

CREATING YOUR LEARNING CONTRACT

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Step 1:

- A. Review the student learning objectives for SW 6770 and/or SW6790, as well as the concentration goals for PP&A Students (below) to get a sense of the overall aims for the field learning experience.

Goals for Students in PP&A

(Source: Field Manual)

1. To develop skills in two overarching PP&A practice skill areas (analytical and technical) important to designing, maintaining, and changing community and/or agency social systems.
 2. To increase sensitivity to, and awareness of issues affecting women, and how diverse racial, ethnic and cultural perspectives are addressed in PP&A practice.
 3. To integrate the values and ethics of the social work profession into their PP&A practice.
 4. To become involved in, and learn from, PP&A tasks that are of special interest.
 5. To acquire information and knowledge about a field of practice, a program and/or an agency that is of special interest.
 6. To acquire knowledge and skill in PP&A practice through vicarious learning experiences such as observation, participant observation, co-participation, post-meeting analysis of PP&A practice activities and events.
 7. To become a professionally reflective, self-evaluating, knowledgeable, and developing social worker.
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- B. Print out a copy of the *Second Year PP&A Evaluation Instrument*, which is available for download on the “Assignments” pages of the on-line course syllabi for SW 6770 and SW 6790. Carefully review the major competency listed on the evaluation form, which are highlighted by grey shading (e.g., Planning, Program Evaluation, Staff Development & Training, Management of Human Resources, and so on...). Familiarize yourself with the “idea” of each area as you will be evaluated on all of them by the end of SW 6790 or the end of the academic year.

Step 2: Keeping the above in mind, get oriented to your field placement. Learn about the agency where you will be placed (e.g., mission, goals, programs, populations served). Ask your field instructor about the scope of learning possibilities that are available to you. Summarize the scope of these learning opportunities in a written paragraph and add it to your learning contract.

Step 3: You will aim to develop at least one learning objective to “correspond” with each major competency area listed on the evaluation form over the course of the academic year. (Note: this means that you may not—in all likelihood will not—address all major competency areas in a single semester.) Decide which major competency areas will be the focus of your learning in SW 6770 versus SW 6790. With the input of your field instructor, select a manageable number of learning objectives to guide your learning experiences throughout a single semester. Remember that you are in placement only an average of 16 hours per week. Also, remember that your learning contract is an important guide for your field learning experience but it is not written in

stone. Changes can be negotiated and addendums created to reflect any modifications made over time.

Step 4: Using Bloom’s Taxonomy as your guide (see below), decide the level of learning that you will strive for each learning objective. Take care to phrase your stated learning objective in ways that communicate advancement in your learning. For example, you may aim to *increase* your knowledge about key policies in your agency or you may strive to *advance* your skills at facilitating a staff meeting. Please note that the levels of learning (Bloom’s Taxonomy) will depend upon your specific learning needs, as well as the opportunities available in your field placement.

Step 5: For each learning objective identify specific activities, actions or tasks that you will carry out in order to achieve the level of learning as stated for each objective. Using “If/then” logic, the relationship between your activities and objectives is as follows: If I complete specify learning activity then, I will accomplish state learning objective.

Step 6: Provide a target date for completing each activity/task and estimate the amount of time that you expect it will take to complete each one. Develop evaluative criteria for each objective. Give action statements that reflect how you will demonstrate your learning progress.

Step 7: Create Learning Contract. A suggested format follows.

- Name of Student:
- Contact Information for Student:
- Name of Agency:
- Address of Agency:
- Name and Title of Field Instructor:
- Contact Information for Field Instructor:
- Description of Learning Opportunities (See Step 2):
- Supervision Schedule (field instructor and student):
- Learning Plan:

Objective #1:			
Tasks/Activities	Target Completion Date	Estimate Hours	Actual Hours
1.			
2.			
.....and so on.			
Totals:			
Evaluative Criteria * (see next page):			
*Repeat format for each objective.			
*Add total estimated hours and keep a running total of actual hours.			

- Signatures:

Student: _____	Date: _____
Field Instructor: _____	Date: _____
Field Liaison: _____	Date: _____

LEVELS OF LEARNING FOR CREATING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A primary purpose of the learning contract is to delineate anticipated levels of learning that students are aiming to achieve. Overall, it is expected that every student who fulfills his or her learning contract will have achieved measurable benefits in knowledge, attitude or skill. Bloom's Taxonomy, organizes learning into six levels, which are presented below from least to most sophisticated (or complex) abilities, along with suggested terms that may be used by students to customize learning objectives for their learning contracts. Below is an example of the levels of learning related to the NASW Code of Ethics.

1. **Level 1: Knowledge:** Is the student able to demonstrate knowledge of common social work terms, specific facts (e.g., dates, events, places), methods and procedures. Terms for evaluative questions: define, describe, identify, label, list, name, quote and articulate. (Example: *Can the student articulate the main purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics?*)
2. **Level 2: Comprehension:** Is the student able to understand facts and principles, grasp meaning, interpret facts, explain methods and procedures, compare and contrast, predict or estimate future consequences given available data and information. Terms for evaluative questions: Defend, explain, distinguish, estimates, generalizes, summarizes. (Example: *Can the student generally explain how the NASW Code of Ethics is intended for use by social workers?*)
3. **Level 3: Application:** Is the student able to apply concepts & principles to new situations, apply theory to practical situations, and demonstrate use of a method or procedure. Terms for evaluative questions: Show, demonstrate, produce, use. (Example: *Can the student demonstrate how he/she used the NASW Code of Ethics to guide his/her actions in performing a task at the agency?*)
4. **Level 4: Analysis:** Student uses information, recognizes unstated assumptions and logical fallacies in reasoning, distinguishes between facts and inferences, and solves problems. Terms for evaluative questions: Break down data, differentiate, infer, discriminate, point out, outline. (Example: *Can the student differentiate between personal and professional behaviors using the NASW Code of Ethics as a guide?*)
5. **Level 5: Synthesis:** Student uses old ideas to create new ones, relates knowledge from several areas and draw conclusions, demonstrates the ability to pull together various aspects of knowledge and skill to form a new whole (e.g., proposal, evaluation plan) Terms for evaluative questions: combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what if?, compose, formulate, prepare, generalize, rewrite. (Example: *Can the student modify or write agency policy or procedure in alignment with the NASW Code of Ethics?*)
6. **Level 6: Evaluation:** Student judges the value of work using identified standards, compares and discriminates ideas, assesses the value of theories, presentations, verifies value of evidence. Terms for evaluative questions: Compare, explain, justify, and interpret. (Example: *Can the student interpret the NASW Code of Ethics to make a judgment or decision regarding an ethical dilemma in the field placement?*)

STUDENT PORTFOLIOS

As stated on the course syllabus, students will be expected to provide the faculty liaison with examples of their work in the agency. The items included in the portfolio should reflect students' activities and accomplishments that are consistent with the learning contract.

Examples of items to include in the portfolio include but are not limited to:

- The Learning Contract
- Products produced for the program or agency (e.g., letters, memos, program materials, graphic presentations, data files or analysis, revised forms, etc);
- Notes or journal entries that document learning activities, and self-reflection of student's performance;
- Any written assessments of the student's performance;
- Annotated list of readings
 - Professional Literature: include both theoretical and empirical reading selections (e.g., academic journals, credible web site publications, professional newsletters, professional conference papers);
 - Organizational Materials: agency or program information (e.g., annual reports, policy manuals, training manuals, completed grant proposals); and,
 - Reference Materials: agency or program standards (e.g., accreditation standards, NASW professional ethics, ethical standards of other relevant disciplines, grant applications or guidelines).
- Other examples to show progress in student's learning.