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## Getting Started - A Checklist for Students

This checklist is offered as a guide to some specifics, which can help you to get started and gain legitimacy with your practicum agency

### Advance Preparation

- ❑ Review the Policies and Procedures in the Course Outline.
- ❑ Write down questions for your first meetings with the field instructor.
- ❑ Do you have any questions about the agency services as a whole? Have these ready for your field instructor.
- ❑ Think about what you really want to learn and how you will benefit from your practicum experience. Make a list of your goals, and be as specific as possible. This will provide you with a good start in formulating your learning contract.
- ❑ Collect course material--course outlines, reading lists, handouts—to share with your field instructor about the UBC program.
- ❑ If you are placed in a community that is unfamiliar to you, learn what you can about the community/neighbourhood--start your own "community file". What information sources are there? For example, available sources are the local library, newspapers, the Infoline, resource guide, etc. Has a community study been done? Explore the neighbourhood your agency is located in and write some notes on your observations.

### First Day - Gaining Credibility

1. First meeting with agency supervisor:
  - find out what the plans are for your orientation/introduction and beginning work with the agency; offer ideas from your list; take your questions with you
  - discuss resume and share learning interests with your field instructor
  - establish supervision times - these should be scheduled weekly
  - establish work hours
  - seek to learn supervisor's and office's most pressing service problems and service priorities
2. List all staff and their jobs.
3. Learn where policy manuals are kept.
4. Observe the office norms in dress, breaks for coffee and lunch, making and cleaning up coffee and socializing.

## During the First Week

- ❑ Complete Social Work Student Health and Safety Orientation form with your field instructor
- ❑ Begin a file or notebook of questions, issues, etc. for your field instructor.
- ❑ Learn office routines for obtaining files, using phone (long distance), keeping work/caseload statistics, getting office supplies such as forms.
- ❑ Find out from your field instructor who will be "back-up supervisor" when s/he is absent.
- ❑ Seek time to talk to other staff members individually.
- ❑ Begin a list of resources used most frequently by the office.
- ❑ Plan your time using a daily log. The first priority will be your field instructor's orientation program, but anticipate "blank spots" by having ideas for your learning. Check these ideas with your field instructor. Some ideas are:
  - ❑ Review policy or other manuals.
  - ❑ Read up on typical problems presented by clients: the staff of your agency library will have such material.
  - ❑ Propose to your field instructor that you visit the local resources (formal and informal), e.g., Police, Community Centre or other centres, Employment Counsellor, develop your own list with staff advice; begin your own resources file.
  - ❑ Read "sample files".
  - ❑ Review legislation related to the job referring to your course materials and agency material.
  - ❑ Ask other staff if you can observe their work.
  - ❑ Attend relevant community meetings or activities.
- ❑ Plan some especially pleasurable and relaxing after-work activity – this is going to feel like a tough week.
- ❑ Don't forget to pay for your coffee!