

University of Montana School of Social Work

MSW Specialization Year Learning Agreement & Evaluation

Learning Agreement Purpose Statement:

The Learning Agreement serves as a guide for the student's learning experience at the practicum agency. For the MSW Specialization Year the nine social work competencies are extended and enhanced, and additional competencies are added by the program for areas of specialized practice. By extending and enhancing the competencies, master's-level students are provided with the four dimensions (i.e., knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes) relevant to each area of specialized practice. Like the Generalist Year, each student is responsible for the development of specific and individualized learning activities within each extended competency, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. These tasks and activities are shaped by the opportunities provided by the agency, the student's learning needs, interests and desires, and the advanced practice competencies required by the School of Social Work and the [2022 CSWE Educational and Policy Standards](#). Activities are site specific, measurable, and individualized with the goal of promoting the student's successful development of the various professional competencies.

The Learning Agreement should be finalized **by week four of the semester** via the student's Sonia account. It will be reviewed by the AFI, the Field Liaison, and the student throughout the practicum's three site visits. It also serves as the basis for assessing practicum performance and progress throughout the academic year and for the student's final practicum grade (credit/ no credit) at the end of the overall practicum experience. Development towards the individual competencies is assessed both during a mid-term and a final evaluation. Consequently, students should regularly review and update their learning agreement and activities and ensure it reflects changes and/or new learning and opportunities.

Rating Scale:

- 1: No Competency - Student does not demonstrate competency with this behavior.
- 2: Minimal Competency - Student rarely demonstrates competency with this behavior.
- 3: Developing Competency with Assistance - Student demonstrates inconsistent competency with this behavior and thus requires assistance and/or coaching.
- 4: Emerging Competency - Student demonstrates beginning-level competency with this behavior but requires ongoing opportunities to demonstrate mastery.
- 5: Demonstrates Competency - Student demonstrates competency and a beginning autonomy with this behavior in complex situations.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
1.1	Demonstrate professionalism in interprofessional, agency, and community practice contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress according to agency policy • Discuss appropriate roles and boundaries of a practicum student with supervisor and other agency staff • Give a presentation at a staff meeting or community event (in person or virtual) • Use professional language (verbal/nonverbal) when dealing with clients and other professionals in the workplace • Engage in effective communication, including notes, emails, letters, and other written correspondence, as well as verbally and non-verbally • Maintain accurate, respectful, and professional written client records (as appropriate) • Inquire and be open to feedback from supervisor or other staff with regards to documentation, oral and written communication
1.2	Utilize critical and anti-racist principles in assessing and evaluating complex ethical situations and decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles with supervisor and assess how they apply to practicum context of practice • Discuss agency policies and how they fit with the NASW Code of Ethics, UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles, and other critical theories and frameworks • Apply ethical decision-making model to work through a situation that presents an ethical dilemma; discuss in supervision • Discuss with other agency professionals how they deal with ethical dilemmas • Review and discuss additional ethical or governing policies which may impact service delivery at the agency (i.e. agency policies, HIPPA/FERPA guidelines, SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP etc.) • Review and discuss UM's IRB process if applicable to practicum context

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss personal/ethical/value dilemmas with supervisor • Journal personal biases or judgments that may hinder appropriate behaviors and discuss managing the same with supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peer in seminar • Discuss needed areas of growth in supervision and work on strategies toward growth
1.3	Utilize supervision and peer consultation to ensure ethical social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend weekly supervision meetings and reflect on professional behavior • Prepare topics to discuss with supervisor (areas for growth, personal and professional boundaries, ethical dilemmas, professional communication, clinical interventions etc.) • Consult with supervisor regarding issues arising in practice • Integrate feedback into practice • Utilize seminar to consult with peers and field liaison • Develop communities of practice with peers and professionals from other disciplines
1.4	Utilize collaborative approaches to complex ethical decision-making that follow standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, additional codes as appropriate, and relevant laws and regulations, and ensure the participation or representation of those most directly affected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss agency policies and how they fit with the NASW Code of Ethics, UMSSW Anti-Racist Principles, and other critical theories and frameworks • Apply ethical decision-making model to work through a situation that presents an ethical dilemma; discuss in supervision • Discuss with other agency professionals how they deal with ethical dilemmas • Review and discuss additional ethical or governing policies which may impact service delivery at the agency (i.e. agency policies, HIPPA/FERPA guidelines, SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP etc.) • Review and discuss UM's IRB process if applicable to practicum context.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
2.1	Utilize anti-racist, anti-colonial strategies to challenge racism and other forms of oppression that compromise human rights or create impediments to socially just policies, programs, and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with current political events and their impacts on social issues and clients • Identify forms of oppression/ discrimination on clients/ populations and discuss with supervisor • Identify economic barriers to social services and care; discuss with supervisor • Identify institutional and systemic barriers to a client's progress and discuss with supervisor • Identify and review key concepts of social empowerment strategies • Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving skills by finding potential solutions and discussing the same with supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in practicum seminar • Critically evaluate service delivery to determine ways current provision of services may
2.2	Advocate for trauma-informed systems of care, expanded access to effective trauma-focused interventions, and social justice for marginalized and oppressed people who are most at risk for experiencing trauma, including historical, racial, and secondary trauma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong understanding of trauma (both primary and secondary), responses to trauma, short and long-term effects of trauma on individuals, families, and communities • Develop a strong understanding of the principles of trauma-informed care and service-delivery • Familiarize yourself with current political events and their impacts on social issues and clients • Advocate for low-barrier client access to services at agency, community, state, and national level • Contact your elected officials to support/ oppose harmful policies and legislation • Join and attend local, state, national coalition meetings • Attend a public hearing or organizational meeting focused on increasing social and economic justice • Develop professional relationships with advocacy organizations serving agency population

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOTE! Engage in voter outreach and education
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	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
2.3	Engage in justice-oriented practice that integrates critical understanding of specific environmental, social, and economic justice issues affecting rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with relevant data on poverty and economic inequality as it relates to practicum context and geographic area of practice • Include specific attention to poverty and economic justice in intervention planning • Identify a policy that addresses environmental, social, and economic issues affecting your community and greater geographic region • Research specific policies affecting clients served by practicum; program and services available; and advocacy opportunities. • Identify specific articles of Universal Declaration of Human Right relevant to practicum context. • Use practicum case example to show how anti-racist and anti-colonial strategies address human rights violations and inform practice. • Complete and present a case study for SW 535 that draws from practicum experience. • Participate in community education or change efforts to address ongoing oppression and discrimination.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
3.1	Design research and practice interventions that are anti-racist, empowering, collaborative, inclusive, equitable, and responsive to organizational and community contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review evaluative tools utilized by agency and evaluate with an ADEI lens • Compare practice methods employed by the agency with ADEI methods being discussed in various classes. • Discuss ways to engage and improve ADEI in practice with supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or peers in practicum seminar. • Summarize the empirically supported interventions available to support the population you serve in culturally relevant ways.
3.2	Engage in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that demonstrate cultural humility and critical understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and document ways you engage in cultural humility within your practice setting. • Outline and then discuss the challenges and opportunities of practicing in rural and Indigenous communities. • Outline and discuss the experience of Indigenous clients seeking services in your practice setting. Determine any barriers and facilitating factors to seeking services. • Identify a time when you have worked across difference with a client or constituency. Critically evaluate the strengths and challenges you experienced during interaction and discuss with supervisor.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
4.1	Apply research-informed knowledge of trauma, including historical trauma, and trauma-informed systems to designing, delivering, and evaluating effective interventions at multiple levels of practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong understanding of trauma (both primary and secondary), responses to trauma, short and long-term effects of trauma on individuals, families, and communities • Develop a strong understanding of the principles of trauma-informed care and service-delivery • Analyze and discuss evidence informed methods and evaluative tools utilized by agency • Discuss theories and perspectives utilized when working with clients and the effectiveness of them • Research evidence-informed policies informing agency practice and client population; discuss with supervisor • Read professional journal articles relevant to clients served by the agency • Discuss with supervisor trauma informed intervention utilized with client population • Interview members of a treatment team for varying perspectives on practice and various models/approaches used. • Discuss specific cases with supervisor, including problem, proposed solution(s), proposed plan of action, and/or proposed measurable outcomes
4.2	Apply multiple ways of knowing and skills of program evaluation (including Indigenous evaluation frameworks and decolonizing methodologies), critical participatory action research, and advocacy to address identified concerns of rural and Indigenous communities and the greater geographic region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review professional literature related to best practices from a variety of sources and perspectives. • Bring findings from readings to bear in seminar and practicum supervision. • Complete program evaluation assignment for SW 521, utilizing Indigenous evaluation frameworks and CPAR. • Learn about the evaluations process used in the practicum. Review research to learn a variety of ways to evaluate practice in the particular context. Suggest possibilities for change as appropriate.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement one evaluation process that engages clients as evaluators (e.g. children's "satisfaction scale" for an after-school program; homeless shelter resident's perspectives on service and support priorities)
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Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
5.1	Demonstrate knowledge of the historic and contemporary significance of the Indian Child Welfare Act in decolonizing or Indigenizing practices with families, communities, and nations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply specific knowledge from SW 532: ICWA to families, communities, and nations served by your practicum agency. Critically evaluate the ways agency services can create opportunities for Indigenous clients to build/enhance cultural connectedness. Discuss with supervisor. Critically evaluate the ways the agency can advocate for the implementation of ICWA. For example, discuss with supervisor how the agency advances the spirit of ICWA- keeping Indigenous youth connected to family, culture and tribal community. Consider how to apply ICWA principles to work with all children and families (e.g. proximity to family, kinship placements, offering culturally specific services to families, reunification).
5.2	Apply frameworks for critical policy analysis that integrate a historical understanding of social policy and a commitment to social justice, intersectionality, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a policy that impacts your practice and critically evaluate its impact on the individual and/or community you serve. Consider whether this policy reinforces or resists against racism, anti-LGBTQ beliefs, colonization, etc. Critically evaluate the history behind a policy impacting services delivered at the agency. What was the intention behind the policy? Does policy meet its intended goals? Discuss with supervisor. Collaborate with supervisor to create policy that promotes equitable delivery of services to minoritized populations

5.3	Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services in rural and indigenous communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize SW 531 in-class activities and assignments to demonstrate the ways you can utilize social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how a social welfare policy affects the delivery of and access to social services in your practice setting. Include an analysis of the considerations particular to rural and indigenous communities.
5.4	Advocate for policies that inform and support trauma-informed systems of care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize yourself with current political events and evaluate the potential connection to trauma experienced by clients. Discuss with supervisor. Advocate for low-barrier client access to services at agency, community, state, and national level Contact your elected officials to support/ oppose policies that have the potential to re-traumatize clients Join and attend local, state, national coalition meetings and advocate for consideration of trauma informed approaches to social issues Attend a public hearing or organizational meeting focused on increasing social and economic justice and trauma informed service delivery to clients served by the agency Develop professional relationships with advocacy organizations serving agency population VOTE! Engage in voter outreach and education

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities:

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
6.1	Apply critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the engagement process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice and document your use of an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective Identify and discuss with supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in practicum seminar, your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles that inform your approach to the engagement process.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the ways you engage with and interview clients/families that demonstrates cultural humility • Take reflective notes and discuss with your supervisor the ways your positionality may impact ethical/ value dilemmas encountered in your work with clients • Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias, and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination
6.2	Effectively address and navigate issues of difference, power, and resistance that arise in the engagement process with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the ways that power is at play in the engagement process. • Seek feedback from supervisor about ways to build rapport and trust, and to roll with resistance with clients • Review literature on rapport-building/ interpersonal skills and practice in various communities and apply concepts in practice • Engage in active listening with clients, colleagues, peers and others • Demonstrate ability to roll with resistance and use appropriate interpersonal skills with clients • Research and apply knowledge related to diversity to enhance client well-being • Observe supervisor and others in their interactions with clients • Identify areas of comfort and discomfort in client engagement and discuss in supervision • Engage with and interview clients/families to determine how power (power with, power over, power to) impacts their experience in the world. • Treat all clients with respect and courtesy regardless of personal bias, and establish initial goals with the client/patient to ensure self-determination

6.3	Implement culturally grounded and trauma-informed principles of engagement with clients and client systems that reflect understanding of and sensitivity to multiple forms of trauma, including historical, intergenerational, racial, and secondary trauma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a case study to show how you are able to practice from a culturally grounded and trauma-informed perspective in context of practicum. • Make a list of specific engagement skills relevant to practicum context (engaging non-verbal children or adults; engaging neighborhood residents; engaging resistant clients; engaging clients who have experienced racism or other forms of trauma) and document your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles. • Identify specific opportunities to practice engagement skills and further your understanding. • Engage in ongoing assessment of learning in supervision. • Identify trauma informed resources relevant to clients served by the practicum. • Critically evaluate how the experiences of historical, intergenerational and racial trauma may impact the engagement process. Discuss with supervisor. • Participate in agency, inter-agency, and community opportunities to enhance culturally-informed practice – e.g. cultural committees, trainings, community consortiums, etc.
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Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities:

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
7.1	Apply critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the assessment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand developmental stages of client population/integrate this into assessment process. Ensure evaluation of developmental stage is informed by an understanding of intersectionality and applies an anti-racist/anti-oppressive lens. • Critically evaluate assessment tools and the appropriateness of fit when used with minoritized client populations • Do family genogram/Eco map after completing assessment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice using systems theory/strengths perspective/anti-racist lens • Utilize culturally relevant intervention strategies to increase understanding of client in environment • Identify and discuss with supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in practicum seminar, various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual) • Engage with and interview clients/families to determine strengths (e.g. connection to culture) and challenges (e.g. experience of intergenerational trauma). • Observe client assessment and write/organize/interpret client data • Develop a written assessment of client that includes client's strengths and challenges including the impact of systems on the client's presenting issue • Critically examine assessment tools and processes, and complete comprehensive, strengths-based, bio-psycho-social-spiritual or Just Practice assessments. • If utilizing the DSM, discuss with supervisor the potential for bias in the assessment process. Work with clients to identify DSM diagnosis, goals for treatment, and interventions that are culturally relevant.
7.2	Utilize collaborative processes of assessment that honor the knowledge, expertise, and experience of the participants and involve them as partners in the change process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document ways in which you involved clients/stakeholders in a teaching-learning process. • Partner with clients to critically examine assessment tools and processes of assessment. Develop assessment approach that is culturally relevant. • Complete comprehensive, strengths-based, bio-psycho-social-spiritual or Just Practice assessments. • If utilizing the DSM, discuss with supervisor the potential for bias in the assessment process. Work with clients to identify DSM diagnosis, goals for treatment, and interventions that are culturally relevant.

7.3	Apply knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed organizations to assess and improve organizational practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically evaluate organization's practices to determine strengths and challenges of trauma informed service delivery. Discuss with supervisor opportunities for change efforts. • Discuss with supervisor organization's approach to assessment of the experience of secondary traumatic stress amongst staff • Discuss with supervisor agency's approach to secondary traumatic stress prevention and response
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Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
8.1	Apply critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the intervention process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a mutually agreed upon focus of work and goals and objectives for clients • Empower clients to identify and work on specific achievable goals • Utilize culturally responsive interpersonal skills with clients • Facilitate a support group or psycho educational group • Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including intervention and termination, as may be appropriate at either the micro, mezzo, or macro level • Identify and discuss with supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in practicum seminar, your critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles that inform your approach to intervention. • Analyze and/or acquire evidence informed methods being utilized within the agency. • Critically evaluate evidence informed or other intervention strategies used with clients to determine extent to which they are culturally relevant. Discuss with supervisor opportunities for adaptation. • Utilize culturally relevant interventions to increase understanding of client in environment • Facilitate a support group or psycho educational group that applies an understanding of anti-racism, culturally humility

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and discuss with supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in practicum seminar, various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual)
8.2	Demonstrate understanding of intervention as a collaborative process of action and accompaniment with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that honors their knowledge, experience, and expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect client to culturally relevant community resources Utilize culturally relevant interventions to increase understanding of client in environment Maintain communication/follow up with client regarding outcomes and potential success Determine commonly used and culturally relevant resources for clients and most effective referral process Attend and participate in community, state, federal advocacy events (e.g. city council hearing, legislative lobby days) Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including intervention and termination, as may be appropriate at either the micro, mezzo, or macro level
8.3	Advocate for the advancement of trauma-informed systems of care, expanded access to effective trauma focused interventions, and social justice for marginalized and oppressed people who are most at risk for experiencing trauma, including historical, racial, and secondary trauma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in community forums (ex. local needs assessments, city council meetings) to advocate for advancement of trauma-informed systems of care related to the issues addressed by your practicum agency and document themes to share with agency staff. Facilitate inter-agency meetings with consumers and providers to expand access to effective trauma-focused interventions. Conduct qualitative interviews with providers, consumers and community members to assess effectiveness of collaboration. Provide recommendations based on results.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
9.1	Apply critical understanding of positionality, intersectionality, cultural humility, and anti-racist principles to inform the evaluation process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review evaluation and data collection tools/ methods used at agency• Evaluate assessments/data collection and intervention practices during supervision• Research and illustrate knowledge of planned change processes, including evaluation and follow-up, as may be appropriate at either the micro, mezzo, or macro level• Integrate research course work into practicum learning• Identify and discuss with supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or peers in practicum seminar, various theories about human behaviors (biological, social, cultural, psychological, and/or spiritual)• Apply strength perspective in evaluation process and review of outcomes
9.2	Design and carry out collaborative and empowering evaluation processes responsive to organizational and community contexts where those most affected are meaningful stakeholders in the decision-making and change efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify specific ways to gather and include client/stakeholder feedback to inform decision-making and change efforts (e.g., surveys, interviews, etc.).• Identify possibilities for integrating participatory approaches into your agency's evaluation process

Competency 10: Apply Forms of Leadership to Support Collaborative, Interdisciplinary, or Transdisciplinary Relationships and Active Community Participation in Addressing the Intersection of Local and Global Issues Impacting your Community and Greater Geographic Region

	Specialized Behaviors	Suggested Learning Activities / Tasks to Evaluate Mastery
10.1	Apply understanding of the relationships among local, state, federal, and Indigenous governments to inform effective advocacy for the rights and wellbeing of residents of one's community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate knowledge of unique community factors, characteristics or initiatives into agency assessments and/or interventions. • Research effective strategies for activism and advocacy and its implications for local, regional and global practice. • Research social work issues specific to your geographic location, including American Indian topics (historical trauma, tribal history and sovereignty, cultural humility; cultural resilience), and rural health care; technology access. • Use knowledge of American Indian topics (historical trauma, tribal history and sovereignty; cultural humility, cultural resilience) to inform practice.
10.2	Utilize inclusive, collaborative approaches to leadership to bring diverse community and organizational stakeholders into processes of organizational change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview AFI and other organizational stakeholders on their leadership styles and use of inclusive and collaborative approach • Engage in collaborate meetings at agency, community, state, and national level
10.3	Facilitate and/or engage in critical dialogue around diversity, equity and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a community change process that takes into account power relations. • Facilitate a dialogue process around diversity, equity, and inclusion at your practicum or in the community. • Facilitate advanced integrative seminar with focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion
10.4	Apply knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed organizations to assess and improve organizational practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate trauma-informed workplace assessment tools in supervision

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a workplace assessment in collaboration with your AFI• Develop trauma-informed care presentation related to practice context and present at agency
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