

# School of Social Work

*Social Work with Integrity: Promoting Global Well-Being*



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**FIELD EDUCATION HANDBOOK**  
*for*  
**Students and Field Instructors**

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*REVISED March 2021*

**TEXAS**  **STATE**  

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**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**®

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## WELCOME TO FIELD EDUCATION

The School of Social Work at Texas State University endorses the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) principle that field education is the "signature pedagogy" of social work education. Field education requires all social work students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through training experiences in professionally supervised and educationally based field internship placements. Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner.

The purpose of field education is to provide the student with the opportunity to develop competence in social work skills and professional values in actual social service settings. The comprehensive curriculum of the School of Social Work encourages the student to integrate theory, knowledge, values, and skills learned in the classroom and demonstrate mastery of social work behaviors and development of professional competencies in field education. Through coursework and field internships, students are prepared to become professional social workers with the knowledge, values, and skills needed to serve individuals and families, transform communities, influence social policy, and promote social and economic justice.

The Field Education Office, which includes the Director, Coordinators, Advisors, Online Site Coordinators, and Field Liaison, are responsible for all matters related to field education. Field team members may serve as field advisors and faculty advisor/liaisons (see [Glossary of Terms](#)).

This handbook guides students in field education and agency field instructors on policies and procedures relevant to the School of Social Work Field Education. Field Education is an exciting time for students as they transition into the social work profession.

The School of Social Work Office of Field Education Frequently Asked Questions may be found at <https://www.socialwork.txstate.edu/fieldpracticum.html>, for additional information to this handbook.

## THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The first social work course was offered in the School of Sociology in 1975. Initially, social work was offered as a sequence in the sociology major. Later it developed as an academic minor, and eventually expanded into an academic major. The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program was first accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 1978, with reaffirmation of accreditation offered in 1985 and 1992. The Master of Social Work (MSW) program was authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in the Fall of 1994 with instruction to begin in the Fall of 1995. The MSW Program received accreditation by CSWE in 2000. Both the BSW and MSW programs have successfully maintained accreditation standards through reaffirmation.

The School of Social Work has robust BSW and MSW programs with over 500 actively enrolled students each semester. The BSW program is a campus-based program for full time students. The School offers online MSW programs for two types of students; 1.) Foundation track for students who have a bachelor's degree in a field of study other than social work and wish to obtain an MSW or 2.) Advanced Standing track for students who have a Bachelor of Social Work degree from an accredited program. Students may complete their MSW education online as a full time or part time student.

The School of Social Work is part of the College of Applied Arts at Texas State University. The School is guided by a Director, Assistant Director, MSW Program Director, BSW Program Director, and Field Director who act as the administrative decision-making body for academic issues relating to social work education. The School Director reports directly to the Dean of the College of Applied Arts.

## **PROGRAM CURRICULUM**

The School of Social Work at Texas State University offers both the BSW and MSW degree options. The curriculum is differentiated by the type of program and method of delivery.

### **Types of Programs**

#### **BSW**

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree program at Texas State University School of Social Work prepares students intending to pursue entry-level professional social work practice or further graduate study. BSW graduates will be prepared for employment in such varied fields as child welfare, corrections, physical and mental health care, long-term care, rehabilitation, and public assistance. The Texas State BSW program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and graduates are eligible for state licensure.

#### **MSW**

The Master of Social Work degree program at the Texas State University School of Social Work is an exciting opportunity for college-degreed people who are interested in pursuing a career based around improving society. Our MSW degree program is built on a liberal arts perspective. Our graduates perform extremely well on state licensing exams and have found employment across a wide variety of service delivery fields.

The Texas State University School of Social Work offers the MSW program both on-campus and online. These degree offerings, regardless of delivery method, utilize the same textbooks and curricula and are taught by core faculty. The School of Social work also offers interesting electives in specific topics, such as health care, diversity, international social work, gerontology, spirituality, adventure therapy, work with veterans, and others. Texas State University's Master of Social Work program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and our graduates are eligible for state licensure.

## **FIELD EDUCATION EXPERIENCE**

Field is a part of the social work curriculum across all CSWE accredited social work programs. Field

education is highly dependent on social work practice settings for students to meet their educational requirements. As such, social work programs work closely with social service agencies, organizations, and industries to secure field practicum sites offering students exposure to a range of roles and skills, client populations, service delivery models, and community resources. Within each setting, social work field instructors assist students in understanding the breadth of social work practice and support the development of core social work competencies.

To be eligible for field education students must be in good academic standing according to their program standards. BSW students must have successfully completed Phase I and Phase II of the BSW program before entering Phase III – Field Education. MSW Foundation Year students must have successfully completed foundation courses Human Behavior in Individual and Family Social Environments (SOWK 5308), Foundations of Social Work Practice I (SOWK 5313), and Foundations of Social Work Practice III (SOWK 5316) before entering Foundation Field. MSW Advanced Year students must have successfully completed all MSW coursework before entering Final Advanced Field.

All students complete the field education process which includes a field information session, completed *Field Practicum Application*, and professional resume. Students eligible for field education are notified the semester before they are scheduled to begin a field internship, of the steps and process. Every student is provided a degree plan to follow throughout the social work program.

### **Contact Hours**

BSW students complete one block internship with 420 contact hours in a field practicum in one semester. MSW foundation students complete two internships consisting of **foundation field** which is 360 contact hours in a field practicum and **advanced field** which is 540 contact hours in a different field practicum. MSW advanced track students complete one internship, advanced field, consisting of 540 contact hours.

Students are required to complete all internships in the Social Work program at different agencies (placement sites). There are no exceptions to this standard.

MSW students have the option if enrolled in the optional two experience, students are required to return to their field placement activities the first day of both semesters (per the University Academic Calendar). Failure to report for field activities at the beginning of the semester may result in a failing grade or a Withdrawal (“W”) on the student transcript. This professionally supervised field experience supports the development of social work skills, while students are concurrently enrolled in integrative seminar classes.

**Contact hours** are those activities corresponding to work with service users, clients, couples, families, community members etc., and directly tie to students *Educational Learning Plan* responsibilities.

**Contact hours are further defined below:**

<b>Allowable</b>	<b>Prohibited Contact Hours</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSWE requires contact hours as face-to-face with clients, families, and community constituents in an agency setting</li> <li>• Weekly supervision time</li> <li>• Field Agency Instructor assigned and approved in agency workload</li> <li>• Agency related orientations, trainings, workshops, and community meetings assigned by the agency</li> <li>• Activities and tasks outlined in the educational learning plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field seminar class</li> <li>• Travel time to and from seminar</li> <li>• Travel time to and from internship/agency placement</li> <li>• Watching videos, YouTube, movies, book reports, and other supplemental reading <u>not</u> in your educational learning plan or assigned by agency</li> <li>• Self-care</li> <li>• Field seminar homework</li> <li>• Meetings on campus with field office representatives</li> <li>• Anything not found in the educational learning plan</li> </ul>

**Schedules**

Students receive academic credit for the field practicum course and the integrative field seminar course. Students are expected to participate in field placement activities for a minimum of **15**

**hours per week and at least two days per week** (as designated by the field agency) each week of the academic semester. Part-time students are afforded a two-week break from field placement activities between Fall and Spring semesters, and a one-week break between Spring and Summer semesters. Students' field practicum schedules are individually negotiated with their field instructors and must not conflict with their classroom schedule. Field placement sites with social work supervision offering student placements solely during the evening or weekend hours exist, however, the School of Social Work does not support evening and weekend only internships.

Students need to plan to be available for field practicum placements during normal business hours maintained by the field site and during times when the professional staff are working and available to oversee the student. Part of the training experience involves participating in the life of the agency, attending regularly scheduled meetings, and other activities involving or sponsored by the field placement site. ***Students may not exclusively complete their field hours during evening or weekend hours – no exceptions.***

The Field Office will attempt to place students as close to their preferred geographical area as possible and within a 60-mile radius of their residence. However, in some instances, students may be placed in field agencies outside of a 60-mile radius of their residence as needed. Travel to and from a student field agency is not counted as contact hours. Contact hours are completed in a field placement under the supervision of an approved field instructor and captured on a student's *Field Education Learning Plan* (ELP). Student contact hours are documented weekly on a student's *Timesheet*.

### **Starting the Internship**

Student internships begin the first week of the semester in which a student is scheduled to begin field education (fall or spring semesters). The internship is approximately 15 weeks, or a full semester, for full time students and 30 weeks, or two full semesters, for part time students.

Upon completing the School of Social Work *Field Education Orientation*, students are permitted to begin pre-field activities such as agency orientation and training activities at their placements up to one-week prior to the first day of class in August and January. Students may not accumulate more than 40 hours before the official class start date. Students may not engage in client contact until the School of Social Work *Field Education Orientation* is completed. This will ensure students are covered under general liability insurance prior to client contact. Students should anticipate holidays and plan their schedules to assure completion of required hours. All requests to begin field education prior to the start of the semester must be approved by the Field Director.

Prior authorization is required from the School of Social Work Field Office if a student desires to begin agency onboarding or training prior to one-week before the first day of class. The Office of Field Education does not allow training, meetings and other activities for students who are currently being placed in the semester prior to the semester of placement (i.e. Fall placements for the Spring 2020 internship). As a School of Social Work we must maintain the educational component of the field practicum which requires us to set important boundaries for our students which aligned with CSWE, the NASW Code of Ethics, and the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Conduct. These boundaries do not allow students to begin their internships while still completing core course work and maintains consistency of standards across all levels of internships.

Thus, it is the policy that students cannot participate in any agency activities prior to the online field orientation. As mentioned before, liability insurance is released to students only after they complete the online field orientation, and the liability insurance is required for any student beginning a field placement.

If an agency needs a student to begin their field placement prior to the regularly scheduled orientation due to a scheduled agency training, the agency must submit the following information to the field office

at swfield@txstate.edu:

1. What is the name, title, date and purpose of the training:
2. How many hours will the training include?
3. How will this training support the student within the internship?
4. Names of students attending the training pre-field from the Texas State University School of Social Work?

The field office staff will review this information and will decide about the student intern attending the training event and communicate the decision to the agency and the student intern. Students may not engage in any client interaction during an approved early training as they do not have the required liability insurance (until the completion of the Online Field Orientation for the semester they enter field).

There are two significant school holidays during each academic year; a winter break in December and a spring break in March (see Texas State University Academic Calendar for exact dates).

Students are not expected to complete field internships during breaks except under pre-arranged circumstances. Students may use academic break time to make up missed field hours from the previous term or they can bank extra field hours for future use. The earliest date students may complete their field placements, even if their field hours exceed required hours, is the week prior to finals and/or last day of classes week (see Texas State University Academic Calendar for exact dates). Students must have the support of their field instructor, must demonstrate successful completion of all required hours, and completion of field assignments, projects, and documents to complete field a week early.

The Office of Field Education's field team is responsible for identifying field placements and coordinating students in agency placements. Because the School is responsible for determining the qualifications of field instructors and community organizations, as well as the appropriateness of educational experiences, students are asked not to approach possible placement settings to secure their own internships, but to work cooperatively with the field team to explore the possibility of a placement in a new field site agency. Students who reside outside of central Texas may be asked

to provide names of agencies and contact information of agencies in their geographic locations (see Out of Area Placement Form). MSW Advanced Year students are assigned to a different field placement and a different field instructor than their previous internships.

### **Eligibility for Field Education**

Students eligible to apply for field education are contacted the semester before they are scheduled to enroll in field education by the Office of Field Education. Eligible field students will be referred to the Field Office by the BSW and MSW Program Directors. **Field Education is not an automatic enrollment or a guarantee to enter field education based on eligibility.** Students will be required to demonstrate good academic standing, complete required coursework before entering field, have an acceptable social work program standards clearance, and instructor evaluations, based on your program level, from Social Work Professionalism (SOWK 4356), or Foundations of Social Work Practice I (SOWK 5313), or Foundations of Social Work Practice II (SOWK 5314), or Advanced Social Work Research (SOWK 5323). Students who do not demonstrate readiness to enter field based on the criteria above will be referred to the Field Director and BSW or MSW Program Directors.

## **FIELD PLACEMENTS**

### **Generalist Practice Placements - (BSW & MSW Foundation Year Placements)**

Generalist field placements encourage students to develop and demonstrate core generalist social work skills and competency. Students are expected to have direct contact with service users (individual, family and/or group) and to have learning opportunities at the organization and community levels. We aim to place students in fields of practice that provide new learning opportunities and exposure to the multiple contexts in which effective practice takes place. We are **not able to guarantee that all student preferences can be accommodated**. Once approved for field education, students submit a complete Field Application and résumé for review and will then work with a field advisor to secure a field placement.

### **Advanced Practice Placements - (MSW Advanced Year Placements)**

Advanced practice placements allow for the development of advanced practice skills in a more concentrated area. Advanced practice field placements encourage students to develop expertise with a

specific population, field of practice, or service delivery mode while applying social work theory and an equity based social justice lens. We are **not able to guarantee all student preferences can be accommodated**. Once approved for field education, students submit a complete Field Application and résumé for review and will then work with a field advisor to secure a field placement.

### **Placements in New Field Site Agencies**

The field team will consider requests for placement in organizations that are not yet approved field sites. Students requesting such consideration must work with their field advisor to explore feasibility, including availability of suitable field instructor(s) and learning opportunities. Affiliation agreements must be secured before placements can be made.

### **Criminal Records and Disclosure to Potential Field Placements**

The School of Social Work takes seriously the need to protect the public, as well as, to provide appropriate opportunities to individuals wishing to enter the social work profession who have criminal records. We are committed to ensuring that individuals who might pose a threat to any client group or practice setting be prevented from causing harm. We are also committed to the value and belief that an arrest or criminal conviction history is not in and of itself indicative of a person's readiness or potential to enter and contribute to the social work profession.

In the event a criminal conviction becomes known to the School, the student will be required to have a conversation with a field team member, to discuss their criminal record and possible implications for field placement, career, and licensing. In some instances, the Director of Field Education (or their designee) and/or the BSW or MSW Program Director, will participate in that meeting. The student will be invited to provide additional information about the context of the offense and any mitigating circumstances. The student will be advised that they have an ethical and professional responsibility to share information regarding their criminal background with a potential field instructor or appropriate agency representative.

Students are not legally required to report a criminal conviction that has been dismissed or expunged from their record. However, because there may be ethical considerations and/or unanticipated complications, students with expunged conviction records may find it helpful to talk with the Director of Field Education. Students may also find it useful to contact Student Legal Services for information and assistance related to criminal convictions and whether/how certain convictions can be expunged.

The field agency may require a student to complete a criminal background check through CastleBranch.com to verify their background. In the event a student disputes information contained in a background check, the student shall be responsible for providing evidence satisfactory to the agency that the criminal information is in error.

In deciding about suitability for a social work field placement and career, the following will be considered:

1. The nature of the crime(s) disclosed by the applicant and/or discovered through the background check;
2. Any false statement made by the student related to their criminal history;
3. The relevancy, if any, of the crime(s) or the false statement(s) to a field placement and career in social work.

The Director of Field Education, or designee, will communicate relevant information, including the criminal record, to the potential field instructor/agency and/or the assigned faculty advisor/liaison. In collaboration with agency personnel at the potential field site, the field instructor or designated agency representative will make the final determination as to whether the conviction will prevent the student from being placed in that agency setting.

Students are required to notify the Director of Field Education about any arrest or conviction for criminal activity that occurs after their most recent field application.

The School of Social Work makes no presumptive judgments regarding the criminal history of a

student and potential field placements. This policy is intended to ensure that the School of Social Work field team will make a reasonable effort to identify a suitable field agency that will provide a placement for a student with a criminal record. Students need to know that in fulfilling this effort, *certain types and calendar dates of criminal convictions may result in some agencies declining to offer them a field placement.* In some instances, it may not be possible for the field team to find a placement willing to interview or accept the student. In such a case it is likely that the student will be unable to complete the BSW or MSW program.

### **Field Placement Process**

In general, the placement process follows these steps:

1. Students attend a field information session, complete, and submit a *Field Education Application* and a current résumé (2-page max).
2. A field team member reviews the completed application and begins to coordinate the placement assignment process. They may also review the student's file, consult with other faculty, and meet with the student as necessary to identify strengths and needs for field education. Students who will be entering generalist field placements will be asked to participate in a placement-planning meeting prior to a tentative field assignment being made.
3. Based on the above information and available field placements, the student is tentatively assigned to a field placement. We attempt to place students as close to their preferred geographic area as possible; however, students may be placed in field agencies up to a 60-mile radius.
4. Students are asked to interview with the tentative field placement so that both parties can confirm that the placement is a good match. Once the student and the field instructor agree to the placement, the field instructor completes an online *Placement Acceptance Form* and the placement is finalized.
5. If the field instructor decides the placement is not a good fit, the field team will work with the student on another option. While we cannot guarantee a specific placement for any advanced MSW student, we make every effort to match students to one of their identified choices. In

the event we are not able to do this, a student will work directly with a field coordinator to identify another option that can provide learning opportunities aligned with the student's educational goals and interests.

### **Out of Area Field Placement Guidelines**

Students who live outside of the Central Texas area will need to collaborate with the Office of Field Education to secure an internship. Students living outside of Central Texas will be asked to provide the Office of Field Education with three potential agencies where an internship may be secured on their behalf. Students are not expected to secure or finalize their own internships but are expected to collaborate with the Field Office throughout the process. Once the Field Office has identified an appropriate field placement for an out of area student, an ***Unaffiliated Agency*** agreement will be secured between the agency and the School of Social Work Office of Field Education. Thereafter, out of area students' complete steps 3 through 5 in section, "**Field Placement Process.**"

### **Unsuccessful Placement Interviews**

If a student has one or more unsuccessful placement interviews, the field team will request feedback relevant to the student's presentation of self, assessed readiness for field, or appropriateness of placement choice or concentration in relation to required previous experience. The student will be invited to meet with a field team member to discuss agency feedback. Following this discussion, a student may be asked to develop a plan of action if it is determined additional support is required to secure a field placement. This must be addressed before continued efforts are made to identify a field placement. If a student has not secured a field placement after three interviews, a determination will be made regarding suitability to continue in the program. (see [Eligibility for Field Education](#))

### **Agencies without Social Workers**

There are some placement settings that can provide solid educational internship experiences for students even though they do not employ social workers with the requisite degree and post-degree experience. The Office of Field Education supports the opportunity for agencies to coordinate off

site field instruction for social work students. The field team works with a small number of such organizations to coordinate “off-site supervision” from a qualified social work field instructor with a designated on-site task supervisor who works in the program and can provide oversight for the student daily.

It is preferred the agency secure an offsite social work field instructor who has an affiliation with the organization and/or knowledge of the program and population served (e.g., staff member in another agency, board member, consultant, etc.). The offsite social work field instructor is responsible for directing the student’s overall learning experience and for guiding the task supervisor’s activities with the student. An off-site field instructor has the same responsibilities as every other field instructor to provide at least one hour of direct supervision a week, help develop the *Field Educational Learning Plan*, complete the student’s *Field Evaluation* at the end of the internship, and participate in site visits with student and faculty advisor/liaison and the task supervisor.

The success of these arranged placements depends on the abilities of the off-site field instructor and task supervisor to clarify expectations concerning their roles, responsibilities, and relationship to each other, the School of Social Work, and the student. It requires regular ongoing communication and coordination between the off-site field instructor and task supervisor. It is expected that the student, field instructor and task supervisor will meet together, at least two times per term and more if necessary.

### **Field Placements Where Students Work: Employer Based Practicum (EBP) Option**

The social work field practicum is an integral part of the social work student’s academic experience and considered the signature pedagogy for social work education. The challenge for the student who is considering completing the field practicum requirements at their place of employment is the overlap of roles. The roles of student-learner and worker are different in several respects, both as defined by the organization, and the student.

It is **preferred by the School of Social Work that students complete the field practicum requirements in agencies where the student has never been employed or is not currently employed.** If a student is requesting an employer-based practicum, the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) requires a role distinction be clear and unambiguous. MSW Advanced Year (Final Field) student may apply for consideration of an employer-based practicum at their place of employment provided they have been employed in their position at least 12 consecutive months and the practicum meets the requirements outlined by CSWE and the School of Social Work. Employer-based practicum requests are reviewed for consideration by the Field Education Committee twice per year, September, and April. The Field Director, or designee, will notify students who have been approved for an employer-based practicum. Students will need to demonstrate the following criteria in their application and supporting documentation:

1. The field practicum has social work as its primary function and the job duties reflect advanced level social work practice.
2. The practicum must be a qualitatively different experience from that provided by regular employment.
3. The student must answer to a different chain of command, where supervision of the practicum is provided by a qualified social work field instructor and assumes responsibility for the student's training.
4. The field practicum must have a clearly identifiable separate work schedule, duties, and role unencumbered by workload and the administrative requirements of regular employment.
5. Student's obligations to the university for written assignments, projects, and integrative seminars must be supported by the organization. The availability of release time for course and field instruction should be ensured.
6. The agency must be formally affiliated with Texas State University's College of Applied Arts and the School of Social Work prior to the start of the internship.

The student, in consultation with the employer, completes the *EBP Application* in addition to submitting the *Field Education Application* and returns it to the field education office. The EBP application is reviewed by the Field Education Committee during the Fall and Spring meetings. EBP applications

should be submitted by September 1 for spring internships and April 1 for fall internships. If approved, a field team member arranges a face to face, in- person, or virtual meeting with the student, the work supervisor, the field instructor, and the task supervisor (where applicable) to negotiate the placement and assure that all parties understand and approve the educational arrangement. The agency representative(s), field team member, and the student will discuss the student's schedule. For example, when field activities take place will they be counted as part of the student's current workload; if not, how will the student complete job, field, and school requirements? If each of the parties involved in the discussion is comfortable with the plan that has been discussed. The Director of Field Education may request clarification, suggest areas for improvement, or deny the request if consensus is not reached.

### **Changing a Field Placement Assignment**

Careful selection of social service agencies and instructors has been made by the office of field education. The process to secure a field placement for each student is time intensive. The office of field education makes every effort to ensure students have the appropriate educational opportunity. Once a student has been placed in an agency they are expected to remain in that assignment for the entire academic semester/year. Occasionally, a change in a field placement is necessary and may be granted for the following reasons:

- Change in personal circumstances (academic, finances, transportation, health);
- Agency not able to provide accessibility to students with disabilities;
- Change in School of Social Work policy;
- Internal matters of the agency;
- Irreconcilable difference between student and field instructor;
- Ethical violations.

When appropriate, a student, field instructor, faculty advisor/liaison or field coordinator may seek a change in the student's placement by following the Procedure for Changing a Field Placement (see below).

### **Procedures for Considering a Change in Field Placement**

If any member of the field placement trio – student, field instructor, faculty advisor/liaison or field

coordinator has concerns or thinks the field placement should end, a respectful process of information sharing should occur.

1. Field instructor and student discuss the concerns. The student or field instructor may prefer to begin with their faculty advisor/liaison or field coordinator if the matter is delicate. A careful delineation of the factors involved is required.
2. Field instructor, student, and faculty advisor/liaison or field coordinator discuss the concerns and explore alternatives. The faculty advisor/liaison or field coordinator informs the Director, or designee, of the concerns. If a resolution is not found within the organization, a decision to end the placement is made by the faculty advisor/liaison or field coordinator in consultation with the Director of Field Education (or designee). The faculty advisor/liaison or field coordinator notifies the field instructor. Students will work with their faculty advisor/liaison or field coordinator to develop a responsible transition plan from their placement.
3. When a decision is made to remove a student from placement, the field instructor will be asked to provide written comments to the Director of Field Education regarding their professional assessment of the student's performance. Depending on how long the student has been in the placement, the field instructor may be expected to complete the *Field Evaluation*.
4. To be reassigned, the student, faculty advisor/liaison or field coordinator, and/or a field team member explore the feasibility of other placement options based on probability of completing educational requirements within the semester. In some instances, the student may not be re-placed in a new agency and will have to postpone their practicum for the next available semester.
5. Any student requiring a change in a field assignment will participate in a meeting with field staff to assess the student's educational needs and relevant circumstances. A written agreement will be reached regarding the pertinent information to be shared with potential field instructors. In instances where a student has a *Plan of Assistance* related to field, the fact that a plan exists, and the pertinent expectations will be shared with a potential new field instructor.

6. Some reassignments may involve assigning the student a different faculty advisor/liaison. However, in most cases where an advising relationship has been established, it is preferable to keep that relationship intact.

### **Preparing for Termination of the Field Placement**

The ending of field placement is a significant part of social work practice and a time of transition for students and service users and community partners. It is useful to plan the ending process for each service user/community partner with your field instructor and to help service users process their feelings about saying goodbye, as well as review progress, strengths and areas for future work. Ending activities may include planning the transfer of the student's responsibilities to other staff in the placement setting. Integrative seminar, field instructors, and field team members will help prepare students to successfully end their field placements.

Students sometimes wish to apply for jobs or consider volunteering at their placement organizations at the conclusion of their internships. While this may be an appealing option, it is still important to acknowledge and process the ending of the student intern role. Before agreeing to volunteer or work at an organization, it is essential to discuss with placement setting personnel how expectations differ for employees, volunteers, and students. All parties involved (student, placement setting personnel, service users) must understand the new role.

Although a student may want to continue working with service users or assist an understaffed organization, it is important for students and field instructors to recognize that student field responsibilities and liability insurance coverage end upon completion of the internship. Instruction.

### **Accepting Employment at the Field Placement Setting**

Students are occasionally offered employment at their field sites. While obviously beneficial to students financially, this dual role at the placement setting can blur the distinctions between the roles of student and employee. To ensure successful completion of the student's placement, the

employment arrangement should be structured to preserve the integrity of the educational internship and the contractual agreement between the school and the placement setting. It is preferable, but not always feasible, for the employment to start after the student completes required placement hours. If employment begins while the placement is in process, employment responsibilities and supervision must be different than placement responsibilities and supervision. Students may consult with a member of the field team or their field coordinator regarding accepting employment at the field placement setting.

## **ROLES IN FIELD EDUCATION**

### **Field Student Intern Responsibilities**

With the student's entrance into the profession of social work during internship, he/she will be held to professional standards, codes of ethics, University policies, and agency policies. The student must also comply with the following standards:

- Must meet the academic prerequisites prior to entry into the field education;
- Arranges a pre-placement meeting with the office of field education for the purpose of agency assignment;
- Maintain records of the School of Social Work' designated professional insurance provider information;
- Attends the field orientation;
- Completes an Educational Learning Plan with the field instructor;
- Submits a weekly timesheet approved and signed the field instructor to the field faculty;
- Adhere to the assigned hours per week in her/his assigned agency for a block field placement, or part-time field placement not to exceed 40 hours per week;
- Complete field practicum hours over the course of at least 15 weeks in the long semesters and 10 weeks in the summer semester;
- Attends all field integrative seminars;
- Completes all specified School and agency assignments with passing grades (B or better);
- Functions in the capacity of a professional person;

- Fulfills the condition of her/his program Acknowledgement and Agreement (BSW or MSW);
- Agrees to abide by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers;
- Is prompt and on time for work at the agency and adheres to the schedule mutually agreed to by student and Field Instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Field Instructor if s/he is unable to report for field practice. Unavoidable absences can be made up to a reasonable limit, as determined by the Field Instructor and Field Faculty;
- Shares experiences and relative information in field seminar discussions and participates in problem solving when appropriate;
- Does outside readings assigned by the Field Instructor pertinent to his/her placement and experiences;
- Arranges conferences with the Field Instructor and/or Field Faculty related to field practice;
- Evaluates the field experience and makes recommendations for future improvements through an end of semester evaluation.
- Failure to fulfill **any** of the student field responsibilities will be grounds for dismissal or termination from field course with a failing grade.

### **The Field Instructor Responsibilities**

The Field Instructor represents the heart of the field practicum as they, in their dual role as practitioners and teachers, enable students to integrate theoretical concepts and practice realities. In close relationship with the student, it is the Field Instructor who leads the student to a personal understanding of the responsibilities and rewards of professional social work practice. Toward this end, Field Instructors assume primary responsibility for:

- Agrees to supervise students in the agency placements. Each Field Instructor is selected by the agency and office of field education based on detailed criteria;
- Orients the student to the agency structure, functions, policies, services, and personnel at the beginning of field practice and prepares a field educational learning plan with the student;
- Is responsible for and in charge of the student in the agency and selects and assigns appropriate activities and cases for each student;

- Maintains close contact with the student and retains overall responsibility for guidance and supervision. Meets with the student one on one, at least one hour per week for supervision;
- Plans in advance for the students' work;
- Arranges for another person to be in charge of the students' activities for any days that s/he will not be available;
- Discusses the objectives and expectations related to assignments with the student;
- Evaluates on a continuing basis the student's progress with both the student and the Field Faculty;
- Reviews contact hours and approves through a weekly timesheet's submission to the Field Faculty;
- May assign appropriate outside readings;
- Submits mid-term and final written student evaluations on forms provided by the office of field education;
- Cooperates with representatives of the office of field education to provide an appropriate learning experience for the student;
- Reviews with the student and Field Faculty, in a three-way conference or in person, the student's progress, accomplishments and areas in need of professional development, and recommends an agency performance grade;
- Evaluates the field experience and makes recommendations for future improvements through an end of semester evaluation.

### **The Field Faculty Responsibility**

The role of the field faculty is to ensure a cohesive and progressive learning experience for the student in the practicum. The field faculty's responsibilities include:

- Counsels with the student to determine an appropriate, educational field placement for the student;
- Makes initial arrangements with agencies for field work placements for students;
- Holds a pre-placement meeting with each student for the purpose of assigning the students to an agency and determining student's academic and performance

- readiness for entry into the field;
- Works with the Field Instructor and other relevant agency personnel to structure a meaningful social work field placement for each student;
  - Reviews with the students any questions and problems surrounding any change from the initial field placement and arranges re-assignment when appropriate;
  - Confers with the student and Field Instructor regarding:
    1. General progress of the student
    2. Performance of the student
    3. Problem areas identified
    4. Progress towards the completion of the educational learning plan and goals
    5. Possible modification of the student's program of activities;
  - Remains available for unscheduled conferences on matters of concern to the student or the Field Instructor;
  - Is responsible for obtaining evaluations from the Field Instructor and for determining the student's final field grade;
  - Recommends to the Field Director change or termination of field practicum before the end of the semester, if it is determined a student is not ready for the experience;
  - In unusual cases where a field setting is unable to meet the field practice agreement and educational objectives, recommends to the Field Director a reassignment of the student to an agency capable of meeting these expectations and willing to invest the resources;
  - Provides consultation to the agency regarding educational concepts, professional issues, and practicum requirements and expectations;
  - Recommends and certifies the final grade for the course;
  - Participates in the placement process of students;
  - Facilitates the integrative seminar and supports student research;
  - Field faculty make every effort to visit with students face to face while in their agency during the semester to confer with the Field Instructor and student

regarding the student's professional development in relation to the educational and performance objectives. If face to face is not possible, the coordination of online conferences via Zoom, Skype, or other types of online conferencing platforms, or a phone conference are planned;

- Addresses the problems that are related to the educational and professional progress of students. Participates in the resolution of conflicts between Field Instructor and student(s);
- Participates in the professional development of Field Instructors in their educational role;
- Participates in the Field Orientation for students and Field Instructors Workshops.

### **THE FIELD AGENCY PARTNERSHIP**

The strength of the field placement lies in the partnership established between the School of Social Work and the field setting. At this level, each organization has certain responsibilities to the other that help keep the partnership viable.

#### **The School's Responsibilities**

- Evaluates the assignments of student interns in the organization to ensure appropriate educational learning opportunities for students and a fit within the organization's service functions;
- Provides the field instructor with information about the student, the curriculum, and School policies;
- Assists the field instructor through orientation, Schools educational requirements, consultation, and continuing education;
- Designates a member of the School's faculty to serve as liaison to the field instructor and organization;
- Elicits periodic feedback and input from community partners and faculty regarding field education and the academic curriculum;

#### **The Field Agency's Responsibilities and Qualifications**

- The agency is recognized as responding to the needs of the

community and consistently accepts the purposes, values, ethics and methods of social work;

- The agency personnel have a commitment to social work education and professional training;
- The agency operates within Texas State University's Harassment and Discrimination policy, UPPS No. 04.04.46, that states; Texas State University is committed to an inclusive educational and work environment that provides equal opportunity and access to all qualified persons. Texas State, to the extent not in conflict with federal or state law, prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, veterans' status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. Texas State forbids discrimination in any university activity or program. Faculty members, staff employees, and students who discriminate against others in connection with a university activity or program will be considered to have violated this policy and are subject to disciplinary sanctions.
- The agency will provide a field instructor who meets the qualifications of the School of Social Work requirements.
- The agency assures the field instructor's overall assignment provides sufficient time and resources within the work schedule to develop learning opportunities and tasks, to prepare for and provide individual supervision, to attend school-sponsored orientation and training, and to complete student *Field Evaluations*;
- The agency accepts the student as a developing professional social worker and will not use students to meet staffing needs nor withhold appropriate assignments because of student status;
- The agency provides adequate facilities, orientation, *including the safety and risk management* policies and procedures of the setting, equipment and learning opportunities appropriate to the students' responsibilities during the period of placement.

## **Qualifications of Field Instructors**

- Field instructors for BSW students must have a BSW from an accredited social work program plus 2 years post degree experience or an MSW from an accredited social work program.
- Field instructors for MSW students must have an MSW from an accredited social work program plus two years of post-master's work experience (preferably supervised by a social worker) performing agency-based practice.
- A field instructor must be a competent social work practitioner in one or more areas of service.
- A field instructor must be an employed staff member of the agency or a School of Social Work approved off-site field instructor.
- A field instructor must have an interest in students and willingly accept the role of field instructor.
- A field instructor must be willing to work within the Texas State University School of Social Work's philosophy of social work education and the competencies identified in the evaluation documents for field education.
- The Director of Field Education may consider a proposal for a field placement where a field instructor does not hold the required credentials (MSW or BSW) to be a field instructor. In such circumstances, the school assumes responsibility for ensuring that the social work perspective is reinforced through the provision of at least once/month consultation or supervision in any situation where weekly supervision is not conducted by a qualified field instructor. This request is not a guarantee of approval and is not a field office standard practice.

## **Educational Supervision**

Field education moves beyond employment-focused supervision towards an educational process during which supervision occurs. Social work field education focuses on the individual learner, the learner's relational and intellectual capacity, as well as the learner's knowledge and skills gleaned

from prior practice and life experience. Educational supervision is different from, although often includes clinical supervision. The primary focus of educational social work supervision is on the individual learner's development of competency and is measured by demonstration of social work knowledge, values, skills, and or cognitive/affective processes in the field setting.

A field education experience should offer a weekly, protected individual supervision time of at least one hour provided by the approved BSW or MSW field instructor. Protected time is defined as an uninterrupted, focused interaction where the student's work and progress towards developing social work competencies are reviewed with the field instructor. One-to-one supervision (student and field instructor only) is the recommended model. Group supervision (field instructor and two or more students) is also an acceptable model. However, group supervision is only allowed on a bi-weekly basis and must alternate with individual weekly supervision time.

The supervisory relationship contains the three elements of trust: mutuality in relationship, facilitation of the student's sense of personal professional competence, and support of the student's role as learner- social worker. Field instructors take responsibility for providing students with direct feedback about their performance within the placement. They teach social work practice skills by guiding students towards increasingly challenging learning opportunities, modeling appropriate roles and skills, and advocating for the student within the placement setting.

Supervision is a process in social work education by which the student is oriented to the social work profession. Supervision shall assure the student:

- applies relevant social work theories;
- makes sound professional judgments or decisions;
- follows the NASW Code of Ethics and other relevant Codes of Ethics;
- conducts oneself with an understanding of the policies of the placement setting and;
- discusses the community standards of care in regard to various diagnostic, clinical, and administrative issues.

## **Field Agency Practicum Site Approval Process**

Initiating a partnership with the School of Social Work to become an approved field practicum site may originate either with the Office of Field Education or on the School of Social Work website (<https://www.socialwork.txstate.edu/fieldpracticum/agency-partners.html>). The process involves the field agency (field instructor or agency representative) to review the *Social Work Education Practicum Information Sheet* and complete the *Partner Agency Intern Placement Request Form* with attachments, and the Texas State University Agency Affiliation Agreement to the School for review. The Field Director or a designee, will contact the agency to discuss next steps. The selection process includes, but is not limited to:

- A review of the proposed request for an intern by the field faculty and Field Director;
- A conference either by telephone, email, or in person with the administrator and/or field instructor of the agency/organization concerning agency expectations of the School of Social Work;
- Upon final approval of the practicum site, the Field Director will finalize the Affiliation Agreement or Contract. This document will be signed by duly authorized representatives of the site and Texas State University College of Applied Arts Dean.

## **SELECTING FIELD INSTRUCTORS and FIELD PLACEMENTS SITES**

### **Selection of Field Instructors**

The School of Social Work has adopted policies and procedures that govern many aspects of the field practicum. For new practicum sites, the field instructor selection process is a part of the initial agency affiliation process. A resume of potential Field Instructors are reviewed together with agency applications. A similar process is utilized for affiliated sites wishing to utilize new staff as Field Instructors. The following criteria have been set regarding selection of Field Instructors.

### **Criteria for Participation as a Field Instructor**

Field instruction is provided by a social work practitioner within an agency setting. While the selection of the Field Instructor involves collaboration between the agency and the department, the final appointment remains with the Office of Field Education.

- All Field Instructors shall possess a social work degree from an accredited

social work program or school and a demonstrated competence in practice. For instruction of BSW students, the Field Instructor must have a BSW from an accredited program with two years of post-graduation professional practice experience. For instruction of MSW students, the Field Instructor must have a MSW from an accredited program with two years of post- graduation professional practice experience.

- The Field Instructor should have a commitment to the NASW Code of Ethics.
- The Field Instructors should have knowledge about the School of Social Work's philosophy, curriculum, and program including a commitment to the education of students.
- Field Instructors shall have a thorough knowledge of the agency in which they are employed.
- Field Instructors shall commit to provide a minimum of one-hour, face-to-face individual supervision per week for each student assigned.
- The Field Instructor is required to work closely with the Office of Field Education in the coordination of assignments and is responsible for providing timely feedback on the progress of the individual student through the faculty liaison.

### **Support Systems for Field Instructors**

The agency-based field instructor is an extension of the School of Social Work in partnering to meet the educational needs of students. Field instructors' contributions to the education of an BSW or MSW students are substantial. The School of Social Work recognizes this partnership and provides the following resources:

- Field instructor training;
- Individual field consultation from faculty assigned as liaisons to the agency;
- Continuing Education Unit Certificates are provided after a final evaluation of student is submitted. CEU's meet the continuing education requirements for social work licensure by the State of Texas; (see Texas Administrative Code - Part 34 Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners, Chapter 781 Social Worker

Licensure, Subchapter E – License Renewal and Continuing Education)

- A Field Handbook
- Professional Development Opportunities

### **Criteria for Participation of an Agency as a Field Instruction Site**

Field instruction is a collaborative educational partnership between the School of Social Work and community agencies in the education of social work students in preparation of social work practice. The learning experiences in the agency facilitate the student's opportunity to apply and extend knowledge as well as acquire skills useful in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. At the same time, students contribute to the delivery of services and share their academic learning relevant to programs in the agency. The School of Social Work has established the following criteria for practicum site participation:

- Practicum site's philosophy of service shall be compatible with the philosophy, values and ethics of the social work profession in efforts to provide a positive learning experience for the student.
- Practicum site shall be related in purpose and function to the mission, methods and curriculum of the School of Social Work.
- Practicum site should maintain a social work service as a recognized function of the agency/organization or have a planning function relevant to providing or improving human services.
- The site should be able to provide a range of learning experiences consistent with the service functions of the agency, the student's learning needs and the objectives of the field practicum course.
- The administration and staff of the site shall have respect for professional social work education and acceptance of the objectives and educational focus of the program of field instruction.
- Practicum site shall support Texas State University's policies and practices must be nondiscriminatory in the provision and delivery of services and in the employment of personnel.

- The practicum site shall have access to qualified Field Instructors.
- Agencies shall provide release time for Field Instructors to carry out field instruction responsibilities and to attend field-related training and meetings.
- The agency shall be staffed with personnel to ensure that the basic agency program is developed and maintained sufficiently without reliance on students.
- Sites shall make available suitable space, telephones, supplies, and work equipment for the student intern to carry out their responsibilities.
- Agencies shall agree to the execution of an affiliation agreement between the School of Social Work, the College of Applied Arts, and the Practicum Site.
- The practicum site must provide necessary measures to protect students' safety. This may minimally include training in policies and procedures for conducting home visits; interacting with potentially difficult clients; and handling emergencies, as well as appropriate screening of student assignments by field instructor(s).
- The agency must communicate changes in supervision to the Office of Field Education as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements for student supervision.
- The practicum site will support the student intern's obligations to Texas State University and the School of Social Work for written assignments, projects, and integrative seminars.
- The agency must provide the student intern with one hour per week of individual social work supervision from an approved field instructor.

## **EDUCATIONAL LEARNING PLAN AND STUDENT EVALUATION**

### **Overview of Field Education Documentation**

The *Field Educational Learning Plan (ELP)* and the *Field Evaluation* are documents used to guide and evaluate students' progress toward competence in Social Work practice. The *Field Educational Learning Plan* outlines specific activities at the student's field placement that will facilitate this

growth and allow for evaluation. The student and field instructor, in consultation with the field faculty (task supervisor where applicable), develop the *Field Educational Learning Plan* at the beginning of the placement, reviewing it weekly and adding new activities throughout the semester if applicable. The *Field Evaluation* identifies competencies and the related behaviors in which students have demonstrated competency.

The student, field instructor (with input from the task supervisor where applicable), and field faculty complete the *Field Evaluation* at the end of the internship to capture the student's achievement toward holistic competence.

### **Field Educational Learning Plan**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) identifies nine Core Competencies for all social work students in accredited professional programs. Texas State University's School of Social Work adheres to these Competencies and Practice Behaviors to guide both the activities completed in the field practicum and to evaluate the social work student's progress towards achieving competencies. The Field Educational Learning Plan identifies field placement activities that support the student's development of professional social work practice and informs the evaluation of students' level of competency as outlined in the Field Evaluation. This is a working document that guides student intern activities in field practicum.

The *Educational Learning Plan* is collaboratively developed by the student, field instructor, and/or task supervisor (where applicable) and provides the basis for the development and demonstration of the professional practice competencies. Involvement in these activities will provide the evidence to support the competency ratings on the student's Final Field Evaluation. The field faculty is available as needed to support the development of this plan. These social work practice activities are site-specific and individualized with the goal of facilitating the student's successful professional development. The expectation is that the student will have various experiences that will allow them to be evaluated through observable behavior. Students' progress towards achievement of social work practice behaviors will be assessed with a **final evaluation** demonstrating students' proficiency in the application of **knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes**

in social work practice. Field Instructions will identify whether students meet performance standards.

### **Identifying Educational Activities for the ELP**

Educational activities are opportunities that allow students to move toward competency and to demonstrate the development of professional practice skills. Selecting educationally useful activities that are tied to this professional growth requires thought and planning.

The following questions are useful guides to assess the value and relevance of an educational activity.

- What is the purpose of the activity? Will it give the student an opportunity to develop the practice skill/competency being evaluated?
- Does the activity build upon or encourage the student to examine knowledge or skills brought from past experience? Learning is incremental--a process of growth; learning activities need to be appropriate to the student's present level of competence.
- Does the activity challenge the student to grow and provide satisfaction in carrying it out? Doing familiar tasks or "busy work" does not increase competency.
- Is there a balance between observational and participatory activities? It is important to provide ample opportunity for the student to put theory into practice.
- How feasible is the activity? Are there agency resources to support the activity? Once an activity has begun, there should be sufficient agency resources to assure its completion.
- Does the activity give the student an opportunity to increase independent performance? Activities should permit the student to progress from supervised to self-directed practice.
- Does the activity give the student a sense of ownership and accomplishment? Activities should be clearly linked to social work competencies, allow for some autonomy, and encourage growth.
- Does the activity engage the student in thinking about the total problem/case/issue? Task focused activities increase growth when students can appreciate how they link with other pieces of the intervention plan.

## **Tracking Student Time - Timesheets**

Students will use the Texas State School of Social Work issued timesheet to record contact hours in the agency each week. Student interns should document their field agency contact hours in the *Student Intern Time Sheet*. The timesheet is a required tracking tool to document work completed in the internship and contact hours completed each week. The timesheet is submitted to their field faculty every week. The form should be signed by all parties, dated, and turned in as requested by their field faculty. Instructions on how to fill out a timesheet along with acceptable contact hour activities are found in the *Time Sheet Instructions*.

Student timesheets should reflect field agency policies relating to employee breaks and/or lunch breaks.

## **Supervision Logs**

Field instructors and students are expected to document their weekly supervision meetings. The *Supervision Form* is intended to document weekly field supervision meetings between student interns and field instructors. Social Work specific supervision, by a credentialed social worker, is a CSWE requirement and must be conducted one on one. On occasion, group supervision is acceptable, but may not be the only form of supervision. Students should prepare for their weekly supervision meeting by completing this supervision form and discussing elements of their ELP. The form should be signed by all parties, dated, and turned in as requested by their field faculty.

## **Field Evaluation**

The Field Evaluation is designed to evaluate the student on their development of professional competencies that align with the School of Social Work's goals and objectives and CSWE's core practice competencies.

Students will be evaluated on each CSWE Competency. The student and field instructor, in consultation with the task supervisor (where applicable), determine a performance rating for each of the professional behaviors using the rubric embedded in the evaluation as a guide. The average of the combined rating scores for each behavior within a competency represent the holistic rating of that competency for each student. In addition, each term, student, and field instructor, with input

from task supervisors (where applicable), are given opportunities to identify strengths, concerns and areas of growth through a series of open-ended evaluative questions. The faculty advisor/liaison in coordination with the field instructor, uses this information and their professional assessment to determine whether the student receives a passing grade for field. Additionally, the *Field Evaluation* includes an overall evaluation that identifies the student's readiness to proceed as a professional BSW or MSW.

### **Evaluating Student Performance**

The ongoing evaluation of a student's performance is an integral part of the field instructor's responsibilities. During weekly supervision sessions, the field instructor can help the student identify specific performance strengths and weaknesses, evaluate progress toward developing competency in social work practice, and demonstrate professional knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive/affective processes. Site visits, which include the field faculty, field coordinator, the student, the field instructor, and the task supervisor (where applicable), are used to review the student's performance in relationship to demonstrating the behaviors identified on the *Field Educational Learning Plan* and the *Field Evaluation*. The site visit should also provide the student with a clear sense of direction for future learning activities.

In addition to the field instructor's direct observation and supervisory discussions with the student, using information from multiple sources increases the reliability of the evaluation.

Various sources of evaluative information can include:

- Student written reports, case evaluations, process recordings, audio or video recordings, supervision logs and self-evaluation indicating activities which provide evidence of level of competence;
- Field instructor observations of student learning activities (sessions with service users, presentations, project related work, participation in staff meetings, etc);
- Feedback from task supervisors (where applicable) and other colleagues and professionals who have worked with or observed the student.

## Rating Student Performance

Students are evaluated twice during an internship. A mid-field evaluation is conducted between the student and field instructor. This is a time to give students direct, clear, and specific suggestions on how to demonstrate social work competence. The mid-field evaluation is submitted to the faculty field instructor upon completion. At the end of each internship, the field instructor and the student evaluate the student's overall performance in a final field evaluation process. The evaluation focuses on rating all competencies and behaviors using the rubric embedded in the Field Evaluation. The mid-field evaluation should identify a rating for each competency and represents a continuum running from Exceeding to Meeting as described below:

<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Exceeding</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Failing</b>	<b>Unable to Complete</b>
Performs well above the standard	Meets performance standards	Performs somewhat below the standard but shows potential for improvement	Performs far below the standard with minimal evidence of potential to improve	Does not show potential for performing satisfactorily	Agency did not have the opportunity for student

The final evaluation ratings will differ slightly in that each competency must clearly state whether a student has met the required performance standard through a rating of **Met** or **Did Not Meet** the CSWE competency required.

### **Open Ended Questions and Final Comments**

Field instructors are encouraged to offer student intern additional comments after each competency. The last page of the *Field Evaluation* provides an opportunity to give the student feedback on their overall professional development.

If the student does not agree with the content of the evaluation, they should still sign it to indicate

that it has been read. The student may write a statement explaining why they disagree with the field instructor's assessments in the comment section at the end of the evaluation.

Differences of opinion should be discussed with the field faculty.

### **Recommending a Grade**

The field instructor provides students field practicum evaluation ratings only. Field instructors do not issue grades. The field practicum is a "Pass"/ "No Pass" course and is entered by the field faculty of record. The field faculty determines the student's grade based on the *Field Evaluation*, the field instructor's recommendation, and the field faculty's professional assessment.

The integrative seminar instructor is responsible for assigning final field grades. For most BSW and MSW students, the Field Seminar instructor is also their field faculty liaison. For those students who have a different liaison and seminar instructor, the liaison informs the Field Seminar instructor of the recommended grade. Students who, in the professional assessment of the field instructor and the field faculty, are meeting expectations for the term, they will receive a "Pass" grade.

In accordance with the grading policies of the School and the University, sometimes a grade of "Incomplete" is given for field instruction due to unique circumstances. The requirements for changing a grade of "Incomplete" to a "Pass" or "No Pass" are clearly delineated in a time- limited written "contract" developed jointly by student, field instructor, and field faculty.

The field instructor, student, and field faculty sign the completed *Field Evaluation*. A grade cannot be assigned until the *Timesheet* is completed and the *Field Evaluation* is complete and signed. Based on the field instructor's recommendations and their own professional assessment, the field faculty, and/or field seminar instructor determines the grade.

The faculty advisor/liaison **must** consult with the Director of Field Education about all students with incomplete grades in field and students who may not be demonstrating passing level work in field. The Policy on Unsatisfactory Performance in the BSW or MSW Program Handbook clearly delineates required procedures if a student's performance in field is below passing level. (see program handbooks)

### **Unsatisfactory Performance in Field**

Students in field education are held to the *Field Student Professional Standards and Conduct* (see Appendix 2 and 3). The field instructor plays a major role in gatekeeping and identifying unsatisfactory performance early and should discuss any areas of concern with the student as soon as they are identified. The field instructor and/or the student should notify the field faculty about the performance concerns if they persist. In situations where concerns continue, the MSW Field Coordinator or BSW Field Coordinator (in consultation with the BSW Program Director and MSW Program Director) will arrange a *Plan of Assistance* meeting with the field instructor and student (in accordance with the Policy on Unsatisfactory Student Performance in the BSW or MSW Handbook). The purpose of the meeting will be to identify those elements of performance identified as unsatisfactory, develop a plan whereby the student can be supported to make the identified changes, and identify a date by which they will meet to review whether the changes have occurred.

If a field instructor recommends a "No Pass" in field\*, or if a student is asked to leave a placement with no opportunity for remediation, the field faculty consults with the Director of Field Education or designee. Together, they will decide that either the concerns:

1. Warrant a Performance Review by the Program Standards Task Force, in which case the field faculty will initiate the Review process, or
2. Do not warrant Performance Review, in which case the Director of Field Education or designee and the field faculty will develop a *Plan of Assistance* for addressing the concerns.
3. If it is determined a student will receive a "no pass" or failing grade in one field education

course, they automatically fail the stacked field education courses.

Students will be provided options for withdrawing from field education courses if applicable. The Field Director, or designee, will meet with the student to determine the best course of action for re-enrollment in field education courses with a corresponding plan of action. Other potential actions may include but not be limited to remediation courses, postponing field education, referral to another program, or dismissal from field education.

### **Student Integrative Field Seminars**

Integrative field seminars are part of the overall field education experience. Seminars are a required part of the field education sequence of courses and must be successfully completed for the student to receive a passing grade.

The seminars are designed to: deal with specific field problems; integrate course work with field experiences; provide an orientation to various agency services and functions; provide students with a structure in which they can support and learn from one another; relate conceptual learning to practice; and increase the knowledge of other agency's functions, services, policies, and problems.

The three (3) hour seminars meet every week either in person, online, or a hybrid of both formats, and are designed to help students integrate conceptual knowledge and practical experience. Students will also be required to present their work, and to lead discussions with their peers on the topic of their presentation. A portion of each seminar will be devoted to small group processing of the students' experiences in their field placements. Students are expected to share their experiences, seek feedback from peers, and to offer constructive feedback and support to other students. Student must be aware and careful not to divulge confidential agency or client information during seminars. Students are encouraged to speak with the field faculty in private if there are concerns about confidential information or feedback being disclosed during seminar.

#### **Student Responsibilities:**

- This is not a lecture course. Students are expected to prepare, and to contribute to the

discussion, and to each other's learning.

- One of the positive benefits of the integrative seminar is the opportunity for mutual problem solving. Students are expected to share both positive and negative experiences and to seek peer and instructor feedback.
- Students are expected to fully participate each week for the entire seminar.
- **One unexcused absence/missed forum results in lowering the grade by one full letter. Two unexcused absences will result in failure of both field courses and the field practicum.**
- Complete all required field assignments and research projects.

The assignments for the field practicum are designed to enhance and integrate social work theory and practice. Assignments are geared toward helping the student meet the educational objectives of the field experience and to support practice within the social work domain. The students are given a course calendar in the class syllabus that outlines each integrative seminar and due dates for assignments.

## **FIELD EDUCATION PROCEDURES AND POLICIES**

### **Deadlines in Field Education**

Eligible field education students are responsible for meeting program deadlines. Information regarding the field education process is posted through University emails and announcement sites. Deadlines for field education applications for all field placements are final. Failure to submit the *Application for Field Education* and supporting paperwork by the posted deadline date may result in not being eligible for placement in that specific semester.

### **Credit for Work Experience**

The policies and standards of the national accrediting body, the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), state: "Academic credit for life experience or previous work experience is not be given...". Therefore, students will not receive academic credit for life experience and previous work.

## **Full Time Employment & Internship Requirements**

Field education is a significant investment of time. Students are highly discouraged from working full time and completing a final field internship concurrently. The School of Social Work does not make accommodations to work around students work schedules and personal commitments. Students are expected to make themselves available for an internship during normal agency business hours when clients receive standard services. After hour agencies with evening and weekend hours only are not available for field education. Students who are employed more than 20 hours per week must complete field education as a part-time placement over two contiguous semesters. The Office of Field Education will not place students in a full-time field placement if they are employed full time.

## **Sick Leave/Leave of Absence**

In the case of illness or medical circumstances necessitating absence from the field setting, students shall notify the Field Instructor and take responsibility for canceling or rescheduling appointments and/or meetings. Hours missed must be made up at a time agreed upon by student and Field Instructor. Excessive absences in the internship site or seminar attendance, may result in a failing grade. Medical issues are not an automatic excused absence.

## **Travel**

It is the student's responsibility to secure transportation to and from the field setting. All students are required to complete the **Acknowledgement Form** from the Texas State University Office of General Counsel which acknowledges this responsibility. Students should not transport agency clients, unless the agency is responsible for automobile liability insurance coverage, as with any other staff or employee. The student is also responsible for his/her own automobile liability insurance coverage for agency-related travel, if such coverage is not provided by the agency. The School of Social Work has no funds with which to reimburse students for civil lawsuits or damage of their automobiles or for other expenses incurred in the conduct of agency business.

Reimbursement for agency-related expenses, including travel, should be the responsibility of the agency, and should be congruent with the agency reimbursement policies and rates for regular staff. The student assumes all liability for out of area travel that is completed as a requirement of

a field placement.

### **Professional Liability Insurance**

All students are required to have professional liability insurance through the University prior to enrolling in field practicum courses. The annual policy covers the period September 1 through August 31. This policy is provided by the School of Social Work. Each student must retain a copy of the insurance policy which is provided by the Office of Field Education.

### **Agency Required Clearances**

Some agencies may require students to complete criminal background checks, drug testing, health or immunization records to be considered for a placement with them. A student who wishes to be placed in an agency that requires a background check will need to complete a background check as a condition of being placed. Some agencies prefer that students use the agency's background check procedure (students may be expected to pay for the check) while other agencies expect students to use the School's procedure. Students will be informed if they must have a background check and will receive instructions.

It is the responsibility of the student intern to complete directly with the agency of record. Texas State School of Social Work will not be responsible for covering the costs of additional agency requirements. The School of Social Work contracts with Castle Branch for all screenings.

To initiate a background check using the School's procedure, the student will visit the CastleBranch.com website, then enter the School's Portal Code (TW90) and then select the appropriate "Package Name" from the drop-down menu to purchase the background check as well as their personal and payment information. Students will be responsible for covering the cost of the background check purchased through CastleBranch.com.

**Castle Branch Procedure:**

Texas State University - Social Work  
**How to Place Order**

Welcome to **myCB**

**To place your order go to:**

<https://portal.castlebranch.com/TW90>

Package Name (if applicable):



To place your initial order, you will be prompted to create your secure myCB account. From within myCB, you will be able to:

- ✓ View order results
- ✓ Upload documents
- ✓ Manage requirements
- ✓ Place additional orders
- ✓ Complete tasks

**Please have ready personal identifying information needed for security purposes.**

**The email address you provide will become your username.**

Contact Us: **888.914.7279** or **servicedesk.cu@castlebranch.com**

## **Selected Texas State University Policies**

This Field Education Handbook is for informational purposes only and is not an official publication of Texas State University. Official rules and regulations may be found in the Texas State University Undergraduate and/or Graduate Catalog, The Texas State University website <https://studenthandbook.txstate.edu/> , or School of Social Work Student Handbook. Listed below are selected policies that are relevant to the field education experience:

### **Academic Misconduct Policy**

#### **Expectation:**

Social workers must demonstrate high standards of integrity. They should do their own work on all graded material submitted for all course requirements. Since dishonesty harms the individual, fellow students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

#### **Policy:**

Students knowingly using, or attempting to use, another person's work as though the work is their own, and students guilty of knowingly permitting, or attempting to permit, another student to use their work, may:

- Be referred to the Program Standards Task Force with the School of Social Work and;
- have their grade on the examination or other academic work affected by the academic dishonesty reduced, thus lowering their grade in the course;
- be required to withdraw from the course with a grade of "F";
- or other Task Force recommendations

Such conduct may also constitute grounds for dismissal from the Program Standards Task Force and the University. Students who are unfamiliar with the University's policy on plagiarism and other types of academic dishonesty should consult the University's website. Students who are uncertain regarding what actions constitute plagiarism or other types of academic dishonesty should consult the instructor.

## **Definitions of Academic Dishonesty**

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Dishonest academic behavior is defined by Texas State University and includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating on an examination or the preparation of academic work;
- Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data, listings and/or programs;
- Using during a test, materials not authorized by the professor;
- Collaborating with another person without authorization during an examination or in preparing academic work;
- Knowingly and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting, copying or possessing in whole or in part, the contents of an administered examination;
- Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
- Bribing another person to obtain an administered examination or information about an administered examination;
- Plagiarizing or appropriating another's work or idea without acknowledging incorporation of that work or idea into one's own work offered for credit;
- Knowingly and without authorization, using, buying, or selling a term paper, computer file or program, thesis, or other written report.

## **Removal from Field Education**

The Office of Field Education makes every attempt to ensure students and agencies are matched up according to student level, geography, and interest. Sometimes, the placement does not work out for several reasons. If any member of the field placement trio – student, field instructor, field faculty, program coordinator – has concerns or thinks the field placement should end, a respectful process of fact finding, information sharing, and problem solving occurs. In most cases, the field instructor and student discuss the concerns and it is resolved. The student may prefer to begin

with their field faculty if the matter is delicate. (see Appendix 1 and 2 for student expectations and conduct in field)

### **Procedures for Determining Removal**

Field instructor, student, and field faculty discuss the concerns and explore possible solutions. The field faculty informs the Field Director, or designee, of the concerns. If a solution is not found within the organization, a decision to end the placement is made by the field faculty, program coordinator in consultation with the Director of Field Education (or designee). The field faculty notifies the field instructor of the Schools decision. If applicable, the students will work with their field faculty to develop a responsible transition plan from their placement.

When a decision is made to end a student's placement before mid-year, depending on how long the student has been in the placement, the field instructor will be expected to provide written comments to the Director of Field Education regarding their observations and professional assessment of the student's performance\*, and/or complete the *Field Evaluation* for that term.

Any student requiring a change in a field assignment will participate in a meeting with field staff to assess the student's needs and relevant circumstances. A written agreement will be reached regarding the pertinent information to be shared with potential new field instructors. In instances where a student has a *Plan of Assistance* related to field, the fact that a plan exists, and the pertinent expectations will be shared with a potential field instructor and the field faculty.

Some reassignments may involve assigning the student a different field faculty, but in most cases where an advising relationship has been established, it is preferable to keep that relationship intact.

Students whose placement terminates after the mid-semester point will need to meet with Field Director and BSW or MSW Program Director to determine if a new field placement is feasible based on:

- 1.) how a student can reasonably meet field course expectations,
- 2.) other open agency placements
- 3.) reasons for student termination,

4.) academic timelines in the semester.

If a determination is made that a student will need to wait for the following semester to enter field education, the student will need to begin the field process from the beginning.

The faculty advisor/liaison must consult with the Director of Field Education to determine grading outcomes and/or the feasibility to pass field education. In some instances, students removed from a field placement could result in a failing grade in field education. (see eligibility for field education policy)

### **Accommodations for Student Disability**

Students having special needs/disabilities that require accommodations for the successful completion of field education must notify the Texas State University's Office of Disability Services <https://www.ods.txstate.edu/> and the Office of Field Education. Requests for in class accommodations will be submitted through the Office of Disability Services to the field faculty, no later than the end of the first week of classes. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in accommodations being delayed, however, every effort will be made to ensure the student's needs are met appropriately and in a timely manner.

### **Student Safety in the Field**

It is expected that students, field instructors and agencies will collaborate to enhance safety and minimize risk in the field placement on a continual and ongoing basis throughout the duration of the internship.

Each agency and field instructor is responsible for orienting student interns to the safety and risk management policies and procedures of that setting during the agency orientation, as well as in supervision. It is important to discuss safety guidelines for home visits, evening office visits, service users who may become angry or violent, other staff members who behave unprofessionally and services that are politically sensitive which may result in threats of violence. Students should not be forced to engage in assignments in which they feel their physical safety might be compromised.

Students should discuss their safety concerns with their field instructor and their field faculty.

### **Security of Belongings**

All students in the field are expected to have a secure place to keep their belongings while at the placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked. It is best not to leave handbags and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars, and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle.

### **Safety Issues Related to Working with Service Users**

When working with service users, it is important to remember that the change process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. With some people, this can contribute to problems with impulse control and can raise safety concerns for the service user, the social worker and others. There may be times when students work with individuals who have difficulty with reality testing, dealing with overwhelming emotions, and controlling their anger. Some of them may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Other service users may be intoxicated, under the influence of drugs, in withdrawal, or may have other medical or neurological disorders.

Students should consult with agency and/or field instructors regarding preparation for and handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons.

### **Safety Tips for Office Meetings**

If a student will be meeting with a service user with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important to discuss the situation fully with the field instructor. When considering location of the meeting, it might be helpful to think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person might sit. Students must schedule appointments with service users at times when the field instructor or other appropriate professional staff person is in the building and readily available if needed. It is also important to discuss the backup plan for assistance in the event the service user becomes agitated or there is another urgent need for support.

### **Safety Tips for Home Visits**

The School of Social Work requires student interns to conduct home visits with another agency employee. Interns will not conduct home visits alone at any point during their internship due to intern safety and university liability coverage. Prior to conducting a home visit with an agency employee, there should be a discussion overviewing the importance in having information about the client before the home visit. In addition, if there is a question of safety, a potential plan should be discussed with your field instructor. Prior to the visit it is recommended to discuss an appropriate plan which may include:

- 1) the address and neighborhood of the client visit
- 2) the use of a cell phone
- 3) Communicate with the agency when the home visit is completed.

### **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF FIELD EXPERIENCE**

Field Education is an integral part of students' social work education and preparation for professional practice. The Office of Field Education seeks input from all stakeholders in the field process and will solicit both student and field instructor feedback. At the end of each semester, an online *Perceptions of Field* survey is accessible through an online link. If at any time during the field education process, a student or field instructor would like to offer feedback, emails may be sent to [SWField@txstate.edu](mailto:SWField@txstate.edu).

## APPENDIX I

### Conditions for Students Enrolling in Field Practicum

1. Representatives of the school and the agency to which the student is assigned have agreed that the purpose of field instruction in the agency is to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the learning objectives as outlined in the respective Field Practicum Handbook.
2. The school has agreed to assign students that meet the criteria of the participating agency.
3. The agency field instructor will assign those cases and client contacts that it deems reasonable for a student to handle during field practice.
4. The agency field instructor will from time to time submit informal and/or formal reports to assist the field faculty in evaluating the student's activities in field practice.
5. The Field Director and field faculty Texas State University School of Social Work assume the responsibility for the selection of students to be placed with the agency and share with the agency, prior to placement, information about the student's academic achievement, personal characteristics, and educational needs.
6. The student is expected to follow the agency's normal office hours, stipulations against disclosing confidential information, and other rules and regulations mutually agreed upon by the School of Social Work and the agency.
7. The student is expected to withdraw from the agency and/or respective course(s) if he/she is found to be unsuitable for his/her assignment or if unusual circumstances within the agency dictate temporary termination of the field placement.
8. The agency may initiate the withdrawal by notifying the field faculty by phone or in writing. The field faculty will then inform the Field Director and the student that s/he is to withdraw. The Field Director may also initiate the withdrawal and will notify the student in writing.
9. The student is expected to maintain confidentiality of records, not to publish or divulge any information or material obtained during field placement, unless

approved for release and publication by the agency to which the student is assigned.

10. The student is expected to perform those tasks that the agency and School of Social Work have designated as a part of field practice.
11. The student understands that in the administration of the field instruction program the School of Social Work seeks to meet the educational needs of the student, but at the same time must cooperate with the agency in maintaining standards that assure the quality of services offered to clients by the agency.
12. The student understands there is a mandatory Pre-Field Orientation and failure to complete the requirements will result in a delayed entry into field practicum and possibly postponing field education for another semester.
13. Students must comply with any agency policy on criminal history or background checks prior to placement. Students must also comply with University policies on criminal history/background checks and Health Reports prior to placement.
14. Full-time students employed for more than 20 hours per week are required to complete a part-time internship over two contiguous semesters.

## APPENDIX 2

### Field Student Professional Standards

#### Academic Performance

**Standard:**

- Plans and organizes work effectively.
- Turns in assignments complete and on time.
- Keeps scheduled appointments (advisor, faculty, field interviews, etc.).
- Plans for his/her personal needs to avoid interference with education
- Develops increasing levels of knowledge and skills with awareness of integration as demonstrated through class participation, assignment and field performance.

**Indications of Concern:**

Appears to demonstrate patterns of:

- Poor organizational skills.
- Demonstrates inability to take initiative toward increasing knowledge and skills relevant to performance demands.
- Requests for extension on assignments.
- Turning in field and/or class assignments late or incomplete.
- Unexcused absences from class per class syllabus requirements.
- Non-response to program communications.
- Multiple absences from field placement.

#### Conduct / Behavior

**Standard:**

- Demonstrates ability to work cooperatively with others.
- Actively participates in class discussion groups/role plays.
- Shows respect for others' opinions.
- Is open to feedback from peers/faculty.
- Accept constructive feedback and takes corrective action.
- Actively participates in field supervision sessions.
- Demonstrates a willingness to understand diversity of people regarding race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political orientation sexual orientation, and populations at risk.

- Conducts him/herself according to the *NASW Code of Ethics*.

**Indicators of Concern:**

- Appears to create conflict in class which impedes learning and /or building effective relationships.
- Uncooperative/unwilling to participate in class activities.
- Consistently late for class, or leaves class early.
- Consistently late for field placement.
- Sleeps during class periods.
- Disrupts class process by talking to others.
- Uses derogatory language or demeaning remarks.
- Difficulty in listening, e.g.:(overly sensitive, feels wounded/victimized, externalized blame, distorts communications).
- Appears unwilling/unable to accept feedback.
- Responds in a defensive manner.
- Consistently argumentative
- Monopolizes class discussions.
- Consistently complains about class workload to the point of impeding class process.
- Unwilling/unable to develop an understanding of people different from oneself.
- Inability to separate his/her personal values from professional values and responsibilities.
- Inability to recognize the impact of personal values and behaviors of others.
- Inadequate maturity, readiness, ability for generalist practice; for example, evidence of excessive anxiety, grandiosity, passivity, etc.
- Discriminatory behavior or harassment towards other on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, etc.
- Physical action directed at clients, faculty, staff, or fellow students.
- Unethical professional behavior (e.g., sexual contact with a client).
- Academic misconduct (see University Policy on Student Conduct).

**Emotional Self-Control (Self-Understanding)**

**Standard:**

- Uses self-disclosure appropriately (e.g., student seems to have an insight, and self- awareness, and has resolved the issue he/she is sharing).
- Appears to be able to handle discussion of uncomfortable topics.
- Deals appropriately in class with issues which arouse emotions.

- Demonstrates an awareness of one's own personal limits/bias/blind spots.
- Understands the effect of one's behavior on others.

**Indicators of Concern:**

- When engaged in self-disclosure, the student appears to be working through unresolved issues and/or avoiding client issues.
- The student appears to overreact to, or resent feedback (e.g., takes it personally).
- Appears unable/unwilling to control emotional reactions.
- Faculty concern regarding possible alcohol/drug abuse, mental health issues.
- Verbal threats directed at clients, faculty, staff, or students.
- Demonstrates impaired judgment, decision-making, or problem-solving skills.
- Consistent failure to demonstrate ability to form effective client/social worker relationship.
- Appears judgmental, abrupt in manner or overly businesslike or unapproachable.
- Expects perfection of self and others.
- Pushes "own agenda" rather than listening to client.
- Consistently "glosses over" or ignores discussion of uncomfortable topics.

**Communication Skills**

**Standard (Written):**

- Shows consistency in written communication. Written assignments demonstrate good spelling, appropriate use of punctuation, clear structure, paragraphing, good organization, follows logical sequence. Demonstrates ability to use citations (A.P.A style)
- Demonstrates ability to write effectively in agency records.
- Abides by University Academic Standards.
- Demonstrates use of critical thinking skills.

**Indicators of Concern:**

- Written work is frequently vague, shows difficulty in expressing ideas clearly and concisely.
- Work appears to have been hastily prepared and not proofread.
- Student has many errors in the areas of spelling, punctuation, structure, etc., and does not make effort to show improvement.
- Appears to have plagiarized the work of others.
- Written work is excessive and/or inadequate regarding the purpose of the work

e.g. (case notes vs. term paper)

**Standard (Verbal):**

- Is able to clearly articulate ideas, thoughts, concepts, etc.
- Has working proficiency of the English language even when English is not the student's primary language.

**Indicators of Concern**

- Appears to have difficulty expressing him/herself when speaking.
- Difficulty communicating so that others can hear or understand.

## APPENDIX 3

### Field Education Code of Conduct

Social Work interns are expected to adhere to the Standards and Ethics of the profession advanced by NASW and CSWE. It is expected that interns will review the entire NASW Code of Ethics prior to placement. What follows are some, not all, of the major Standards for practice in the field.

Important: If at any time during your field placement you find yourself in a situation in which you have concerns/questions regarding a potential ethical dilemma you must discuss this with your Field Instructor and Field Faculty.

#### **NASW Code of Ethics in Field Education:**

##### **Commitment to Clients (1.01)**

Social workers primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients.

##### **Self-Determination (1.02)**

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals.

##### **Informed Consent (1.03)**

Social workers provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based on valid informed consent. It is the social worker's responsibility to secure proper informed consent.

##### **Competence (1.04)**

Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, and supervised experience.

##### **Cultural competence and Social Diversity (1.05)**

Social workers should have a knowledge base or obtain information about their client's cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' culture and to differences among people and cultural groups.

##### **Conflicts of Interest (1.06)**

- (a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment.

- (b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship.
- (c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality (1.07)**

Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons.

### **Access to Records (1.08)**

Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records in accordance with agency policy. Access should be provided while ensuring client's understanding of records and protecting the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

### **Sexual Relationships (1.09)**

Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

### **Physical Contact (1.10)**

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients).

### **Derogatory Language (1.12)**

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

### **Respect (2.01)**

Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues with clients or with other professionals.

### **Client Records (3.04)**

- (a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records is accurate and reflective of the services provided.
- (b) Social workers should complete records in a timely fashion in order to facilitate the delivery of services.

**Discrimination (4.02)**

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, political belief or, mental or physical disability.

**Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception (4.04)**

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

**Impairment (4.05)**

(a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or jeopardize the best interests of those for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

## FIELD FORMS REFERENCED

Field Education forms referenced in this document are located in the Office of Field Education webpage found at <https://www.socialwork.txstate.edu/fieldpracticum.html> under the School of Social Work at Texas State University <https://www.socialwork.txstate.edu>. The most current version will be located on this site.

The field forms are as follows:

- ❖ Field Application
- ❖ Field Educational Learning Plan and Evaluation
- ❖ Field Education Timesheet
- ❖ Field Education Instructions for completing time-sheet
- ❖ Supervision Form
- ❖ Plan of Assistance
- ❖ Placement Acceptance Form
- ❖ Employer Based Instruction and Application
- ❖ Field Student Perception of Field Experience Survey
- ❖ Field Instructor Perception of Field Experience Survey
- ❖ Texas State University Office of General Counsel Acknowledgement Form
- ❖ Agency Affiliation Agreement
- ❖ Field Education Practicum Information
- ❖ Partner Agency Intern Request Form
- ❖ Out of Area Placement Forms
- ❖ Social Work Education Practicum Information Sheets
- ❖ Partner Agency Intern Placement Request Form
- ❖ Texas State University Agency Affiliation Agreement
- ❖ Field Agency Orientation Checklist
- ❖ Student Safety in Field Education
- ❖ Frequently Asked Questions

## **GLOSSARY OF FIELD TERMS**

### **Advanced Field Year**

Students completing the advanced MSW field experience.

### **Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)**

National association representing social work education in the United States and the School of Social Work's higher education accrediting body. CSWE sets the standards for baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work with nine social work competency based educational policies. <https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS/2015EPASandGlossary.pdf.aspx>

### **Field Advisor**

Any member of the field education team who works with a student to identify a suitable generalist or advanced field placement site.

### **Field Educational Learning Plan**

The required document which identifies field placement activities that support the student's development of the professional social work competencies as outlined in the Field Evaluation.

### **Field Evaluation**

Document that is completed at the mid and end of each term and serves to assess student's demonstration of professional social work competencies as identified by Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and Texas State University School of Social Work faculty and field instructors.

### **Field Faculty/Liaison**

The field faculty is a member of the faculty of the School of Social Work selected to work with particular social agencies, when possible, because of interest, knowledge and background in that particular field. The field faculty is the liaison between the School and field placement agency and is expected to serve both as consultant to the field instructor and advisor to the student. In the capacity of field liaison, the faculty member is directly responsible to the Director of Field Education, who has overall responsibility for the Office of Field Education.

### **Field Instructor**

A qualified MSW or BSW who works or volunteers at the agency, who assumes overall responsibility for the student's educational experiences during a field placement and acts as a

supervisor at the agency. Provides a protected weekly hour of educational supervision and support and orients the student to the organization and program.

### **Field Placement**

Professionally supervised field experience that supports the development of social work competencies while the student is concurrently enrolled in practice classes. BSW students complete 420 hours and MSW students complete either 360-hour placements and/or 540- hour placements in approved field agencies.

### **Field Team**

Faculty and staff of the School of Social Work including the Director of Field Education, the Assistant Director of Field, Field Faculty, Field Advisors, Field Coordinators, and Field Program Assistants.

### **Generalist Field Year**

First year field placement experience that encourages students to develop core social work skills and competencies. Generalist field students are expected to have direct contact with service users (individual, family and/or group) and to have learning opportunities at the organization and community levels.

### **NASW Code of Ethics**

The professional ethics of social work practice. The “Code” sets forth values, principles, and standards to guide social workers’ conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students. Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior, judgment and performance and adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and the agency’s code of ethics.

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

### **Task Supervisor**

Staff person onsite who oversees the student’s day to day tasks if the field instructor is not available. If the field instructor is on site, it is not necessary to have a task supervisor.

Thanks to Portland State University School of Social Work, University of Connecticut School of Social Work, Boston University School of Social Work, Dominican College of Social Work, and Field Directors across the country for sharing their information on Field Education Best Practices.