

Field Instruction Placement



Employment-Based Placement:

The Social Work Program has a clearly defined policy regarding the use of students' employment agencies as field placements. This policy is specified in the Field Education Manual. A student may propose to use the agency in which the student is employed for a field practicum placement. Any exception must be approved by the Coordinator of Field.

Students who wish to apply for a employment-based practicum must complete a Request for Agency of Employment – Based Field Practicum application and a proposal which is reviewed by the Field Coordinator. All employment based field practicum agencies must meet the same requirements established for qualified field agencies. If the criteria are met, Coordinator of Field will contact (by agency visit or phone) will the student's employment supervisor and the proposed MSW supervisor and the proposed MSW supervisor for work site placement to discuss the Department of Social Work's policies and to discuss the plans for the practicum experience. During this contact, the student's employment is clarified, a clear differentiation between the placement experience from the work duties, ensure goals and objectives of the practicum will be met, verify the field work time and the employment time and verify the MSW credentials and experience of the identified field instructor. Material (field manual, learning contract, curriculum plan) for use in making the practicum experience a positive experience for the student and agency are provided during the contact. The work site supervisor may also use the contact to ask questions about any information presented.

THIS POLICY RARELY UTILIZED DUE TO BSW STUDENTS LACK OF CREDENTIALS AND WORK EXPERIENCE.

The following information is required for consideration of an employment-based practicum:

1. The proposal must be designed in such a way that its implementation will facilitate the student's development as a professional social worker by providing opportunities to pursue and achieve the specific objectives of the field practicum courses for which the proposal is made.
2. The proposal may not include or in any way duplicate the roles, tasks, or responsibilities for which the student is employed by the agency.
3. The student is to review the options for completing the field practicum outlined in the

Student Handbook and must consult with his or her advisor prior to developing the proposal.

4. Submit current resume of proposed field instructor.
5. Review the objectives of the field practicum course you are proposing to complete in the agency where you are employed. Your proposal is for completion of Foundation Field Practicum, keep in mind that the foundation curriculum is generic and your proposal must ensure that you will have opportunities to apply the entire curriculum in the field placement including direct work with the individuals and families, group experience, and involvement in an macro project.
6. Type your proposal on agency stationary and title it, "Proposal to Complete Foundation Field Practicum in My Agency of Employment".
7. Structural Arrangement
 - o Describe your agency's function and staff composition.
 - o Describe how your work load will be reduced to insure that the time required for your field practicum is available each week of the placement.
 - o Indicate how your practicum within the agency will be different from the status and responsibilities of your employed position.
 - o Specify the days and times set aside for the field practicum each week.
 - o Specify the days and times set aside for conferences with the proposed field instructor each week (a minimum of 1 hour per week for the concurrent placement or a minimum of 2 hours per week for the current BLOCK placement is required per student)
8. Learning Opportunities
Describe in detail the learning opportunities that will be available to you in the placement, how they relate to field curriculum objectives, and how they differ from your present roles and functions as an agency employee. There must be a differentiation between field work

time and job time: time spent in the field experience must be done in documented blocks of time that are differentiated from the job time.

9. Field Instructor

Approval of the proposed field instructor (MW and two-year post-graduate practice experiences are the minimum requirements LCSW preferred) rests with the Graduate Social Work Program. The student's present supervisor may not be used as the field instructor. In addition, careful thought should be given to the nature of your relationship with the person you are proposing as a field instructor with regard to potential conflicts of interest, for example: a relative or close personal friend would not be appropriate.

10. Approvals and Signatures

- The student's advisor must sign the proposal before it is submitted to the Field Coordinator.
- The administrator of the agency where the student is employed must sign the proposal indicating their approval. This includes approval of the required time for the employee to be a student in the agency and for the person providing Field Practicum supervision to serve as the student's field instructor.
- The field instructor must sign the proposal indicating their approval of the plan, including willingness to serve as the field instructor and to be available for required Field Practicum supervisory conferences; must submit resume with proposal.
- The student must sign the proposal.
- The proposal must be submitted to the Coordinator of Field Instruction for final approval.
- This proposal becomes the formal agreement among all parties who have signed the document and an attachment to the Memorandum of Agreement.

Students are provided by a few agencies for students. When accepting the stipends, students are not considered employees of agencies. The purpose of Field Instruction is to provide a setting in which students are seconded the opportunity to theoretical and conceptual materials from the curriculum, to practice under the supervision of agency based professional social workers approved by the Program. The following policy applies to students receiving stipends from agencies.

AS B2.0 The curriculum is developed and organized as a coherent and integrated whole consistent with program goals and objectives. Social work education is grounded in the liberal arts and contains a coherent, integrated professional foundation in social work practice from which an advanced practice curriculum is build at the graduate level.

Placement Policy. Placements are recommended by the Coordinator of Field Instruction based on careful screening of the agencies and the students' needs. The best possible matches are made with the educational goals of the field program and curriculum uppermost in mind. All placements are generic settings capable of offering opportunities for generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities and at risk populations in Northern Alabama.

Pre-Placement Procedures:

1. During the Fall and Spring semester of the junior year, students receive an orientation from the Coordinator of Field Instruction and current field students at a Sunday afternoon reception. This meeting gives students general information on the field program, policies and procedures. All potential candidates for senior field instruction are expected to attend this program.
2. After this meeting, students initiate the process of applying for senior field instruction through their faculty advisors. A record check of all required courses is completed jointly by the student and faculty advisor. A record check is a thorough examination of the student's transcripts to determine courses passed and failed, missing grades, transfer waivers, if applicable, current GPA, insurance coverage (liability and automobile), etc.
3. If a student has not met requirements for senior field instruction, a plan to remove the deficiencies is prepared by the faculty advisor.
4. The student is recommended or not recommended by the faculty advisor based on the completion of prerequisite requirements

assessed during the record check. Students must have a 2.0 GPA to enroll in field instruction.

5. After the senior record check is completed, a referral of the student's readiness to enroll in senior field instruction is forwarded to the Coordinator of Field Instruction. This form begins the field instruction placement process.

Placement Procedures:

1. The student is given a field instruction application to complete and a meeting is arranged to discuss the application and field instruction readiness form. If needed, any questions regarding the completion of the application is answered by the Coordinator of Field Instruction. Student must successfully pass ABI/FBI Background Check, apply for liability insurance and NASW membership.
2. After an individual meeting with each student approved for field instruction, the Coordinator of Field Instruction will make specific placement assignments and notify the student in a pre-arranged meeting. Prior to notification of the student, the Coordinator of Field Instruction will make appropriate arrangements with the agency and agency field instructor.
3. If the student agrees with the placement recommendation, the student is approved to arrange a pre-placement interview with agency field instructor at the proposed placement site. The student is responsible for arranging his/her pre-placement interview within one week of notification by the Coordinator of Field Instruction. At this interview, the student will provide the agency field instructor with an updated resume™ and placement confirmation form.
4. The purpose of this pre-placement interview is to:
 1. provide an opportunity for the agency field instructor and student to determine the suitability of the placement in relation to the educational needs of the

student and the generalist practice requirements of the Program.

2. discuss any relevant conditions of placement.
3. acquaint the student with the agency and its functions.

Placement Notification:

1. Following the pre-placement interview, the agency field instructor will return the pre-placement confirmation form to the Coordinator of Field Instruction indicating whether or not they are in agreement with this placement decision.
2. If both parties agree to the placement, the student's pre-placement form is completed and forwarded to the Coordinator of Field Instruction with copies to the agency's Field Supervisor and one placed in the student's record.
3. If the agency field instructor or student refuse to accept the assignment, the Coordinator of Field Instruction will seek an alternative placement.
4. The student is permitted to voluntarily reject only one placement assignment. The rejection of all subsequent placement assignments is conducted through the appeals procedure for field instruction.
5. If it is necessary to assign an alternative placement to the student, steps 7-10 are repeated.
6. Finalization of the student's placement assignment occurs prior to the end of the semester in which the application was made.
7. If unforeseen circumstances arise that necessitate a change in placement after the final approval has been granted, the Coordinator of Field Instruction must be notified immediately in order that other arrangements can be made. No alternate placements will be developed once SWK 407 commences.
8. If the student desires placement in an agency that has not been approved previously, the

student should notify the Coordinator of Field Instruction prior to the beginning of the field placement process. Since the process of approving field agencies and agency field instructors require considerable time, no requests for previously unapproved agencies can be honored following the placement process, which begins in March (for Fall placement) and October (for Spring placement) of each academic year.

Placement Planning and Agreement:

At the onset of the placement process in either the Fall and Spring semester, the student and agency field instructor prepare a Field Instruction Plan. The purpose of the field instruction plan is to identify three phases of the student's generalist field instruction placement. The phases will describe, (1) how the student will be oriented to the agency, (2) how the student will be provided core field instruction assignments and activities and, (3) how the student will be evaluated for termination at the end of each semester.

The agency field instructor is responsible for the completion of the field instruction plan. A plan is prepared at the beginning of each block placement, which will allow the student substantial opportunities for generalist practice skills.

The faculty liaison and Coordinator of Field Instruction use this plan to understand the scope and extent of generalist assignments given to the student over the course of the field instruction year. The Coordinator of Field Instruction is available to meet and assist in the development of the plan with the agency field instructor. The submission of the Field Instruction Plan and Agreement form completes the placement process.

Change of Placement Policy:

It is the policy of the Undergraduate Social Work Program that students are placed in generalist field settings that offer the opportunity to practice under MSW supervision. Each placement has those generic qualities, which afford every student, regardless of personal preference, the opportunity to become a competent entry-level practitioner.

Agency field instructors are expected to keep the faculty liaison and Coordinator of Field Instruction informed of any field problems. Once a student is placed at an agency, the placement agreement implies that termination from the setting by either party will be undertaken in the rarest of circumstances.

Procedures:

Requests for changes of placement must involve active participation of the student, faculty liaison, agency field instructor and Coordinator of Field Instruction. In those rare instances when intractable problems arise in the setting, the following procedures are to be followed:

- The Coordinator of Field Instruction must be informed immediately if an issue develops that may affect a student's continued placement.
- Student, agency field instructor, and faculty liaison make arrangements to resolve the problem(s).
- If the issue cannot be resolved, the Field Instruction Grievance process is activated.

Early Withdrawal Policy:

If a student withdraws from Field Instruction before the end of the semester with a valid excuse (illness, death, family crises, etc.), University policy will be followed. At that time an incomplete grade will be given. The withdrawal from field instruction is an extremely critical act on the part of the student. Every effort should be made to resolve personal and performance problems.

Procedures:

1. The student is required to meet with the Coordinator of Field Instruction and his/her faculty advisor before a final decision to withdraw from field instruction is made.
2. If necessary, field instruction grievance procedures can be utilized prior to withdrawal from SWK 407.