

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

GRADUATE COLLEGE of SOCIAL WORK

Our mission: University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) prepares diverse leaders in practice and research to address complex challenges and achieve sustainable social, racial, economic, and political justice, locally and globally, through exceptional education, innovative research, and meaningful community engagement.

WHAT IS THE UH GCSW LOOKING FOR IN A PRACTICUM AGENCY?

- ◆ A setting which aligns with UH GCSW's mission of serving vulnerable populations, aims towards justice (social, racial, economic, and political), and honors the values and ethics of the social work profession.
- ◆ Link to the [UH GCSW Racial Justice Principles](#)
- ◆ A willing and qualified social worker to affiliate and act as the practicum instructor (see below) This person can be internal or external to the agency.
- ◆ Diverse and appropriate learning opportunities for students that help build competency in following areas: Ethical decision making, diversity, inclusion and anti-racist frameworks, abolitionist frameworks, advocacy, research, policy, engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with individuals, families, groups, organizations and/or communities.
- ◆ A setting that encourages growth and development through instruction, processing, application, assessment, and feedback with social work master's level students.

GCSW works with 2 levels of students:

- ◆ **Generalist.** Generalists students are just beginning the MSW program and seeking opportunities serving any clients from individuals to communities with basic practice skills. Generalist placements help teach roles that social workers fill, basic social work services, and the context of the social work profession or systems in which social workers operate. Generalist students complete a total of 400 hours, typically over the course of 2 consecutive semesters of 200 hours each.
- ◆ **Concentration:** Concentration students are nearing the end of their MSW program and seeking opportunities for advanced practice in preparation for post MSW work in areas aligning with their concentration topic: either Macro or Clinical. Concentration students complete a total of 500 hours, typically over the course of 2 consecutive semesters of 250 hours each.
 - **Clinical concentration** students engage in practice with individuals, families and groups. This may include case management, intake/assessment, client service coordination and referrals, as well as direct counseling and therapeutic intervention.
 - **Macro concentration** students engage in practice with groups, organizations and communities. This may include advocacy, policy work, program development & evaluation, research, organization, community needs, improvement on boards and agency functioning, funding etc.

WHAT SHOULD MY AGENCY PROVIDE STUDENTS?

- ◆ Social service tasks to help develop social work knowledge, skills, and experience
- ◆ A qualified Social Work Practicum Instructor (see below)
- ◆ Opportunities for students to attend professional development trainings
- ◆ Adequate space, sufficient access to technology, parking/travel/on-boarding reimbursement, stipend or compensation for benefit added (strongly encouraged), and connection to agency safety protocols & resources

WHO CAN SERVE AS A PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR?

Anyone- either **external** or **internal** to the agency who:

- ◆ has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program (license not required)
- ◆ has at least 2 years, post-MSW, social work experience
- ◆ has capacity to offer weekly supervision to the student (no less than one hour)
- ◆ is willing to become affiliated and complete online, asynchronous training for GCSW
- ◆ is supported by the agency to provide adequate student orientation, training and feedback on tasks, and administrative supervision of students

NOTE: Sometimes when practicum instructors are external or not on-site with students, any personnel from the agency with any credential or background can act as an on-site task manager or preceptor. This person can support the day-to-day facilitation of practicum directly with the student.

LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT: The term PRACTICUM versus field

*We want to note the use of the term practicum versus field is intentional. The GCSW practicum team believes language is important. Team members, justice advocates, community, students, and partners expressed how the term "field" references historical racist oppression and slavery. In May 2022, the team chose to intentionally shift language toward the usage of practicum to refer to the experiential and applied components of the social work education. We are at the start of this transition and recognize many national and historical partners who are in various changes of shifting perspectives and language.

We want to acknowledge the voice of activist Joyce McMillan as a significant catalyst to this shift from a presentation she made titled *From Complicity to Resistance: Demanding an Abolitionist Model of Social Work in Reproductive Justice*

<https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/advancesinsocialwork/article/view/24115/23864>

HOW DOES MY AGENCY BECOME AFFILIATED WITH UH GCSW?

- ◆ Affiliation and connection can be initiated by anyone! (member of the community, agency personnel, students, GCSW employees, etc.)
- ◆ Initiation begins by contacting the University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work, Practicum Education Office: 713.743.7848 or practeam@uh.edu
- ◆ A member of the practicum team will connect for an introduction call/meeting/email to explore the opportunity & ability to meet educational standards, discuss affiliation, answer questions, and provide next steps.
- ◆ Upon approval, a contract, in the form of an Affiliation Agreement, is completed between the agency and the University of Houston. The signatory on the University side is the Provost and we request for a signatory for the agency in an equal position. *This may be different for agencies where the student is an employee.

If you have any questions please contact the UH GCSW Practicum Team at: practeam@uh.edu

Thank you for your interest in becoming a valued partner and supporter of practicum education at the GCSW!