

LEARNING AGREEMENT - FOUNDATION

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE LEARNING AGREEMENT

The learning agreement is a dynamic teaching and learning tool that specifies the areas of learning each field experience should provide. It brings together the contributions of the classroom instructor, student, field instructor and field advisor. The learning agreement has a direct relationship to the student's course work and the learning opportunities available at his/her field site.

The learning agreement should be developed by the student and the field instructor after the student has been in the agency long enough to be aware of learning opportunities the agency offers. Concurrent students should complete the agreement by the sixth week of placement and summer block students by the second week of placement.

Developing the learning agreement is done by:

Completing the front page of the learning agreement document which includes identifying information, supervision arrangements, and a work schedule for the student;

Reviewing the goals and outcomes on the following pages; these represent the school's expectations regarding outcomes student should be able to achieve during placement;

Identifying learning activities available in the agency which can help the student accomplish the stated outcomes;

Selecting the learning activities the student will do during the entire time the student will be in the agency; the activities selected to achieve each set of outcomes should be recorded on each page in the space below the outcomes; and

Signing the agreement in a conference with the field advisor, the field instructor and the student; the field advisor will arrange this conference.

The learning agreement is placed in the student's file as documentation of the planned learning experience during the student's practicum. The learning agreement should be viewed as a dynamic document that can be changed and developed as the practicum proceeds. Major changes should be forwarded to the field advisor to be filed with the original document in the student's file.

The learning agreement should be reviewed at least monthly by the student and the field instructor and progress reported on the monthly report.

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Goal #1: Assessment:

Assess the functioning of a client system(s).*

**Client System is defined as work with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and/or communities.*

Outcomes:

At the completion of the Foundation year the student is able to identify and assess:

- The biological, psychological, social, spiritual and environmental factors that influence the development and behavior of the client system;
- The impact of race, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, marital status, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation and socio-economic status on functioning of client systems;
- The impact of social, economic, and political environment on client systems;
- A variety of risk factors, for such social problems as family violence, substance abuse, and suicide;
- The affective content, underlying messages and themes embedded in the assessment interaction; and,
- The strengths of the client system.

At the completion of the Foundation year the student is able to:

- Articulate a sound assessment of client systems at both the direct practice and management and community practice levels;
- Understand the strengths and limitations of theoretical frameworks for guiding assessments; and,
- Identify assessment tools and approaches used in the agency.

Learning Activities:

Please list **both** direct practice and community, management and policy practice activities necessary to achieve educational outcomes.

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Goal #2: Relationship Building and Communication

Establish and maintain the helping relationship with client system(s).

Outcomes:

At the completion of the Foundation year the student is able to:

- Communicate his/her role and purpose clearly in an interview, group, or community meeting;
- Demonstrate effective interviewing skills using listening, empathy, genuineness, pacing and focusing;
- Demonstrate compassion, helpful intent and acceptance of differences;
- Demonstrate appropriate boundaries with client systems;
- Identify and collaborate with key persons in client systems critical to effecting change;
- Identify and explore emotionally charged issues and elicit underlying feelings with skill and sensitivity; and,
- Recognize and manage his/her own non-verbal communication: interpret and respond skillfully to client system's non-verbal communication.

Learning Activities:

Please list **both** direct practice and community, management and policy practice activities necessary to achieve educational outcomes.

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Goal #3: Goal Planning and Intervention

Identify goals and select and apply interventions that enhance functioning of client system(s).

Outcomes:

At the completion of the Foundation year the student is able to:

- Identify theoretical frameworks and evidence based practice models appropriate for the client system;
- Engage client systems in identifying desired goals;
- Identify immediate, short-term and long-range goals based on the assessment;
- Keep goal planning within the constraints of the agency's function;
- Identify client system ambivalence to change;
- Review the implementation plan and modify as needed (i.e., analyze consequences of change, modify objectives and tasks appropriately, assess strengths and identify new needs that require action);
- Respond appropriately to client systems in crisis;
- Demonstrate advocacy skills and mobilize needed services for client systems;
- Facilitate the termination process, reviewing accomplishments and identifying areas of future needs; and,
- Develop and practice relevant, sensitive interventions in working with culturally diverse client.

Learning Activities:

Please list **both** direct practice and community, management and policy practice activities necessary to achieve educational outcomes.

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Goal #4: Policy

Describe and analyze major laws & policies and apply them to work with client systems.

Outcomes:

At the completion of the Foundation year the student is able to:

- Identify the impact of policy and legislation on a specific client system and on services provided by the agency;
- Assess the agency's policies and procedures for the efficiency and effectiveness of its services;
- Identify processes involved in policy development in the agency;
- Demonstrate knowledge of values, principles, and theories guiding policy development;
- Understand the environmental factors that affect organizational change in the agency;
- Identify how agency policies and procedures have impact on diverse populations eligible for services from the agency; and,
- Identify strategies to effect policy and/or organizational change.

Learning Activities:

Please list **both** direct practice and community, management and policy practice activities necessary to achieve educational outcomes.

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Goal #5: Professional Behavior

Work constructively to meet professional, organizational, and community responsibilities.

Outcomes:

- Identify and work within agency guidelines, manage workload and accomplish assigned tasks within expected timelines, appropriately uses existing channels of communication in agency;
- Make presentations to professional staff and/or community members that meet the standards of the agency and demonstrate the ability to critique the strengths and limitations of the presentation;
- Document work accurately, following the prescribed agency format and standards;
- Meet the agency standards for appropriate dress, work habits, attendance and social interaction; understand and articulate how these standards impact the ability to work effectively with the client system and the community;
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of others and comply with agency policy and professional ethics regarding confidentiality;
- Demonstrate initiative and motivation in seeking learning opportunities and in supporting team members and co-workers;
- Demonstrate the ability to interact effectively with diverse agency and community personnel; treat colleagues with respect and accurately represent their views;
- Be able to use and model problem-solving, conflict resolution, mediation and negotiation skills as necessary;
- Maintain appropriate emotional intensity; is generally adaptive and able to overcome challenges; and,
- Demonstrate understanding of boundaries and appropriate self disclosure.

Learning Activities:

Please list **both** direct practice and community, management and policy practice activities necessary to achieve educational outcomes.

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Goal #6: Evaluation

Demonstrate the ability to evaluate social work practice.

Outcomes:

At the completion of the Foundation year the student is able to:

- Engage client systems in reviewing and evaluating intervention strategies;
- Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to evaluate practice;
- Successfully design an evaluation study and present findings to field instructor;
- Demonstrate the ability to elicit feedback from the client system(s)* regarding the effectiveness of interventions;
- Seek and respond non-defensively to client feedback about professional performance and incorporate results into practice; and
- Utilize instruments, assessment tools, and record keeping, to monitor client change.

Learning Activities:

Please list **both** direct practice and community, management and policy practice activities necessary to achieve educational outcomes.

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Goal #9: Ethics

Demonstrate a commitment to social work values and ethical standards.

Outcomes:

At the completion of the Foundation year the student is able to:

- Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly;
- Identify potential conflicts between personal values and ethics and professional social work values and ethics;
- Respect the rights of others to maintain perspectives and positions different from one's own;
- Demonstrate progress towards culturally competent practice;
- Demonstrate a commitment to the mission of social work including client self determination, empowerment and promotion of social justice;
- Demonstrate respect, sensitivity and skill in identifying and responding to the needs and issues of diverse populations; and,
- Recognize institutional discrimination and advocate for change.

Learning Activities:

Please list **both** direct practice and community, management and policy practice activities necessary to achieve educational outcomes.
