

What Every Social Work Student Needs in a Field Instructor

Updated: June 2025

Bekka Russell, MSW, LSW

Learning Objectives



- ❑ Overview of Field Placements
- ❑ Overview of Field Placement Paperwork
- ❑ Linking Social Work Education to Field Placement
- ❑ Challenges and Opportunities for Growth in Field Supervision
- ❑ Discuss the use of “grit” and intertwining students’ passion, skills, and talents to produce dedicated social workers

Small Group Discussion #1

- ❑ First, let's get into small groups to introduce ourselves (and network with one another)!
- ❑ In your small group:
 - ❑ Tell your group members your name, where you are located, and if you have had a Malone social work intern in the past.
 - ❑ If you have had a Malone social work intern, talk about that experience a little bit.
 - ❑ If you have not yet had a Malone social work intern, talk about what you anticipate will be learning opportunities for you or for your student.

Internship Opportunities



Three distinct field placements:

1. Introduction to the Profession and Practice of Social Work—40 hours at field placement (1 credit)
2. Community and Organizational Development—60 hours at field placement (1 credit)
3. Senior Field Practicum—450 hours at field placement (10 credits)

CSWE EPAS Competencies

- ❑ Competency 1—Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- ❑ Competency 2—Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- ❑ Competency 3—Advance Human Rights, Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- ❑ Competency 4—Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- ❑ Competency 5—Engage in Policy Practice

CSWE EPAS Competencies (Continued)

- ❑ Competency 6—Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- ❑ Competency 7—Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- ❑ Competency 8—Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- ❑ Competency 9—Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- ❑ Competency 10—Appropriately integrate Christian faith with professional social work practice and recognize the importance of spirituality to the human experience

Field Pre-Paperwork

❓ Field Agency Information Form

❓ This form keeps you active in our field directories. We have a field directory for sophomore, junior, and senior internships. We usually only pass out senior directories because we ask our students to formally interview for two internships. If you are a licensed social worker (LSW or LISW), we will ask for diplomas and licensure verification. Annie St. John, our administrative assistant, does update this at least once each year. **Please** be sure to respond to her email to keep you active on our list of placements!

Field Agency Information Form

MALONE UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK FIELD PLACEMENT INFORMATION FORM

Agency Information

Agency Name: _____

Agency Address: _____

Agency Telephone: _____

Agency Web Address: _____

Agency Contact Person Name and Title: _____

Field Instructor Information

Field Instructor Name and Title: _____

Field Instructor Credentials (academic degrees, licensure, years of experience): _____

PLEASE ATTACH COPIES OF YOUR LICENSE AND HIGHEST ACADEMIC DEGREE

Field Instructor Telephone: _____

Field Instructor E-mail Address: _____

Placement Information

DO YOU KNOW OF
ANOTHER AGENCY THAT
COULD USE OUR SOCIAL
WORK PROGRAM
INTERNS? PLEASE
INCLUDE INFORMATION
HERE. WE WILL BE GLAD
TO CONTACT THEM!

Field Paperwork

- ❑ Paperwork that we ask students to complete with field instructor:
 - ❑ COVID-19 Policy and Consent to Participate in Field Experience
 - ❑ Memorandum of Agreement (M of A)
 - ❑ Internship Agreement between Agency and Malone University
 - ❑ Learning Contract
 - ❑ Timesheet (to be updated each time student completes hours at field placement site)
 - ❑ Seniors: Midterm SWEAP Evaluation

Field Paperwork (Continued)

❓ Paperwork that we ask field instructors to complete:

❓ Student Evaluations

Sophomore Field Evaluation

Junior Field Evaluation

Senior Field Evaluation (on SWEAP)

❓ SWEAP=Social Work Educational Assessment Project

COVID-19 Policy and Consent



Malone University

COVID-19 Policy and Consent to Participate in Field Experiences and Internships

As a student at Malone University enrolled in a field experience/internship. I wish to continue my education by completing my field experience as part of my program. As a member of the Malone University community, I have an important role to play in keeping myself, the Malone community and those that I will be exposed to as part of my field/clinical experience safe by doing my part to stop the spread of COVID-19.

I also understand that despite all reasonable efforts by myself, the university or the placement site where I will be completing my experience, I can still contract COVID-19 and other infections. In order to reduce my risk, I agree to be an active participant in maintaining my own health, well-being and safety, as well as the safety of others, by following all the guidelines and expectations outlined by the university and the placement site at which I will be completing my field/clinical experience.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19 illness (CDC, 2020).

Field Experience/ Clinical Policy:

1. Students must wear a facemask at all field experience/clinical sites.

Memorandum of Agreement

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Appendix 1A

Field Learning Contract

Name of Student _____

Telephone: _____

Agency _____

Field Instructor _____

Agency Address

Agency Telephone _____

Internship Agreement

Appendix 1D

SOCIAL WORK INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN MALONE UNIVERSITY AND

(For Senior Student)

This Agreement made and entered into, effective as of the ____ day of _____, 20____, by and between MALONE UNIVERSITY ("the University") and _____ ("the Agency").

I. Preliminary Understandings

The parties acknowledge that it would be to their mutual benefit, and to the benefit of the communities which they serve, to cooperate in providing field social work experience and instruction for students of the University.

II. Term of Agreement

The term of this Agreement shall be from _____, 20____ through _____, 20____, unless earlier terminated, as herein provided, or extended by written agreement of the parties.

Learning Contract

SAMPLE Student Learning Contract (Senior)

The following is a sample student learning contract giving examples of BSW senior level tasks. Please use these examples to assist you in developing a specialized student learning contract relevant to your agency and the student you are supervising.

| Competency | Practiced Behaviors | Tasks |
|--|--|--|
| Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;• use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss ethical issues involved with specific cases with field instructor• Student outlines the ethical issues on caseload during supervision• Discuss student journals about ethical dilemmas and tensions that might arise in practice |

Appendix 1F

Student Name: _____

[illegible]

Sophomore Evaluation

SOPHOMORE FIELD EXPERIENCE EVALUATION FORM

Appendix 1E

Completed by Agency Field Instructor

Student _____ Date _____

Agency _____

Field Instructor _____

The following evaluation points are based on the competencies from the learning contract completed at the beginning of the placement. Please look over the learning contract and tasks you expected of this student and use this form to evaluate the student's level of work in comparison to other sophomore level-students in their first social work class. PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE WORD/PHRASE.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.

Please Circle the word/phrase which best describes the level of student performance

Unacceptable Needs Improvement Satisfactory Very Good Outstanding

2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.

Please Circle Level of Student:

Unacceptable Needs Improvement Satisfactory Very Good Outstanding

3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Please Circle Level of Student:

Unacceptable Needs Improvement Satisfactory Very Good Outstanding

4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice.

Please Circle Level of Student:

Unacceptable Needs Improvement Satisfactory Very Good Outstanding

Junior Evaluation

SWK 348 Field Placement Evaluation

Name of Student _____ *Placement:* _____

Please look back at the learning contract developed at the beginning of the semester and rate the student on their abilities. Please note: If any responsibilities have changed, feel free to adapt this to relevant experiences the student participated in.

Responsibility #1

In comparison to a typical junior level student, how did the student meet this responsibility?
(please circle)

Much Less
competent

Slightly less
competent

As Competent

Slightly more
competent

Much more
competent

Comments _____

Senior Evaluation

- ❑ Completed through SWEAP (*see example on the next slide*).
 - ❑ Must be completed on a desktop or laptop computer (the evaluation is not compatible with smart phones/tablets).
- ❑ Evaluation of all 10 CSWE EPAS competencies on SWEAP.
- ❑ Seniors must demonstrate “entry level proficiency” in all competencies.
 - ❑ If a student is not competent or demonstrating competency, this warrants a conversation with the field liaison and field director (sometimes the liaison and director are the same person, but sometimes there are two different people).
- ❑ Seniors complete a midterm self-evaluation on SWEAP to assess where they believe are with all 10 competencies.
 - ❑ Field instructors should utilize this self-evaluation to facilitate a conversation with the student about strengths, weaknesses, and areas of needed improvement before the final evaluation.

SWEAP

Student's Name

Student's Name

Field Practicum Supervisor Education

Please indicate your education background (Mark all that apply)

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BA or BS in Human Services field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BA or BS in Social Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MA in Liberal Arts field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MA in Human Services field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MSW or MA/MS in Social Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PhD in Human Services field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PhD or DSW in Social Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other |

Please indicate your education background (Mark all that apply)

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BA or BS in Human Services field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BA or BS in Social Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MA in Liberal Arts field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MA in Human Services field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MSW or MA/MS in Social Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PhD in Human Services field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PhD or DSW in Social Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other |

| Competency 2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intern applies and communicates understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Intern applies and communicates understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the mezzo level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| https://www.cengage.com/cgi/venue/login.php?ED=O&ALDTF=027602472024112210160 | | | | | |
| (NIAF) Evidence of | | | | | |
| Intern applies and communicates understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the macro level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Intern presents themselves as learners to clients and constituencies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Intern engages clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Intern applies self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| Comments | | | | | |

| Competency 2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intern applies and communicates understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| Intern applies and communicates understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the mezzo level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | |

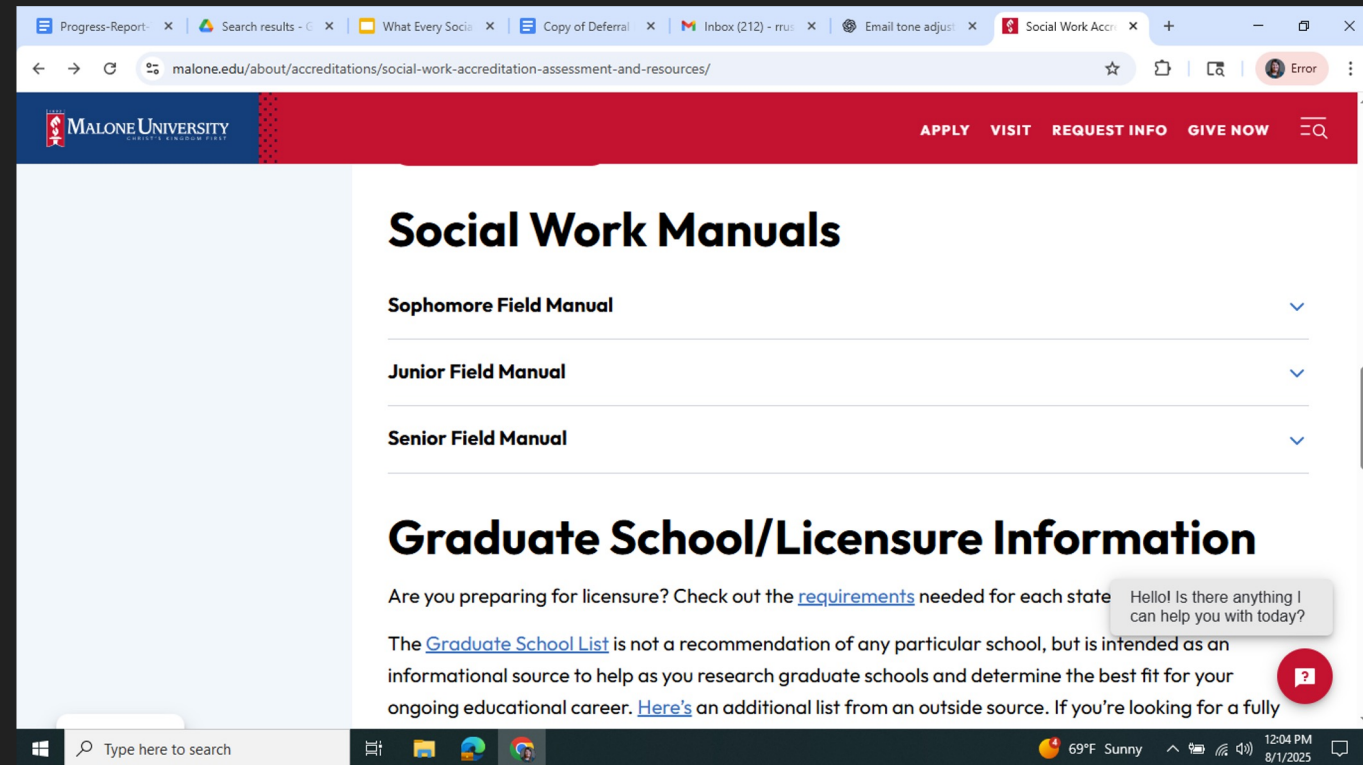
STAF Institute of

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intern applies and communicates understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the macro level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Intern presents themselves as learners to clients and constituencies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Intern engages clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Intern applies self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments

When in doubt...

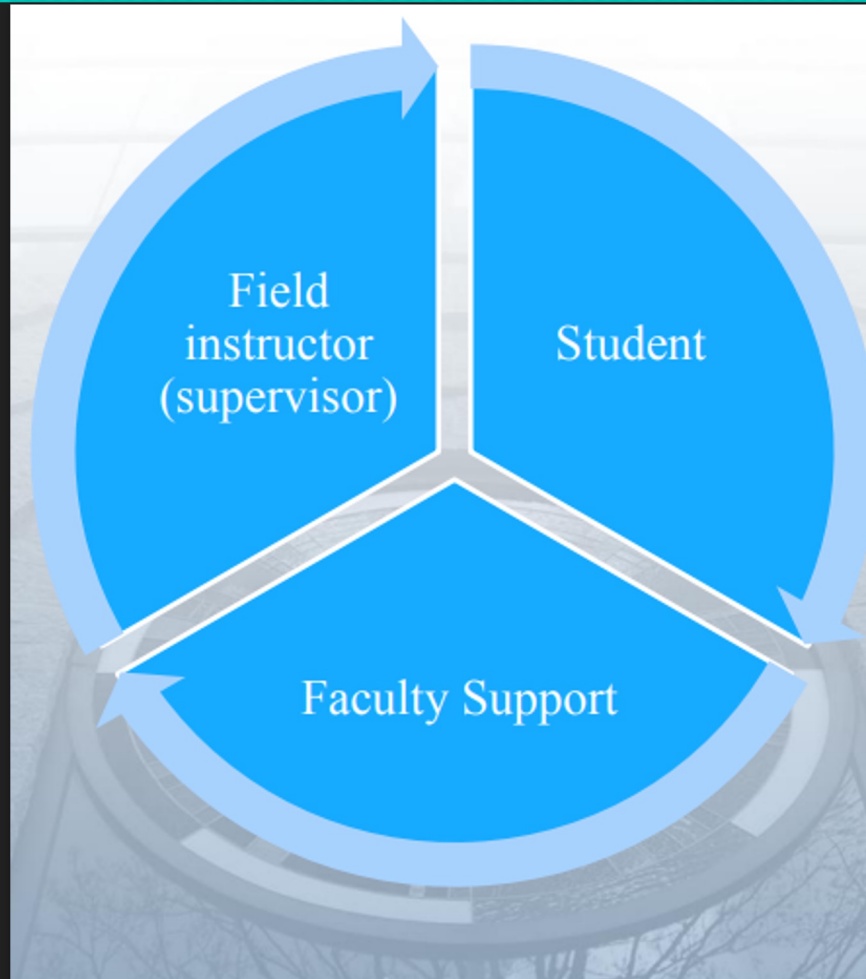
- ❓ Visit the Social Work Department or Accreditation Website!
- ❓ <http://www.malone.edu/social-work>
- ❓ <https://www.malone.edu/about/accreditations/social-work-accreditation-assessment-and-resources/>
- ❓ Call/Email Bekka!



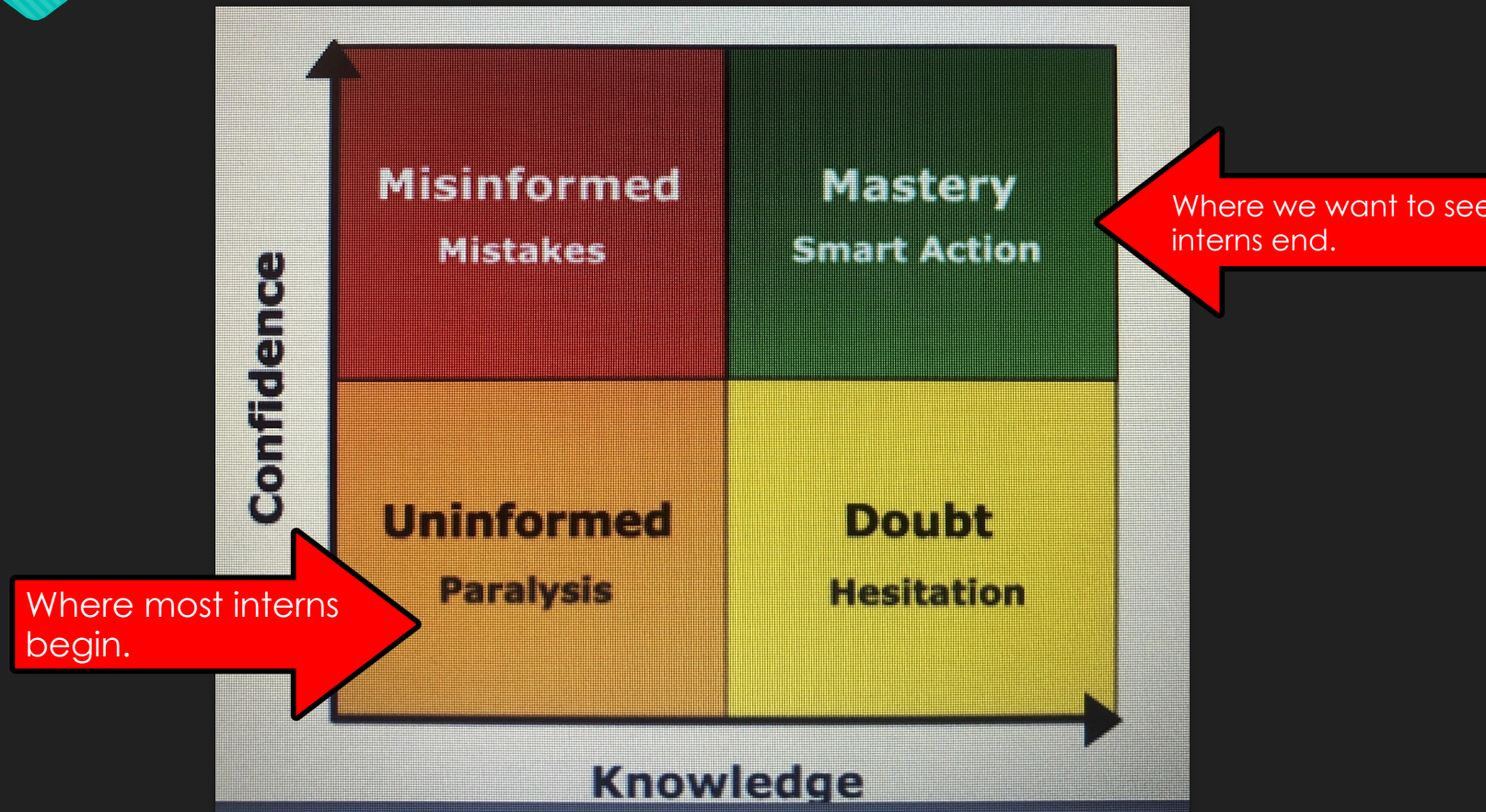
“Signature Pedagogy”

The 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) states, “Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting” (CSWE 2015, p. 12).

Collaborative Relationship



Forming Social Work Professionals



Small Group Discussion #2

- ❓ What have been some challenges that you have had with Malone social work interns? If you have not had Malone social work interns, what challenges do you anticipate with your agency (agency culture, clients, environment, etc.)?
- ❓ What have been some opportunities for growth that you have seen with Malone social work interns?

**WHILE THE
CHALLENGES ARE
GREAT, SO ARE THE
OPPORTUNITIES.**

What Students Need:



1. Clear expectations.
2. Help moving from classroom-based theories to in-person practice realities.
3. Feedback/Evaluation from the beginning of time in field until the end of time in field.
4. A nurturing environment that will encourage the student to grow.
5. A collaborative relationship between supervisor and student.

What helps students make the transition from student to intern?

- ❓ In making the transition from student to intern, "...I have found it helpful to have regular supervision, to use any resources that are available at the agency, to develop a life outside of work, and to maintain contact with people who are making a similar transition" (Trifari, 1999).



Students have also shared...

- ❓ Making the adjustment to intern or social work professional while many of their peers are “just students” is a challenge. Peers are going to class for a few hours, doing homework, taking naps, involved on campus, or eating together in the cafeteria. Our interns are fully immersed into the world of social work for 30-40 hours/week. They often feel isolated!
- ❓ Many students struggle with the realities of the field because the internship is so immersive and their other internships have been for shorter time periods. Some students question whether or not social work is really their passion.
- ❓ Many students experience financial stress, as they are trying to intern, complete seminar class work, work, parent, etc.



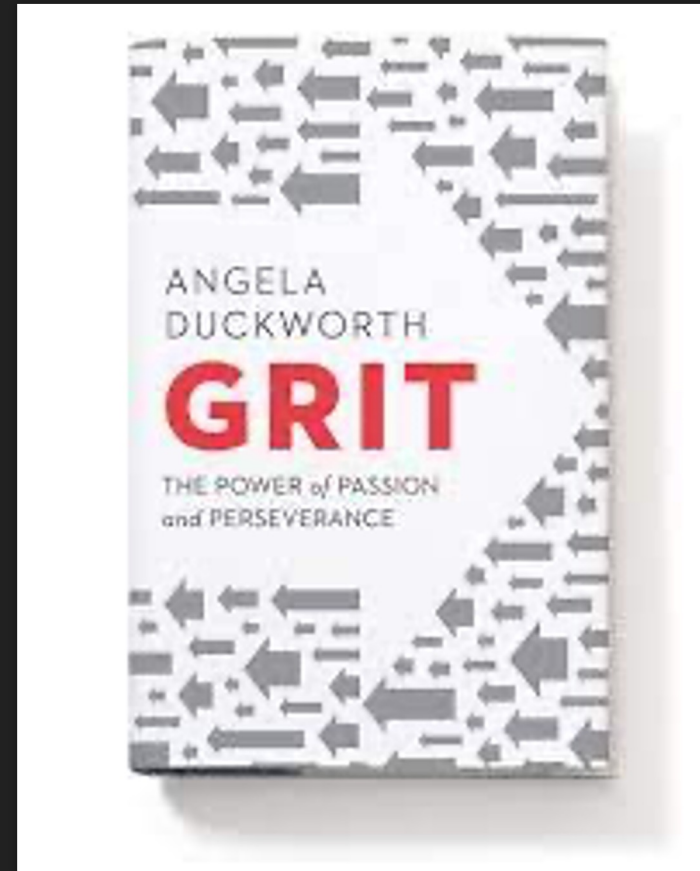
Resourceful Teaches Humor
Answers questions Approachable
Focused Supportive Genuine

Student Generated Adjectives

Mutual respect Makes time for me
Available Challenging Consistent
Problem Solver Accountability

Teaching Grit

- Based on the book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* by Dr. Angela Duckworth.
- To summarize, “Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals.” It is also “...a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is holding steadfast to that goal. Even when you fall down. Even when you screw up. Even when progress toward that goal is halting or slow” (Duckworth, 2021).
- Incorporating these concepts, especially the concept of a “growth mindset” into conversations with students.



Grit Aligns with Malone's Pendle Hill Pledge

- ❑ https://youtu.be/Qghu9ILs_hA
- ❑ Aligns with our Pendle Hill Pledge:
 - ❑ career-focused personality inventories
 - ❑ one-on-one mentoring with faculty
 - ❑ education in the practical skills of job-seeking
 - ❑ internship, practicum, service-learning experience, or major research project opportunities

(Malone University, 2021)




Grit Video

<https://youtu.be/sWctLEdIgi4>

Talent x **Effort** = Skill

Skill x **Effort** = Achievement

A person is standing in a field of tall grass, looking out towards a bright sun in a clear sky. The scene is peaceful and inspiring. Overlaid on this image is a quote in a white box with a black border.

“Without **EFFORT**, your talent is nothing more than unmet potential. Without **EFFORT**, your skill is nothing more than what you could have done, but didn't. With **EFFORT**, talent becomes skill and, at the very same time, **EFFORT** makes skill productive.”
- Angela Duckworth, **GRIT**

WWW.SCHWALLERMEDIA.COM

Creating Passionate Social Workers



Small Group Discussion #3

- ❓ What are some advantages to teaching our student social work interns the concepts of “grit”?
- ❓ Discuss your general thoughts about the concepts of grit: developing a fascination, daily improvement, greater purpose, and growth mindset.



How “gritty” are you? How can you use this with social work interns?

- ? <https://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/>
- ? Take a few minutes to complete the Grit Scale.
- ? “I also think this questionnaire is useful as a prompt for self-reflection. For example, some of the most effective coaches and teachers I know give this questionnaire to their players and students in order to prompt a conversation about their evolving passion and perseverance” (Duckworth, 2021).

Angela Duckworth

THE BOOKFAQRESEARCHABOUTCHARACTER LAB

Grit Scale

Here are a number of statements that may or may not apply to you. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer honestly, considering how you compare to most people. At the end, you'll get a score that reflects how passionate and persevering you see yourself to be.

1. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.

☐ Very much like me

☐ Mostly like me

☐ Somewhat like me

☐ Not much like me

☐ Not like me at all

2. Setbacks don't discourage me. I don't give up easily.

☐ Very much like me

☐ Mostly like me

Intentionally Incorporating Grit

- ❓ We will begin the conversation about being “gritty” in SWK 222 with sophomore level students. We will revisit in conversations with students in SWK 348 and SWK 440/SWK 460, too.
- ❓ The ultimate goal is that we will have social work students who enter field experience feeling “gritty” about the heart of social work, which is social justice!



Final Questions, Comments, or Concerns?



References

CSWE Commission on Accreditation. (2015). *CSWE Handbook of Social Work Accreditation Policies and Procedures*. Council on Social Work Education.

Duckworth, A. (2021). *Angela Duckworth: FAQ*. <http://www.angeladuckworth.com>

Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. Simon & Schuster.

Malone University. (2021). *Pendle Hill Pledge*.
<https://www.malone.edu/academics/pendle-hill-pledge/>

Trifari, J. (1999) From student to professional: Making the transition. *The New Social Worker*.
https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/career-jobs/From_Student_to_Professional%3A_Making_the_Transition/