Field Instruction and Grievance Policy

Every student has the right to resolve a grievance in a professional manner with the appropriate parties. All grievances shall be handled expeditiously with full consideration for the student's rights and prerogatives.

Field Instruction Grievance Procedures:

The student complaint procedure for resolving a grievance in SWK 407 is outlined below.

1. If the student has a complaint, disagreement, or concern, it is recommended that the student discuss the matter with the person involved. If the complaint involves a grade, the student should refer to the appropriate section in the University catalog and the Undergraduate Social Work Student Handbook.

2. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved through discussion, or if the student thinks it is not practical to contact the person involved, the student should inform his or her Faculty Liaison of the situation. The Faculty Liaison may schedule a conference with the student, agency field instructor, and the person to whom the complaint is directed for the purpose of achieving a mutually agreeable solution or compromise. If the complaint is directed at the agency field instructor, the student should discuss the issue with the Coordinator of Field Instruction.

3. If the conjoint conference fails in its goal, the student may present a letter of request for a grievance hearing to the Coordinator of Field Instruction. The letter of request must specify the exact nature of the complaint and an agreement to accept the findings and decisions of the committee as final.

4. The Coordinator of Field Instruction will inform the person involved that a complaint has been filed and specify the nature of the issue.

5. Within seven days of receiving the letter of request for a grievance hearing, the Coordinator of Field Instruction will convene
the Field Instruction Grievance Committee, which is an ad hoc committee.
6. The Field Instruction Grievance Committee will be composed of the following people:
   1. Chairman (selected from Social Work faculty)
   2. The Coordinator of Field Instruction
   3. Social Work Student Representative (In the event this is the grievance, a substitute will be chosen)
   4. A Representative of the Field Review and Certification Committee
   5. Field Agency Representative (other than person involved in the grievance)
7. The grievant may be accompanied by one other person who has direct knowledge of the grievance and can provide factual information to substantiate the grievance.
8. After a full hearing, the grievant and the party involved will be excused before the Committee votes.
9. The decision of the Committee is final and no further hearings will be held in the matter.
10. Students receive a copy of the field instruction grievance procedures at the beginning of each block placement (fall and Spring). A copy is also posted in the Social Work lab.

Field Practicum Insurance Requirements

Professional Liability and Automobile Coverage

All undergraduate social work students are required to secure professional liability coverage prior to entering the actual field placement. This coverage must be secured at the expense of the students and is available through the NASW Student Professional Liability Insurance Program as well as private insurers. Students are encouraged to secure coverage through NASW as the cost are more affordable and the policy is designed to meet the needs of the social work field placement student. Proof of coverage is required before the actual field placement process can be completed. The Coordinator of Field Instruction has applications available in the office. Additionally, a car is usually required at most practicum sites therefore, students must have access to an automobile with appropriate insurance coverage to meet their field placement requirements. Documentation for automobile coverage must be submitted to the Coordinator of Field with the application for field.
Students should be aware that the practice of social work involves an element of personal risk. Concerns about safety of self or others should be discussed with the field instructor to determine effective and appropriate actions, which reduce or eliminate this concern. The faculty field liaison or Coordinator of field should also be informed of any concerns that the student may have regarding safety issues in the field.

**Leave Time from Field Practicum**

1. All field practicum students are expected to comply with the leave policies of their field agency. The following policies should be adhered to by all field students when leave time from the practicum is necessary:
2. Regular attendance in placement is expected for the entire scheduled field instruction period;
3. Students will notify the field instructor of anticipated absences due to any reasons;
4. All absences, except for official University or agency holidays and required meetings arranged for by the Undergraduate Social Work Program, are to be made up in a manner mutually agreed to by the student, the field instructor, and the faculty field liaison;
5. Absences due to observance of religious holidays, attendance at professional meetings, or participation in professional conferences may be excused with the approval of the field instructor and the faculty field liaison;
6. Vacations: Prior to lengthy semester breaks (more than two weeks), students are expected to assess their agency assignments (specifically related to clients and/or special projects) with their field instructor to determine if, and how frequently, during their vacation time, they will need to be at the agency to meet on-going professional responsibilities. This will become part of their learning/working contract and is to be shared with their faculty field liaison; and
7. Some overtime in field practicum is to be expected. This overtime may be used to offset leave time used by the student for sickness or other personal concerns. However, if this overtime becomes excessive, students should discuss the matter with their field instructor and/or faculty liaison.
Ethics Violations

In instances where the student's problem is not primarily academic, but has arisen because of violation of professional ethics or behavior that is detrimental to the welfare of the student's client and the agency, the student may be subjected to discipline and/or dismissal from the Undergraduate Social Work Program by recommendation of the undergraduate faculty (see NASW Code of Ethics).

Non-Discrimination And Sexual Harassment

Alabama A&M University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or gender. The University has a sexual harassment policy to ensure non-discrimination against any member of the university community. Any incident of discrimination or sexual harassment should be brought promptly to the Coordinator of Field Instruction who will proceed through the chain of command regarding such matters. The University has formal procedures to deal with problems that occur relating to violations of this university policy. Contained within the Student Handbook is a copy of the University’s Sexual Harassment Policy.

Confidentiality

Relevant personal student information, written and oral, will be shared with all relevant parties - Coordinator or Field Instruction, faculty field liaison, and field instructor. This information will be shared to enable appropriate field placement, informed choice by field instructors, protect clients and students and facilitate the learning process. Information about the student must facilitate the learning process or have direct impact on field placement. Information is relevant if it may affect clients, field instructors, agency staff or the learning process. Before sharing sensitive information the student will sign a release of information form. All parties will adhere to strict standards of confidentiality regarding sensitive information shared in the efforts to locate a field placement for the student.

Examples of relevant student information to be shared:

1. If a student desires a placement in a sexual assault program, and he/she or a member of their family has been raped; the student should probably share this information with the Coordinator of Field Instruction.
2. If a student or a member of his/her family has been hospitalized for a psychiatric illness, and the student desires a placement in a
psychiatric hospital; the student should share this information.

3. If the student has an illness or disability that will affect the performance of field placement responsibilities, he/she should share what they will do to carry out the tasks of the placement and what reasonable accommodations the agency will need to make. For example, if the student has chronic fatigue syndrome, he/she may need to spend shorter periods of time in the agency and spread the placement out over a longer time period.

Life Experience/Work Experience

No Field Practicum credit is given for life experience or previous work experience of any student accepted into the Undergraduate Social Work Program.