

UW School of Social Work Practicum Office

Checklist for International Social Work Practicum Preparation

OPTION NOTE: Credit for international experiences can also be arranged through an Exploration Seminar or Independent Study, which do not need to meet the many specific practicum requirements

1. DOWNLOAD INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM PROPOSAL GUIDELINES from Practicum Website

Meet with Student Services and BASW or MSW Program Director to review academic progress and plans to finish any incompletes, determine required coursework still needed, consider scheduling options for an international experience, and obtain approval based on fit with your learning plan and goals. Also consider full-time vs. part time practicum credit load possibilities and whether an independent study is needed to increase credits to full time to qualify for tuition waiver. If an independent study will supplement practicum credits, begin seeking faculty sponsor.

FINDING A SITE and SUPERVISOR FOR INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM PURPOSES:

Reflect on Abilities, Interests, Goals, and Needs: Consider language capability, countries of interest, field of practice interest, level of skill-building needed to advance your learning. Assess comfort traveling alone and ability to find own site, housing & transportation and to work as a professional, vs. a group language and culture program, faculty-led and arranged Exploration Seminars, or an internship placement through an exchange program to identify site, housing, and supervisor, with assistance in monitoring the placement and country conditions

Research potential international experiences that fit above considerations. Discuss with UW SSW faculty any upcoming projects or international research opportunities for students to do with SSW faculty. Visit International Programs and Exchange office in Schmitz Hall, review examples of sites in library, do on-line search of global learning internship opportunities or country and practice-specific agencies (e.g., HIV treatment in Ghana), view UW Global Health Resource Center website (<http://depts.washington.edu/deptgh/ghrc/index.html>) and SSW International Practicum website (<http://depts.washington.edu/ssweb/practicum/intl.html>). Explore websites of programs who place students international internships at graduate level, (e.g., IE3 or Cross-Cultural Solutions). Determine whether practicum or independent study or Exploration Seminar or language/culture immersion program is the best fit for you, and develop some options.

For Practicum credit, determine MSW availability for supervision at agency (employee, Board member or volunteer; faculty at local university with expertise in area of practice interest, UW faculty availability for onsite or distance supervision. Obtain names and contact information for possible MSW supervisors.

Determine source of funding for International study: financial aid, fundraising, private pay, vs. grants or scholarships or funded study abroad. Search out sources via the Undergraduate Scholarship or Graduate School office, Jackson School of International Studies, Global Health Resource Center, International Programs and Exchange, and Office of Global Affairs. Research application process for various funding sources and apply early.

If you want to pursue a practicum, complete the International Practicum Proposal with above information summarized and schedule a meeting with your assigned practicum coordinator. If all required practicum credits cannot be completed internationally, also consider local practicum sites that could complement your international experience, schedule and hours for local practicum as part of the proposal.

MEET WITH PRACTICUM COORDINATOR OR FACULTY SPONSOR ABOUT YOUR PROPOSAL.

For practicum, work with your assigned Practicum Coordinator who will be responsible for contacting your chosen site/project about (practicum requirements, learning contracts for professional activities, evaluations, and supervision by an MSW or exact equivalent from an accredited institution, with at least two years' post-grad experience and willingness to supervise at least weekly). Plan will also include any local practicum needs and total credit plan, as well as completion of Affiliation Agreement, Risk Form, and travel documents to be submitted.

For independent study, determine a faculty member willing to help you develop a written plan for SW 599, Independent Study (form available from Student Services), outlining title and subject of your study, methods of achieving your goals, and expected outcomes or products such as a research paper, curriculum, resource manual, etc. This form must be signed and submitted to Student Services before you can get an add code to register for Independent Study.

Time Frame and Credit Plan For International Practicum and possible local practicum as well.

Most international practica are done in the spring and/or summer, or after all required coursework for the BASW, foundation or advanced MSW program has been completed. Since summer quarter is nine weeks long, the maximum practicum hours obtainable are 360 (or 9 credits) of the 720 total hours needed for advanced practicum (18 credits total needed). The remaining hours would need to be completed with another local agency or related practicum during the school year, or completed the following summer in an additional placement.

REGISTRATION / TUITION FEE OPTIONS

Meet with Office of International Programs and Exchange (IPE) regarding Tuition Waiver option.

The UW IPE, located on the 5th floor of Schmitz Hall (206-543-9272), can assist in several ways.

- They offer **information on exchange programs** around the world, for undergraduates and graduate students.
- They offer workshops on **financial aid** for study abroad and other **funding** for foreign exchange programs.
- **FULL TIME:** If you meet full time credit load requirements, **IPE can waive UW tuition and register you** for Foreign Studies, then convert the credits to SW Practicum and/or Independent Study credit after receiving a satisfactory evaluation or letter of completion from your exchange program, practicum instructor, and/or faculty sponsor. A \$200-300 fee is charged for this tuition waiver, in addition to any program fees charged by the international agency or organization. Practicum and faculty sponsors need to sign IPE registration forms prior to your registration and, upon your return, need to sign their forms stating approval for departmental credit.
- **PART-TIME:** You will pay regular by-the-credit tuition if you do not meet the fulltime load requirements for the tuition waiver program (10 credits for graduate day program students, 6 for EDP students, 12 for undergraduates). Work with SSW Student Services on increasing credits. **Financial aid covers study abroad.**

INSURANCE OPTIONS: We strongly advise you to purchase regular health insurance AND field insurance.

- IPE offers information on **field insurance programs**, which you may purchase to supplement any local health insurance you may have. NOTE: **Verification of health insurance** valid in your host country is **REQUIRED** for practicum students and must be part of the travel documents given to the Practicum Office prior to leaving. the U.S. Many exchange programs include health insurance as part of their program fee; if not, purchase in U.S.

APPLY FOR GRADUATION, in quarter BEFORE planned graduation quarter

File Application for Graduation (if applicable) If you are planning to be out of the country during your final quarter(s), you must **apply for graduation the quarter before** you leave, or work with Student Services to arrange for application to be mailed. If you do not apply for graduation in the designated time frames, you will be required to register for and complete an additional quarter. Contact: Graduate Records office or UW SSW Student Services.

COMPLETE PORTFOLIO OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION and SUBMIT TO PRACTICUM OFFICE:

Portfolio Requirements are found on the SSW practicum website for International Practicum

<http://depts.washington.edu/sswweb/practicum/PortfolioMaterialsList.pdf>, and include copies of Health Screening, Inoculations, Passport, Visa, Itinerary, Emergency Contact, Site and Instructor Contact, Local Housing Contact, and other information we need to insure your safety and accessibility. See library samples.

Several months prior to your departure, you should also begin checking on and arranging for the following:

- Travel advisories** (current country conditions, warnings, travel restrictions, requirements for passports, visas, etc.) from US Government (check State Dept. website: www.state.gov).
- Student Visa application** (often needed if staying long periods, e.g., greater than 90 days, or if traveling to certain countries – check with Embassy of host country or State Department website). Visa applications can take up to three months for approval. Students staying for shorter periods are usually considered tourists.
- Passport** – obtain at US Federal Building; bring your birth certificate and at least two current small photographs of head and torso; up to **6 week turnaround** unless requesting emergency assistance. Birth certificate and passport will be returned by mail or can be picked up when passport is ready.
- Inoculations/Medications:** Contact UW Travel Clinic or Seattle King Co. Public Health Department to determine what vaccinations and preventive medications are required for travel to your host country. These costs can be substantial. In addition, some inoculations like Hepatitis A are serial and need to be administered over several months.
- Register with U.S. State Department and with the local US Embassy upon arrival in host country.**

THE PRACTICUM OFFICE MUST APPROVE PRACTICUM PAPERWORK BEFORE YOU LEAVE.

Roles and Responsibilities Regarding International Study

I. Student Responsibilities: Consider your rationale, research options, and complete all requirements

Students should carefully consider their motives, interests, and options in traveling and studying abroad. Many different kinds of opportunities are available: volunteer experiences in structured programs; independent study opportunities with faculty or agencies in other countries, which requires only UWSSW faculty sponsorship to help develop a learning plan, as well as practicum, which is highly regulated and often difficult to arrange. Arranging an international practicum can take several months of intense work, on top of your other obligations.

A website is available at www.ssw.washington.edu/isw for your assistance.

Practicum students are responsible for insuring that all above processes and requirements are met on a timely basis, and for communicating and coordinating with all above mentioned parties. Students must work closely with an assigned Practicum Coordinator to develop an approved plan for practicum and practicum credits. Students must be registered to receive credit and for UW professional student liability coverage to insure them during a practicum. Students must take every precaution for their own safety and not enter into activities in their host country that would create danger for themselves or others. Any proposed change in a practicum plan or learning contract must be communicated in advance to and approved by the Practicum Coordinator.

Language: Most international practica expect students to arrive with a high degree of fluency in the local language, especially if you expect to work in a professional capacity. Begin taking language courses through the UW, private language schools, or through self-study for several months prior to your departure. You may receive some language and culture instruction upon arrival, but those intensive courses are challenging for those with no prior experience.

Cultural Adaptation: An international practicum or independent study is most appropriate for students who have already had some international travel or work experience and exposure to living conditions in other parts of the world. Adaptation to other cultures, languages, and work environments, especially those in developing countries, can be very difficult. Working in a professional capacity is different than traveling as a tourist, and requires business relationships and professional behavior, while a student is in the process of adjusting to cultural differences. Some programs have language and culture orientations and staff available for assistance, and some do not. Students should speak with other students who have been abroad and learn as much as possible about conditions in the proposed area of study. Students need to anticipate support needs while abroad and stay in close communication with their assigned Practicum Liaison. Plan to review ethical and practice differences in depth.

II. Practicum Office Responsibilities:

The Practicum Coordinator and Office will assist in the development of international practicum by providing information on development processes, past sites, and in helping the student decide which options best meet requirements and the individual's interests. The Practicum Coordinator and Office is not responsible for initiating or searching for international practicums on behalf of a student, finding funding, or insuring that placements abroad will have adequate safety and instruction programs. We will insure the timely review of proposed plans and mailing of or access to required paperwork, will attempt to make an evaluation of the adequacy of the site for a placement, and will provide encouragement, advice, and liaison support to the practicum instructor and student as needed.

Your Practicum Coordinator will need to talk with the suggested field instructor to arrange for the following:

- Mailing address, telephone number, and email address for practicum instructor and agency (see #1);
- Affiliation Agreement between Practicum Agency and the UW School of Social Work, prior to departure;
- Biographical Form documenting instructor's degree, and background
- Practicum manual, learning contract, evaluation forms and timeline; insuring professional level learning tasks;
- Assignment of practicum liaison role to one of the practicum coordinators, and exchange of contact information;
- Mechanism of contact between the practicum instructor and practicum liaison, regarding student learning contract, progress, problem-solving, support, and assistance with forms or training as needed.

PLAN REVIEW and APPROVAL: The Practicum Coordinator and Office will insure the timely review of proposed plans and required paperwork (forms available through the UW SSW Practicum website at www.depts.washington.edu/sswwweb/Practicum), and will provide liaison support to the student and practicum instructor as frequently as needed. Independent Studies are approved and monitored through your faculty sponsor.