**Field Practicum**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. When can I begin my field internship?**

* Students may begin their placement once field orientation has been completed and your understanding of field expectations have been assessed
* Students may not begin a field internship without a School issued malpractice insurance and release of liability form completed – no exceptions
* Students who begin a field practicum prior to the field orientation may risk losing their placement

**Q. What if my field agency wants to me to attend an agency orientation prior to the field orientation?**

* Students must seek approval from the Field Director regarding orientation at an agency prior to field orientation
* If approved, students are not authorized to have direct client contact until the field orienation

**Q. What if my field agency requires a background check, drug test, or immunization records from me?**

* Texas State does not pay for background checks, drug tests, or immunization records
* Students must make arrangements in advance to complete the agency required documents

**Q. Who are the points of contact for my field practicum?**

* The field instructor/supervisor is your first point of contact for agency related issues
* Field liaisons are your seminar instructors and liaison with the agency where you are placed
* Field advisor is the faculty who placed you at the agency

**Q. What are the requirements of field education?**

* Students must apply for field education
* Students must pass all required courses prior to entering field courses – final grades will be verified by the academic advisor. A failing grade in required coursework may postpone field education
* Students must enroll in an integrative field seminar course concurrently with a field practicum course (BSW 4645/4650, MSW-F 5410/5411, MSW-A 5378/5979,5379,5679)

**Q. What am I responsible for doing in the field practicum?**

* Attendance of all integrative seminar classes
* Completion of all seminar course assignments
* Completion of all internship hours
* Successfully demonstrating competency in social work practice (educational learning plan)

**Q. Can I miss an integrative seminar class? What does that mean for my grade?**

* One missed seminar will result in an automatic letter grade drop
* Students may not miss a seminar class due to the limited contact hours available
* Medical emergencies (unplanned) are the only exception with proper medical documentation
* A passing grade in seminar is a “B” or better

**Q. How often does the integrative seminar course meet?**

* On campus students have a hybrid seminar
	+ Meet in person every other week for 3 hours
	+ Check in activity online every other week for 1 hour
* Online students meet virtually every other week for 3 hours
* Online students have a check in activity every other week for 1 hour
* The integrative seminar is a mandatory course

**Q. What are considered ‘contact hours’ in field?**

* CSWE requires contact hours as face-to-face with clients, families, and community constituents in an agency setting
* Weekly supervision time
* Field Agency Instructor assigned and approved in agency workload
* Agency related orientations, trainings, workshops, and community meetings assigned by the agency
* Activities and tasks outlined in the educational learning plan

**Q. What are NOT considered ‘contact hours’ in field?**

* Field seminar class
* Travel time to and from seminar
* Travel time to and from internship/agency placement
* Watching videos, YouTube, movies, book reports, and other supplemental reading not in your educational learning plan or assigned by agency
* Self-care
* Field seminar homework
* Meetings on campus with field office representatives
* Anything not found in the educational learning plan

**Q. How do I keep track of my time worked?**

* The field office provides you with a timesheet template and instructions
* Time sheets must be filled out and signed by you and your supervisor approving your hours for the week
* Weekly timesheets are to be submitted the faculty liaisons teaching seminar courses
* Time worked must match educational learning plan activities and tasks

**Q.** **I work full time, can I work only nights and weekends?**

* No, there are no nights and weekend only internships
* Interns are required to have approved supervision during their internship hours
* Field practicum is a required course which involves a substantial amount of your time, working full time is not an excuse for missing any parts of the field education requirements

**Q. What if I do not complete all the required field contact hours?**

* You will not pass field practicum without meeting contact hour requirements
* A failing grade in field is a “C” and below
* You may have to begin your field practicum again if you do not meet the course requirements

**Q.** **What if I have personal issues or a personal crisis during the internship?**

* Schedule a time to speak with your field liaison to explain the circumstances
* If the situation is going to prevent you from completing the field requirements, a meeting with the Field Director will be necessary
* If the situation is affecting your well-being, consult with your field liaison so the appropriate School representatives can provide support and guidance on resolution

**Q. What is supervision and how many hours of supervision do I need each week?**

* Supervision is direct one-on-one meeting with an approved social work professional to support your development of social work competencies while in the field practicum agency
* Meet with your supervisor for a minimum of one hour every week
* Schedule your weekly supervision day and time in advance with your field instructor/supervisor
* The weekly supervision form will support a structured supervision session
* Ask for feedback from your field instructor to make improvement in your professional development
* Process client issues and feelings about your experience in the agency during supervision

**Q. What is an educational learning plan?**

* The educational learning plan is the contract between the student and the agency which outlines practice behaviors and tasks related to the nine (9) Council on Social Work Education Competencies
* Each competency includes practice behaviors, corresponding learning activities, evaluation criteria, and target dates
* Student interns will receive a learning plan template with instructions to complete
* The educational learning plan is the tool to conduct midterm and final evaluations during the internship
* The educational learning plan is developed by the student with the field instructor/supervisor and then submitted to the field liaison

**Q. How will I be evaluated in my field placement?**

* Student’s will be evaluated during their internship by the field instructor/supervisor through a midterm and final evaluation
* Weekly supervision is an opportunity to track your progress and development of social work competencies
* The midterm and final evaluations are the formal instruments used to evaluate the student’s internship experience in relation to the educational learning plan. The field instructor/supervisor provides the direct feedback and evaluation
* Field instructors recommend a Pass/Fail to the field liaison based on students’ evaluation and performance in the practicum
* Field Liaisons are the Texas State School of Social Work faculty of record for field instruction and final grades

**Q. Will my faculty liaison visit me at the agency and how often?**

* The field liaison will visit you at least once during the semester. This may include one face-to-face visit and/ or a web-based visit for online students
* The field liaison will determine the most appropriate time and type of visit based upon the availability of the field instructor

**Q. What do I wear to my internship?**

* Follow the agency’s dress code, speak with your field instructor about the expectations of the agency
* When in doubt, dress professionally for your internship
* Remember, you are representing the agency, Texas State School of Social Work, and the profession
* If you are unsure, contact Texas State University’s Career Center http://www.careerservices.txstate.edu/ Point of contact: Ross Wood

**Q. What are my work hours in the internship?**

* As a student intern, you must follow the hours of operation of the agency
* Set up a work schedule with your field instructor within the first week
* As an intern, determine the policies regarding arrival time, lunch time, and authorized leave
* Discuss with your field instructor holidays and days off to determine your available time off
* Discuss with your field instructor the policies for calling in sick or informing someone you will be late
* Discuss with your field instructor your integrative field seminar days and time

**Q. What if I don’t like my agency? What if I am having conflicts in my agency?**

* We encourage student interns to speak with the field instructor to discuss issues of concern
* If you feel there are any safety concerns, immediately address with your field instructor and field liaison
* If the situation at your agency is delicate, speak with your field liaison to guide you on next steps
* Resolving conflicts in the workplace is part of professional development

**Q. Can I switch to another agency placement?**

* The Office of Field Education works diligently to secure an internship which is a good “fit” for each student entering field. The Director and Field Team will review each internship uniquely and determine if adjusting a student’s internship is appropriate

**Q. What if I believe there are ethical violations occurring in my agency?**

* If a student believes there are ethical violations occurring in the agency they need to approach the agency supervisor/field instructor to discuss the concern
* The student should share these concerns with the field liaison to determine the best approach in addressing the ethical violation
* The student can process the experience during supervision with the field instructor or preceptor or field liaison to understand the violation through a social work lens/perspective

**Q. Can I conduct home visits with clients?**

* Yes, with a representative of the agency and never alone
* Safety considerations are always important when assessing a visit in the field
* Review the Guidelines for Enhancing Safety and Minimizing Risk in Field

**Q. What if I must transport clients?**

* If the agency requires you to transport a client(s), you may only use an agency vehicle
* Never transport a client alone, partner with an agency representative
* ***Texas State University is not liable for accidents***
* Talk with your field instructor about your concerns for transporting clients if you feel uncomfortable doing so

**Q. What if I feel unsafe in my field placement?**

* If students feel unsafe in their agency, inform the field instructor immediately to explain the circumstances
* Students should inform the field liaison who can assess the best course of action
* Students must communicate this concern as soon as they feel unsafe. Prolonging the circumstance could exacerbate the situation

**Q. What if my agency requests to terminate my internship?**

* If an agency requests to terminate an internship, the student should notify their field liaison as soon possible
* The Office of Field Education will be involved in this decision and work to resolve any issues
* The field liaison is the student’s primary point of contact for any concerns related to the overall internship

**Q. What if I complete all of my hours before the end of the 15 weeks (summer 10 weeks)?**

* The earliest date students may complete their placements, even if their field hours exceed the program required hours, is December 1 (fall), or May 1(spring)
* In order to end early, the student must have the support of their field instructor and must demonstrate successful completion of all required hours and field documents
* Students should ensure that their responsibilities to agencies, clients, communities, and families are met first before exiting an agency