impaired judgment or functioning, particularly in relation to practicum settings



## engaging in supervision and receptiveness to feedback

- seeking out assistance or support when needed AND being able to problem-solve on their own
- asking thoughtful questions AND being open to considering various perspectives in response
- being willing to look at their own learning and working style, strengths, areas for growth, and emotional responses that arise during practicum

# Professional Considerations in Practicum

Keep in mind that's considered "professional" varies from placement to placement, and colleague to colleague. As an expression of colonial values, "professionalism" has also been used to oppress, judge and exclude people from non-dominant groups.

- **physical appearance**
- **punctuality**
- **language & communication**
- **boundaries & relationships**
- **self-disclosure**
- **identities**
- **work style & workspace**
- **wellbeing**
- **activities outside practicum, including social media**



# Ethical Considerations in Practicum

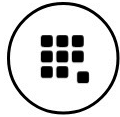
We are surrounded by ethical issues every single day, in every interaction. Integrating and reflecting on ethics in practicum goes beyond naming ethical dilemmas or conflicts to consider broader issues like:

- **boundaries**
- **power**
- **self-determination & consent**
- **confidentiality**
- **competence & scope of practice**
- **accessibility & appropriateness of services**
- **similarities & differences between SW values and ethical principles and those of your agency or other professions**
- **wellbeing & fitness for practice**



# Wellbeing and Fitness for Practice

What does “impaired judgment or functioning” mean?



## we've all got “stuff”

- Social workers - and social work students - are often trying to manage many aspects of their lives (personal and professional).
- Students and RSWs are also ethically required to prioritize the needs of people & communities we support.
- Sometimes this means we need to make tough(er) choices about how we manage it all.



## candid self-assessment is essential

- **Prepare for imperfection.** What are all the “balls” your student is trying to juggle this term? Can they shift them or put some down? Which ones are glass (and might break if they drop them), and which are plastic?
- **Bolster your coping.** How does your student cope with things like stress, change, vulnerability, lack of control, and newness? How's that working for them?



## asking for help

- Is your student comfortable asking for help, especially when they're vulnerable or don't feel they have power and control?
- Who are their supports?
- What can they do to proactively set up a plan to stay as well as possible during practicum?



SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES:

# Approaches to Supervision

# How do you learn best?

See: Self-Assessment of Preferred Learning Styles handout



# START DOING



## How does your approach to learning influence how you work with practicum students?

# Reflection & Discussion with Your Student

## Do you have a primary learning style?

Did you have more than one style that emerged as predominant, or a balance across several categories?

## How can other experiences with learning and supervision inform your approach as a Field Instructor?

How might this insight influence your approach to teaching, learning, supervision, and evaluation?



# Suggested Topics to Explore in Student Supervision

## • **relationship building**

- Why social work?
- What are you passionate about?
- areas of practice interest & experience
- insights into SW/human service work
- What I wish I would have known...
- how I strive for balance/self-care/etc.
- career goals
- important things you should know about me...

## • **teaching and learning styles/needs**

- formal & informal
- expectations (how often? how formal?)
- student preparedness and readiness
- I need you to...
- What can I do to help you... ?
- I learn best when...

# Suggested Topics to Explore in Student Supervision

- **evaluation approach**

- how students will contribute to the formal evaluation process
- expectations, limitations re: how students will demonstrate progress
- how you approach & interpret the assessment tool (scoring)

- **practice styles and approaches**

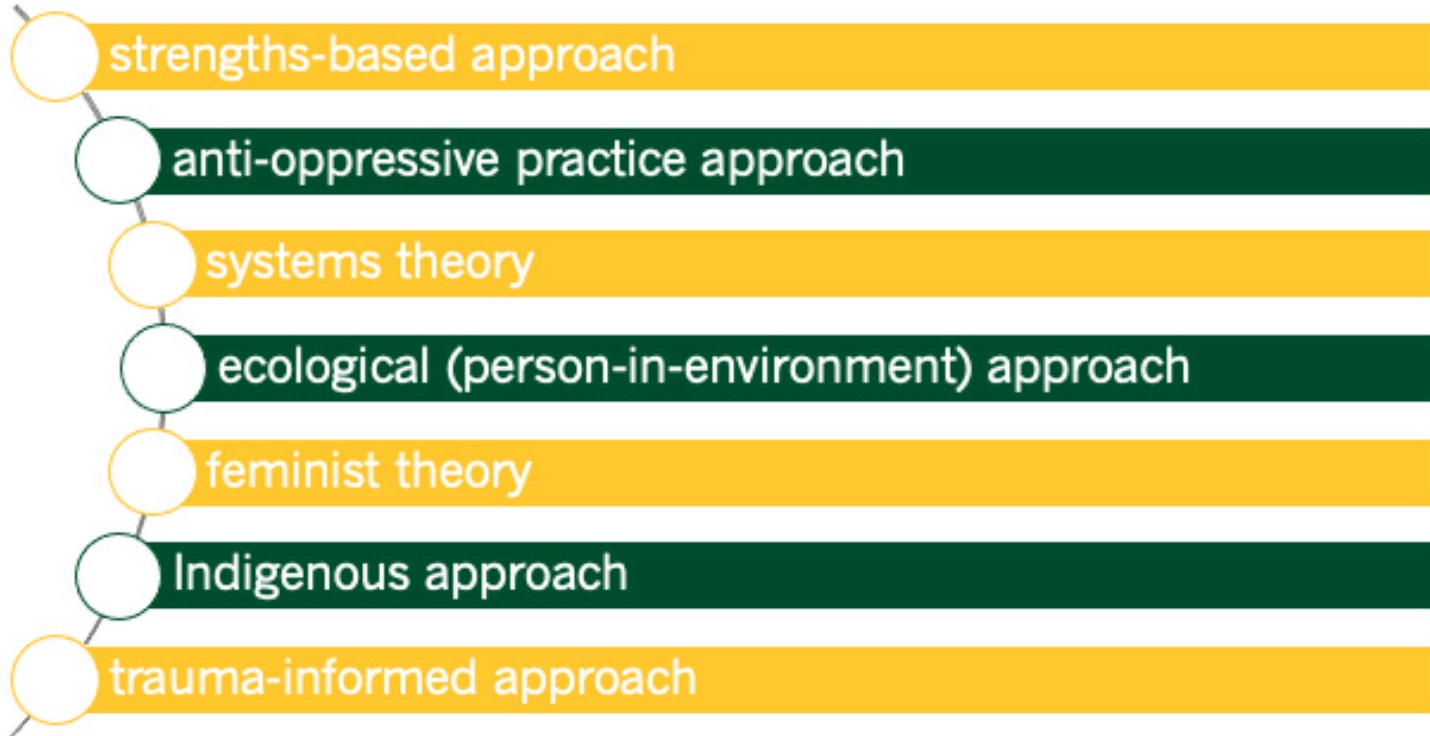
- What theories and/or practice models do you (and/or your agency or program) use? What does the student think you use?
- What do you wish you would've learned, thought/talked about, considered, etc. when you were a practicum student?
- How does what you're observing/experiencing in practicum align with what you learned in the classroom?



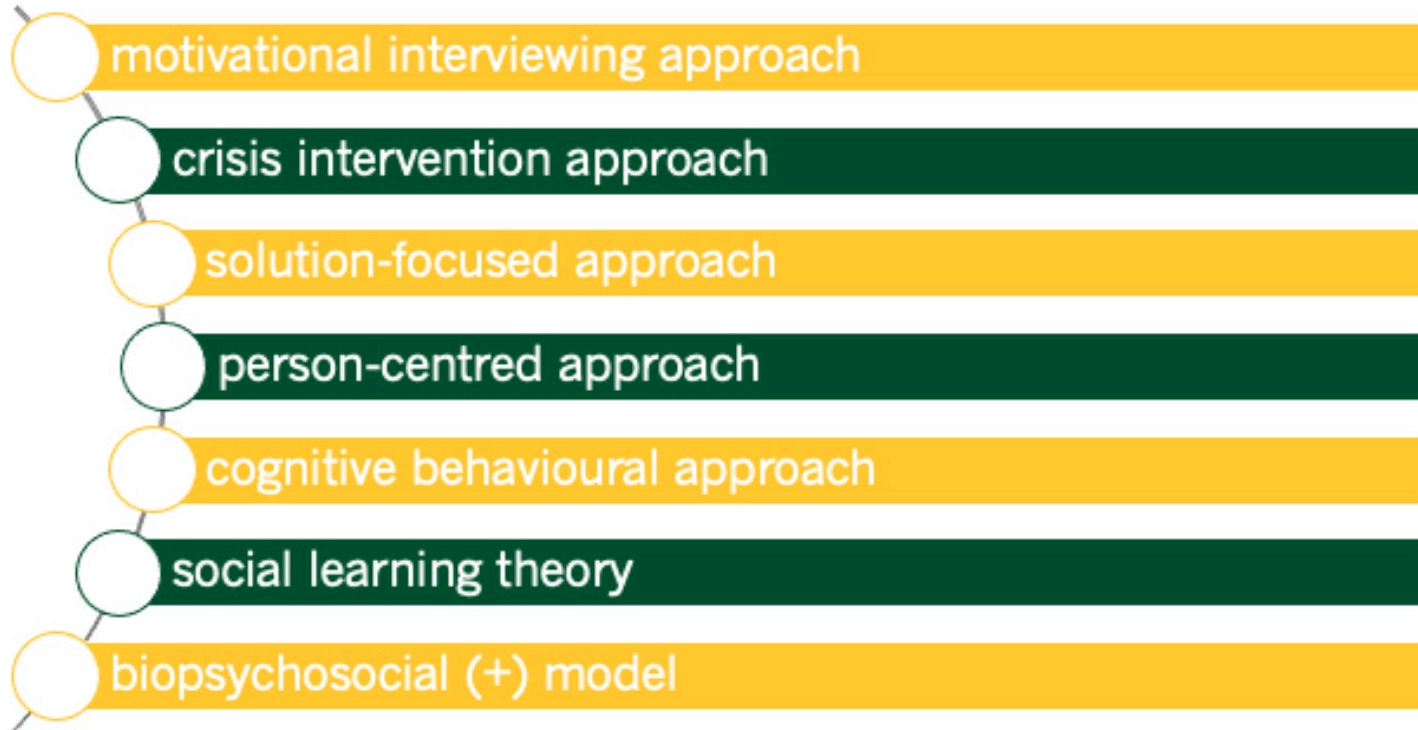
SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES:

# Integrating Theory and Practice

# Some Theories, Approaches, & Models Used in Social Work Practice



# Some Theories, Approaches, & Models Used in Social Work Practice



# Integrating Theory + Practice



## practicum isn't about adding - it's about integrating

- making connections between what students have learned - through formal SW education and other experiences - and their field placement
- the goal of practicum is to be able to articulate the “why” and “how” of what a student is seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking, and doing



## it's an opportunity to develop critically reflective practice skills

- going beyond the surface (ie. hours and tasks focus) to a deeper reflection on the personal, cultural, professional, and political dynamics of student learning experiences
- considering the question, “Who am I as an emerging social worker?”



## you might not have answers to all their questions

And that's okay.

What's important is that students keep asking informed, thoughtful, reflective questions of themselves, their field agency, social work, and society - and be open to ongoing (un)learning.



THANK YOU.

**Emily  
Alston-O'Connor**

Field Education Coordinator

[emily.alston-oconnor@uregina.ca](mailto:emily.alston-oconnor@uregina.ca)

306-664-7375