

FIELD INSTRUCTOR GUIDANCE FOR THE LEARNING AGREEMENT ASSIGNMENT

The Learning Agreement assignment:

- Reflects and formalizes the discussion(s) that you, your student (and potentially the On-Site Supervisor, if there is one) have had about the work the student will be doing in the semesters ahead.
- Is a student-driven assignment but requires significant input from the Field Instructor.
- Is a deeply relational document and a wonderful opportunity for collaboration, curiosity, discovery, exploration, visioning, agreement, and the building of authentic connections at the very beginning of your supervisor-supervisee relationship.

Some specifics as it relates to the assignment:

- Field Instructors should ensure that students have closely followed the Learning Agreement assignment guidance (found on the UVM Department of Social Work Field Education website¹). This includes:
 - Use of headers
 - Inclusion of requisite information for *each* section of the assignment
 - Signatures from all parties (you, student, and On-site Supervisor, if applicable) before the final submission
- However, you and the On-Site Supervisor (if applicable) should offer the student feedback on their first draft and review it together.
 - The student should integrate this feedback into their final document before their final submission to the Faculty Field Liaison.
- Your Liaison will also be giving feedback to students, either by requesting edits on a first draft before the final submission or asking that their feedback be considered for the Spring revision of this document (the Learning Agreement Addendum).

For Section One: Agency/Organization/Program Description

- Students should describe what they know and have learned about both the overall agency/organization, as well as the program they will be working in for the coming year.
- They should include their sources of knowledge (e.g., website, conversations with professionals, word on the street, etc.) using appropriate APA formatting.
- Here students should also include any questions they have about the agency/organization/program they hope to have answered for themselves by the end of the placement.

For Section Two: Relationship to the Work

¹ <https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/field>

- Here students should share their particular relationship to the work of the agency, organization, and program overall, as well as that which they will be doing in the semesters ahead.
- This articulation could include personal anecdotes, references to students' educational or professional backgrounds, connections to a related interest, etc. We ask students to take the time "to think and write deeply so as not to miss any 'overlapping stories'" that might reveal some connection between them and where they have been placed.
- This is a great opportunity for you and the student to explore together what the student's relationship to the work looks like and how this connects to their, and your, hopes and expectations for their learning in the year ahead.

For Section Three: Engagement Assignments

- A solid Learning Agreement should have 4-6 engagement assignments; some of these may be more of a priority in an ongoing capacity, others may be of a one-off and/or back burner.
- The description of each of the student's assignment should accurately reflect what they will be working on in placement throughout the year.
- Students should choose the *2-4 most relevant* Learning Objectives/Social Work Competencies for each task listed.
- Each task description should articulate a clear and explicit link between the engagement assignment as conceptualized and each of competencies they have chosen.
- As a whole, the student's engagement assignments should reflect some experience with *each of the requisite areas of practice*: Individual, Family, Group, Organizational and Community.
- *Each* of the nine Learning Objectives/Social Work Competencies (including research and policy) should be connected to *at least one* Engagement Assignment within this section.
 - For clarification of the social work practice behavior expectations of the nine Social Work Education Competencies, please see pp. 8-13 of the CSWE 2022 EPAS² or the Ending Evaluation for your level student (BSW, FMSW, or SPMSW), which can be found on the UVM Dept. of Social Work Field Education website³.
- And finally, for the Process for Determining Student Progress/Evaluative Plan:
 - For each Evaluative Plan, students should consider not just how they will know how they have made progress towards the stated goal of the task as described, but also, *how will both you, as the Field Instructor, and they know that they have made progress towards the Learning Objectives (Social Work Competencies) chosen for this task?*—this is not necessarily the same as making progress on the stated goal of the task itself.

For Section Five: Student Safety Agreement

² <https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/bb5d8afe-7680-42dc-a332-a6e6103f4998/2022-EPAS.pdf>

³ <https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/field>

- First, review and discuss the UVM Department of Social Work “Student Safety Agreements” with your student; this policy can be found under policies on the UVM Dept. of Social Work Field Education website³.
- Please also discuss your organization/program’s safety protocols.
 - Consider such possibilities as: client escalation, threats and/or crisis situations; client transportation and home visits; remote meetings; lockdowns and other routine safety practices; COVID risk mitigation, etc.
- What the student should include in the Learning Agreement is a brief summation of the salient points of this conversation, as well as the last paragraph (verbatim) of the “Student Safety Agreements” policy.

For Section Six: Monetary Compensation

- The student should list here any agreements with your agency/program that results in their receiving any form of monetary compensation. This might include stipends for the academic year or semester, hourly pay rates, mileage reimbursement, etc.

For Section Eight: Signatures

- Electronic signatures (typing the name above the signature line or inserting a picture from a signature file) are fine, if they have been approved for inclusion by the appropriate party.

If you have any questions about this assignment, please reach out to your Faculty Field Liaison.