

GRADUATE HANDBOOK: Online Master's Degree in Sociology

GUIDE TO GRADUATE PROGRAM PROCEDURES

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ASU Graduate Policies and Procedures:
http://graduate.asu.edu/faculty_staff/policies

Graduate Education Catalog On-Line:
<http://www.asu.edu/aad/catalogs/graduate/>

Graduate School On-Line Application:
<http://asu.edu/gradapp>

NOTE: APPLICANTS FOR ADMISSION SHOULD COMPLETE THE ONLINE APPLICATION VIA GRADUATE EDUCATION AFTER READING THROUGH THE ENTIRE HANDBOOK

Last Revised: April 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
PROGRAM OF STUDY.....	4
A. Culminating Experience.....	4
1. Overview.....	4
2. Capstone Project Part I: Professional Development (SOC 586; 3 credits).....	4
3. Capstone Project Part II: Exploration/Specialization (SOC 587; 3 credits).....	4
4. Capstone Project Part III: Application (SOC 588; 3 credits).....	5
B. Admission Procedures for the Online SOC Master’s Program.....	6
1. Program Requirements.....	6
2. Processing of Applications.....	7
3. Admission and Denial Criteria.....	7
C. Plan of Study	7
1. Approval of Plan of Study.....	7
2. Changes in Plan of Study.....	8
3. Performance Reviews.....	8
4. Non-Registration.....	8
D. Expectations	9
1. Timelines.....	9
2. Maintaining Satisfactory Progress.....	9
3. Incomplete Grades.....	10
4. Professional Conduct.....	10
5. Registration Requirements.....	11
E. Financial Aid	11
APPENDIX A: Sample Plan of Coursework	12
APPENDIX B: Capstone Project Part II Proposal Form	13
APPENDIX C: Capstone Project Part III Proposal Form	14
APPENDIX D: Field Experience Guidelines	15
APPENDIX E: Online Master’s Field Experience Agreement Form.....	16
APPENDIX F: Field Experience Supervisor Evaluation Form.....	17

Sociology: Online Master's of Arts (MA)

Forging New Expertise in a Complex World

INTRODUCTION

In order to help families and individuals of all ages, one must help them to succeed in their relationships and to achieve positive outcomes working and living within their communities. Sociological inquiry, including the examination of cultures, relationships, and social change, is an important aspect of supporting these individuals and families. By exploring these relationships, sociological theory, and research methodology, our graduates learn to evaluate and translate research and best practices, developing important and exciting career skills and opportunities.

Beginning Fall of 2015, The T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics (The Sanford School) at Arizona State University offers an **expedited 30-credit hour online Master of Arts degree in Sociology (SOC)** that prepares professionals to work in community settings. **In as little as 15-18 months**, students can obtain their Master's degree. This **non-thesis degree** program focuses on practical application.

Students in this degree program will gain the knowledge and skills to create, facilitate, and evaluate research and programs that provide an understanding of social behavior. The program is designed for students who want an applied practitioner-oriented approach to understanding the issues and needs of children, youth, families, and communities in the 21st century. Experienced faculty who are trained in the area and have considerable expertise in delivering high-quality online education teach the courses and help direct your capstone project. You can enroll any time over the course of the year and no GREs are required for admission.

The Online Terminal Master's (MA) program in SOC is designed to provide practitioner-oriented professionals with advanced training in applying scientific methods to investigate the well-being of various individuals and institutions, and to enhance the public good. . The skills and knowledge acquired during the course of training should enable each student to develop professional competencies that can be applied to significant problems and issues affecting society. The online format provides easy access to rigorous and valuable information that inform best practices in understanding human behavior. The 18-month accelerated non-thesis program includes a culminating experience that allows students to focus their training in their areas of interest and work.

This Graduate Handbook supplements the Graduate Catalog and the Graduate Education Policies (http://graduate.asu.edu/faculty_staff/policies) distributed by ASU Graduate Education. Graduate students should be familiar with and observe all requirements and procedures as defined in those publications.

Sociology: Online Master's of Arts (MA)

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PROGRAM OF STUDY

<u>1. Core Requirements</u>	Credit Hours
SOC 585 Sociological Theory	3
SOC 500 Research Methods	3
SOC 501 Social Science Statistics	3
 <u>2. Electives</u>	 12
 <u>3. Culminating Experience Requirements (see below for more details)</u>	
Students must complete the following culminating experience requirements:	
SOC 586, 587, 588 Capstone Project I, II, III	9
Total Credits	<u>30</u>

A. Culminating Experience

1. Overview.

The Online Master’s degree in SOC has a non-thesis culminating experience as its capstone. This applied culminating experience consists of a 3-part Capstone Project. Each part of the Capstone experience will be customized to fit the individual student’s professional and academic needs and interests. The culminating experience is limited only by the student’s creativity and motivation, with possible experiences being as varied as the student’s interests and individual circumstances. Ultimately, this culminating experience will provide students with a deeper understanding of individual and social needs, issues, and behaviors, as well as a comprehensive professional portfolio.

2. Capstone Project Part I: Professional Development (SOC 586; 3 credits)

Capstone Project I allows students to explore and begin to specify their professional goals and means of obtaining those goals. This process of professional exploration and goal specification will help ensure that, together, the student and capstone instructor can craft personalized capstone projects and experiences that maximize the student’s potential of obtaining his/her goals. As part of Capstone Project I, students will submit each of the following:

- a. Professional Investigation
- b. Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- c. Fieldwork/agency investigation
- d. Resume
- e. E-portfolio
- f. Ongoing online journal entries
- g. Proposal for Capstone Project II (see Appendix B)

3. Capstone Project Part II: Exploration/Specialization (SOC 587; 3 credits).

Capstone Project II allows students to delve into their area(s) of interest, developing a greater depth and understanding of topics related to social needs and behavior, and that further the student's academic and professional goals. In completing Capstone Project II, students must submit **one** of the following papers:

- a. **White paper:** Students focus their writing on identifying problems and related solutions, arguing particular positions, or helping the reader to understand particular issues related to social behavior. Although the content of the information is based on academic sources, the typical audience is non-academic and visual appeal is an important component. Approval of the topic is required.

or

- b. **Research paper:** Students investigate and synthesize information related to an approved topic of interest. The paper will focus on reviewing past and current research pertaining to a specific topic, as defined by the student and the capstone instructor. The paper is written for an academic audience.

In addition to the written requirement, students will be required to do each of the following:

- a. Create a professional presentation summarizing the content of the written paper and present (in person or remotely) to one of the following audiences:
 - A student or professional symposium
 - Academic or professional conference
 - Community agency, organization, or workplace
 - Members of the community, such as parents
 - ASU Online undergraduate students
 - Sanford School faculty and/or graduate students
 - Other approved audience approved by your Capstone Instructor
- b. Fieldwork experience/observation
- c. Expand upon the e-portfolio submitted with Capstone Project I by incorporating information related to your written report.
- d. Write and submit ongoing online journal entries
- e. Submit a proposal for Capstone Project III (see Appendix C)

4. Capstone Project Part III: Application (SOC 588; 3 credits).

Capstone Project III is the point at which students have the opportunity to apply what they have learned through their coursework and the Capstone II written report and research. Once again, the emphasis is on a personalized and useful experience for the students. In consultation with the Fieldwork Coordinator, the student will fashion a field experience plan that allows the student to gain real-world experience related to social needs and behavior. Activities that fulfill the field experience requirement are vast and varied, often limited only by a student's creativity.

As part of Capstone Project III, students will be required to complete **one** of the following activities:

- a. **40 hours of field experience.** Field experience hours can be obtained by working with a single agency, organization, or project, or hours can be derived from a variety of agencies, organizations, or projects. Examples of "field experience" may include

volunteering with community organizations, completing advocacy or policy work, or starting a non-profit entrepreneurial venture.

or

- b. **In-depth investigative paper (40 page minimum).** Students will expand their investigation of their Capstone II paper topic and create a more in-depth written report that informs the reader of the current state of research, future research directions, and/or identify problems and solutions related to individuals, communities, and society.

In addition to selected option above, students will be required to do each of the following:

- c. Write and submit ongoing online journal entries
- d. Write a final reflection paper that brings together what the student has learned through the three parts of the Capstone Project and coursework.
- e. Submit a complete and updated e-portfolio that incorporates information obtained from all Capstone experiences
- f. Submit an updated resume

B. Admission Procedures for the Online SOC Master's Program

Admission to Online MS in Sociology requires the submission of all application materials cited in the *Graduate Catalog* and the program in Sociology. Applicants are expected to meet GPA requirements established by Graduate Education.

1. Program Requirements.

In addition to the application form and materials required by Graduate Education, including official transcripts and official TOEFL test results for international applicants - please see <https://students.asu.edu/graduate/proficiency>), the following information must be submitted for the supplemental application to the Master's program in Sociology. All materials must be submitted on-line via Graduate Education. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis for entry Fall, Spring, or Summer of the academic year.

Requirements for the Supplemental Application to the Master's program in Sociology:

- a. Two letters of recommendation. These letters should be from people who know you as a student or in a professional capacity. Letters from family members or friends do not meet this criterion.
- b. A resume that summarizes the academic and employment experiences of the applicant, as well as applicable community involvement.
- c. A 4-5 page, double-spaced personal statement addressing the following:
 - o State your professional goals, interests, and reasons for desiring to enroll in this program,
 - o Describe your strengths that will help you succeed in the program and in reaching your professional goals,
 - o Describe the significant responsibilities you have held,
 - o Include any additional information that you feel will help the committee evaluate your application.

2. Processing of Applications.

Credentials submitted by the applicant are evaluated by Graduate Education and by the Online Graduate Committee.

3. Admission and Denial Criteria.

Based on the recommendation of the Online Graduate Committee, applicants will be admitted by the School Director. Recommendation for admission or denial will be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Education. Criteria for admission will include:

- a. Evidence of outstanding potential from previous academic record, and previous experience as addressed in the applicant's personal statement;
- b. Professional goals that are compatible with the Online Master's program;
- c. The decision of the committee will be one of the following:
 - Regular admission is granted when the applicant meets the criteria of adequate area preparation, satisfactory grade point average, favorable letters of recommendation, completed Supplementary Information Form and Personal Statement, and when enrollment limits have not been met.
 - Provisional admission is granted either when the applicant has less than a satisfactory academic record but shows potential for high achievement as a graduate student as evidenced by high GPA and/or strong letters of recommendation, or the applicant meets the criteria for regular admission but has had insufficient preparation for the designated area for the graduate study. In such cases, the conditions for admission are stated on the letter of acceptance. The student must meet these stated conditions prior to advancement to regular status. The student is responsible for initiating a change in graduate classification after the conditions of provisional admission have been fulfilled. If the conditions for admission are not met within two semesters of the student's admission, the student will be asked to leave the program. Students who are dropped from the program may reapply for admittance when they can present evidence that the conditions have been met. Presentation of such evidence does not guarantee re-admittance.
 - Admission is denied when either the student does not meet the requirements necessary for admission, the student does not rank sufficiently high to be selected for available slots, or it is deemed that graduate program does not match an applicant's needs, goals, and interests.

C. Plan of Study

1. Approval of Plan of Study.

A Master's plan of study should be carefully worked out with the Sanford School Director of Online Graduate Studies so that it meets the requirements set forth in this document. The Plan of Study should be completed and approved by the student by the semester in which students earn 50% of the required hours for degree completion. Acceptance of the proposed plan of study must

be verified by signature of the student and a school representative. The plan of study is then submitted to Director of Online Graduate Studies in The Sanford School for approval and to Graduate Education for final approval.

2. Changes in Plan of Study.

Necessary changes can be initiated and petitioned by the student. The changes must be pre-approved by the Director of Online Graduate Studies, and Graduate Education.

3. Performance Reviews.

Master's students are required to maintain a minimum of 3.0 GPA in graduate school in all work taken for graduate credit (courses numbered 500 or higher) and in all coursework in the student's approved plan of study. If either the cumulative GPA or the plan of study GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation and receive a deficiency notice from the Online Graduate Committee. The student will be required to raise the cumulative GPA and the plan of study GPA to a minimum of a 3.0 within one semester. If the student fails to raise the cumulative GPA and the plan of study GPA to a minimum of a 3.0 within the allotted time, the student will receive a letter from the Online Graduate Committee notifying him/her that he/she will be recommended for withdrawal from the Program. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the Program.

In addition, a student cannot accumulate more than 2 incompletes at any given time while completing a graduate plan of study. If a student accumulates 3 or more incompletes at any given time, the student will be placed on academic probation and receive a deficiency notice from the Online Graduate Committee. The student will be required to complete all incompletes by the beginning of the following academic year. If the student fails to complete all incompletes within the allotted time, the student will receive a letter from the Online Graduate Committee notifying him/her that he/she will be recommended for withdrawal from the Program. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the Program.

If a student has been absent from the program for 7 or more years and wants to return to complete the Master's program, he/she needs to become current and meet current standards of knowledge in the discipline based on their previous progress in the Master's program. If the student enrolled for continuing registration credits but did not enroll in or complete any coursework, in order to become current, the student needs to satisfy certain requirements. If the student did not enroll in any courses or in continuing registration units, he/she would need to re-apply for the program and be readmitted. In that case, the Online Graduate Committee would recommend the appropriate plan of study for the student.

4. Non-Registration.

According to Graduate Education policy, admitted graduate students are required to be registered for a minimum of one credit hour during all phases of their graduate education. Registration for every fall semester and spring semester is required.

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit a *Request to Maintain Continuous Enrollment* form. This request must be submitted and approved before the anticipated semester of non-registration. Students may request to maintain continuous enrollment without course registration for a maximum of two semesters during their entire program. Students who do not register for a fall or spring semester without an approved Request

are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason may reapply for admission to resume their degree program; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program.

Students should refer to the official ASU Graduate Policies and Procedures document (http://graduate.asu.edu/faculty_staff/policies) for details.

D. Expectations

1. Timelines.

- a. *Deadlines.* In accordance with Graduate Education policy, students must successfully complete all requirements for the Master's degree within 6 years of admission to the Master's program. The Director of Online Graduate Programs, the head of the academic unit, and the dean of Graduate Education must approve exceptions. The Online Graduate Committee will recommend students who do not successfully complete all of the requirements of the Master's program within these timelines for withdrawal from the Master's program. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the Director of the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Online Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, the Doctoral Graduate Committee will review student appeals. Students should refer to the official ASU Graduate Policies and Procedures document (http://graduate.asu.edu/faculty_staff/policies) for details.
- b. *Dates.* The university calendar found in the current *Graduate Catalog* lists important dates and deadlines, including the deadline for *applying for graduation*. Check these and other dates carefully. These dates can also be found on the Graduate Education web page.

2. Maintaining Satisfactory Progress.

Graduate students are required to maintain a minimum of 3.0 GPA in (a) in all coursework taken for graduate credit (courses numbered 500 or higher; Graduate GPA), (b) all coursework in the student's approved plan of study (including those 400 level courses that are taken for graduate credit; Plan of Study GPA), and (c) all coursework taken at ASU post baccalaureate (Overall GPA).

- a. If a student's Graduate GPA, the Plan of Study GPA, or the Overall GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation and receive a deficiency notice from the Online Graduate Committee in Sociology.
- b. The student will be required to raise the Graduate GPA, the Plan of Study GPA, and the Overall GPA to a minimum of a 3.0 within 9 credit hours or two semesters, whichever comes first. Any coursework that earns either a Z or a Y grade cannot be counted to raise the GPA.
- c. If the student fails to raise the Graduate GPA, the Plan of Study GPA, and the Overall GPA to a minimum of a 3.0 within the allotted time (as defined in b above), the student will receive a letter from the Online Graduate Committee notifying him/her that he/she will be recommended for withdrawal from the Program.

- d. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the Director of the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Online Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, the Doctoral Graduate Committee in FHD will review student appeals.

3. Incomplete Grades.

A student cannot accumulate more than 2 incompletes at any given time while completing a graduate plan of study.

- a. If a student accumulates 2 or more incompletes at any given time, the student will be placed on academic probation and receive a deficiency notice from the Online Graduate Committee in Sociology.
- b. The student will be required to complete all incompletes within one semester. Any appeals to modify the length of time to complete the incompletes must be submitted in writing to the Online SOC Graduate Committee. Appeals must be approved, in writing, by the instructing faculty member who assigned the incomplete grade before the appeal will be considered by the Online Graduate Committee.
- c. If the student fails to complete all incompletes within the required timeframe, the student will receive a letter from the Online Graduate Committee notifying him/her that he/she will be recommended for withdrawal from the Program.
- d. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the Director of the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Online Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, the Doctoral Graduate Committee in FHD will review student appeals.

4. Professional Conduct.

All graduate students admitted to a Master's program are subject to the general standards of academic good standing of the university. However, academic standards do not necessarily guarantee that a student will graduate from the program. Because students obtaining a Master's degree from the program are often placed in positions of dealing with the public, they must also demonstrate the requisite qualifications for successful professional performance, including sound mental health, interpersonal skills, basic communication skills, appropriate professional conduct, and satisfactory performance in field experiences.

- a. The Online Graduate Committee will review graduate students who demonstrate behaviors or characteristics that make it questionable that they can succeed in the profession.
- b. The committee's review may result in a decision to disqualify the student or the specification of conditions under which continued participation is permitted (e.g. probation).
- c. Students who wish to appeal the decision of the Online Graduate Committee may do so in writing to the Director of the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics. In this circumstance, the Doctoral Graduate Committee in SOC will review student appeals.

5. Registration Requirements.

All graduate students enrolled in the Online Master's program must be registered for a minimum of one hour of appropriate graduate level credit in the department/school in which they are pursuing their degree program. According to Graduate Education Policy, admitted graduate students are required to be registered for a minimum of one credit hour during all phases of their graduate education. Registration for every fall semester and spring semester is required.

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit a *Request to Maintain Continuous Enrollment* form. This request must be submitted and approved before the anticipated semester of non-registration. Students may request to maintain continuous enrollment without course registration for a maximum of two semesters during their entire program. Students who do not register for a fall or spring semester without an approved Request are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason may reapply for admission to resume their degree program; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program. Students should refer to the official ASU Graduate Policies and Procedures document (http://graduate.asu.edu/faculty_staff/policies) for details.

E. Financial Aid

There are various sources of financial aid through the University. Students should contact ASU's student financial aid office for specific information. A limited number of paid student-hourly Teaching Assistant/Grader positions are available as part of The Sanford School's Online Program. Students interested in these positions should contact Dr. Amy Reesing (amy.reesing@asu.edu). The Sanford School also has a limited number of scholarships available. The number of positions and scholarships vary from year to year depending upon the number of current and entering graduate students who are eligible for support, and the financial support available to the school.

APPENDIX A: Sample Plan of Coursework

Year in Program	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Year 1	<p>Session A SOC 585– Sociological Theory (3)</p> <p>Session B SOC 500 (3) – Graduate Research Methods</p>	<p>Session A Elective 1 – Marriage and Family Relationships (3)</p> <p>FAS 586; Capstone 1 (3)</p> <p>Session B SOC 501 – Social Science Statistics (3)</p>	<p>Session A Elective 2 – Social Change (3)</p> <p>FAS 587; Capstone 2 (3)</p> <p>Session B Elective 3 – Diversity and Culture (3)</p>
Year 2	<p>Session A Elective 4 – Deviance (3)</p> <p>Session B FAS 588; Capstone 3 (3)</p>		

APPENDIX B: Capstone Project Part II Proposal Form

Proposal Statement: Please indicate your plans for your Capstone II project.

1. When do you plan on registering for capstone 2 (i.e., when are you approved to complete capstone 2)? Please include the semester, session, and year.
2. Because Capstone 2 is writing intensive, it can be completed in either 1 session or 2 sessions, although students will only register/pay for a single session (unless continuous enrollment considerations come into play). Do you plan on completing this course in 1 or 2 sessions?
3. Do you plan to write a white paper or a research paper?
4. In 500 word of less, describe your proposed topic. Please include the following: (1) a description of your topic, (2) your reason for selecting the topic, (3) why this topic is important in today's society, (4) the goal/purpose of your paper, and (5) any additional information you would like to share.

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Capstone Instructor: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C: Capstone Project Part III Proposal Form

Proposal Statement: In the space below, indicate your plans for your capstone III project in 500 words or less. If choosing an in-depth investigative paper, please include the following: (1) your selected topic, (2) your reason for selecting the topic, (3) why this topic is important in today's society, and (4) any additional information you would like to share.

If choosing 40 hours of field experience, please describe, in detail, how you plan on completing these 40 hours, including: (1) where and with whom you plan on working, (2) reasons for choosing to work with the agency/organization (or agencies/organizations), (3) how many hours you plan to complete with each agency/organization, (4) what you plan on doing with each agency/organization, (5) what you hope to gain from these experiences, and (6) any additional information you would like to share. In addition, please include: (7) an assessment of any possible barriers to your aforementioned field experience goals.

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Capstone Instructor: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D: Field Experience Guidelines

Students who plan to arrange a field experience must follow these guidelines. Students are required to spend 40 hours engaged in approved field experience activities.

After approval of your Capstone Project III Proposal, students should contact the appropriate person (people) and/or community organization(s) to arrange an initial interview to discuss your field experience. You should be prepared to discuss your goals and the kinds of duties and activities that will contribute toward realizing these goals. If it seems likely that the placement will meet your educational goals, you and your supervisor should determine your field experience hours and responsibilities. Complete the **Field Experience Agreement Form** with your supervisor for each agency/organization. This form must also be approved and signed by the Fieldwork Coordinator. Students should begin their field experience by the end of the first week of classes. Students are required to meet with his/her placement supervisor at least two times during the session.

Journal

Students are required to keep a journal in which they reflect on, evaluate and record their field experience experiences. The journal is intended to serve as a tool to help students develop their capacity for reflective practice. The field experience requirement is based on the premise that learning occurs through direct practice with children and families. Students are expected to record significant experiences, including emotions, attitudes, opinions and insights, and to record reflections on what they have learned as a result of these experiences. Journal entries should focus on: a) what the student learns about him/her self during episodes with children, parents, families, clients, co-workers, and supervisors; b) what the student learns about the children and families with whom he/she is working (if applicable); c) what the student learns and about the nature and process of change (developmental and therapeutic); and d) what the student learns about the organization for which he/she worked and the efficacy of the services provided by that organization. Journals are submitted weekly.

APPENDIX E: Online Master's Field Experience Agreement Form

Student's Name _____ ASU ID _____

Student's Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Agency/Office of Field Experience _____

Agency Supervisor of Student _____

Agency Address _____

Agency Phone _____

Date on which field experience begins: _____ ; and
ends: _____

Field Experience Hours:

Monday between _____ and _____

Tuesday between _____ and _____

Wednesday between _____ and _____

Thursday between _____ and _____

Friday between _____ and _____

Saturday between _____ and _____

Sunday between _____ and _____

For a total of _____ hours.

Field Experience Description: (describe specific tasks, duties and responsibilities of intern. To be filled out by agency supervisor.)

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

Signature of Agency Supervisor _____ Date _____

APPENDIX F: Field Experience Supervisor Evaluation Form

Student: _____

Date Completed _____

Name of Supervisor:

Placement Organization:

Organization Address:

Supervisor's Email address:

Supervisor's Daytime Telephone (including area code):

Supervisor's Professional Discipline/Education:

Signature of Agency Supervisor Date

The rating scale is:

0 – No Opportunity to Observe

1 – Minimal Ability

2 – Moderate Ability

3 – Above Average Ability

4 – Excellent Ability

NA – Not applicable to this setting

1. Was professional and respectful. 0 1 2 3 4 NA	Comments/examples:
2. Attendance was consistent. 0 1 2 3 4 NA	Comments/examples:
3. Was curious, involved, and motivated. 0 1 2 3 4 NA	Comments/examples:
4. Was able to develop professional working relationships with co-workers and clients. 0 1 2 3 4 NA	Comments/examples:
5. Demonstrated the capacity to work as a partner/team member with program and agency representatives. 0 1 2 3 4 NA	Comments/examples:
6. Demonstrated the ability to understand and respect ethnicity, culture, individuality, and diversity. 0 1 2 3 4 NA	Comments/examples:
7. Demonstrated the ability to seek out and use consultation. 0 1 2 3 4 NA	Comments/examples:
8. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of child and family dynamics. 0 1 2 3 4 NA	Comments/examples:

<p>9. Demonstrated the ability to communicate clearly, honestly, sensitively, and diplomatically.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 NA</p>	<p>Comments/examples:</p>
<p>10. Demonstrate sensitivity, empathy, and willingness to understand others.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 NA</p>	<p>Comments/examples:</p>