

**AULTMAN COLLEGE  
SOCIAL WORK  
FIELD MANUAL**



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COLLEGE**

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**STUDENT CENTERED. HEALTH CARE FOCUSED.**

**2018-2019**

Dear Social Work Field Student,

Welcome to your Social Work Field Practicum!

Your field placement is your chance to put into practice the knowledge, skills, and values you have learned and developed in the classroom. It's also the place to see theory in action and learn, firsthand, how theory, policy, research, and practice intersect with one another. Field work is exciting, yet challenging. Your field experience will prepare you to become an ethical, competent professional social worker.

The goals of the BSW program include challenging students to learn skills and knowledge for social work practice as well as how to solve problems and conduct yourselves as professionals. To accomplish this, we partner with community agencies to offer you a hands-on educational experience. Several field placement options are available, from healthcare to substance abuse, infants to seniors, and everything in between.

This manual will guide your progression through field placement. The manual and field program follow the structure and recommendations provided by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Questions concerning policies outlined here should be directed to the BSW Field Coordinator Heather Cain at [Heather.Cain@aultman.com](mailto:Heather.Cain@aultman.com).

On behalf of the social work program, we hope you take full advantage of this service learning experience. We are committed to your success and your future contributions as a professional social worker.

Best Wishes,

Heather Cain, MSW, LSW  
BSW Field Coordinator

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## **FORWARD**

This manual is a guideline for undergraduate social work field education for the Social Work Program at Aultman College. The purpose of this manual is to:

1. orient students, agency Field Instructors, and new faculty to the structure and process of the field education experience; and
2. outline the policies and procedures of participating field placement agencies, Field Instructors and the Field Coordinator relative to their roles, responsibilities, and expectations in providing an educationally productive field experience for undergraduate social work students.

## **SOCIAL WORK FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM VISION**

The vision of the BSW program is to provide collaborative, interdisciplinary generalist education within the vast local and national sectors of social work through community partnerships and adherence to the values and diversity of northeast Ohio community systems and agencies.

### **SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM MISSION**

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program serves a diverse set of students in a community based environment. It is committed to promoting basic human rights, advocating for social and economic justice, and providing leadership by empowering social systems as change agents to individuals, groups, and communities in diverse populations and settings.

### **GENERALIST PRACTICE**

The BSW program defines "*generalist practice*" as the application of knowledge, values, and skills of the general method of problem-solving, which spans the processes of engagement, data collection, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and termination. The program focuses on the application of this method to individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations. Key to this problem-solving approach is its applicability to multi-cultural contexts, focusing on the strengths inherent in clients/consumers and systems. At the core, the ethics and values of the social work profession guide this practice.

### **SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM GOALS**

1. Prepare students for beginning social work practice in a generalist setting. This includes meeting licensure requirements and developing self-awareness and responsibility to pursue lifelong learning through professional development.
2. Encourage students to recognize their own heritage and cultural background while gaining knowledge and perspective on other cultures, ethnic groups, and religions that may differ from their own values and views.
3. Practice according to principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession and utilize those practices to effectively advocate for social and economic justice within the communities they serve.

4. Develop an understanding of the various settings of social work practice and how they intersect with other generalist practice settings.
5. Develop critical thinking skills in deciphering social work research literature to enhance knowledge base and skill set for social work practice.
6. Begin identifying, utilizing, communicating with, and networking with community resources in social work practice.

## **COMPETENCIES AND DIMENSIONS**

### **Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) 2015 Educational Competencies**

#### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

1. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
2. use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
3. demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
4. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
5. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

#### **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, because of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

1. apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
2. present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
3. apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

1. apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
2. engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

1. use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
2. apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
3. use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

1. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
2. assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
3. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

1. apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
2. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

1. collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
2. apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
3. develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and

4. select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

1. critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
2. apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
3. use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
4. negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
5. facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

1. select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
2. apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
3. critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
4. apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

## **FIELD EDUCATION**

### **PURPOSE**

The BSW program prepares entry-level generalist social workers to recognize client strengths, resilience, and resources needed to empower them toward optimal functioning in their environments. The purpose of the social work field experience is to allow students to apply concepts and theories learned in the classroom to real practice in the community in a service orientation of the student's choosing. The BSW uses the urban communities of Stark County and surrounding urban areas to help students understand generalist social work practice in various practice settings. The field internship program emphasizes training students to practice foundational and core social work skills acquired in the classroom to provide effective person-centered care and resource referral in their practice environment. To promote student learning, the field education environment and experiences are systematically developed and supervised by competent practitioners and then coordinated and evaluated to promote student achievement of social work competencies. By the end of the field placement, students should be ready to assume the responsibilities of an entry-level social work position.

### **OVERALL AIM OF FIELD EDUCATION**

1. Social work field education promotes professional competence by building on which coursework. As the signature pedagogy, field placements provide students with supervised generalist practice experience in the application of knowledge, values and ethics, and practice skills to enhance the well-being of people.
2. Field placements must provide field students with opportunities to develop awareness of self in the process of intervention.
3. Field placements are designed to integrate knowledge of social work practice with actual work situations, thereby fostering an integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge. This curriculum facilitates integration of classroom knowledge and theoretical discussions (including but not limited to: human behavior, human development, diversity, social justice, interviewing skills, assessment skills, intervention skills, etc.) with the actual delivery of social work services to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Field placement learning experiences are likely to be specific to the respective agency but should also be generalized to the entire social work profession.
4. The social work student should gain an understanding of the agency's formal organizational structure, its functions, and its methods of operation. This includes the social problems treated, characteristics of clients served, source of agency's funds, its relationship to other agencies in the community, and the community forces affecting the agency's organization and operation. Students should observe and understand the informal dynamics of the decision-making processes at work, which may include salary negotiations, how policies that benefit clients/staff are developed/changed, and how to influence political decision-makers and the broader community.
5. Field students should gain an initial understanding of the community and how it is affected by sociological, economic, and political variables. They should gain a deeper understanding of the impact of social problems (e.g., delinquency, inadequate housing, family breakdown, and mental illness) upon individuals, families, and communities. Students need experience with and exposure to a great diversity of clientele and should have opportunities to work with clients and staff of various cultural, ethnic, and racial groups. To the extent possible, students

should also have opportunities to work with a wide variety of oppressed groups, including those characterized by gender, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity.

6. Field students should gain an understanding of the role of a generalist social worker in the social agency, including the methods of change intervention used and the social worker's responsibilities and tasks.
7. Field students should create and develop a professional, respectful relationship with clients and agency staff to test and develop techniques and skills necessary for practice. These include assessing, interviewing, organizing, counseling, planning, reporting, and evaluating their impressions in written and oral form. Students should assess their own practice and use this insight to demonstrate professional growth. Students should also be given responsibility for developing in-depth working relationships with clients as skills and techniques developed through forming professional relationships are the core of social work practice and are generalizable to most social work practice areas.
8. Field students should become aware of and analyze their own value orientations and feelings about client populations and their issues.
9. Field students should engage in research to assess the effectiveness of their own interventions and should also be involved in other research activities within the agency.
10. Field students should be able to assess their own potential as professional social workers, including developing insight into their own satisfactions and dissatisfactions as well as professional motivations and frustrations.
11. Field students should have opportunities for critical assessment, implementation, and evaluation of agency policy within ethical guidelines.
12. Field students must be professionally supervised by agency personnel and college faculty to enhance learning.
13. Field students should be provided opportunities to use professional oral and written communication(s) consistent with the terminology of the practicum setting and the profession.

The end goal of the field placement is to produce students who are ready to assume the responsibilities of a beginning level social work position. Therefore, should students experience limitations or obstacles during the field placement experience, the Field Instructor and the Field Coordinator will work with them to develop performance improvement plans to rectify the limitation.

## OVERVIEW OF FIELD

Through field education and field placement, students will demonstrate basic knowledge and application of all nine (9) social work competencies evident in specific behaviors measured in field. Senior students will perform an assigned field placement in one agency requiring 15 hours per week over two 14-week semesters (two semester format) OR 30 hours per week for 14 weeks (block format) for a **total of 420 hours**. Students should work with the field site to schedule the most convenient time for learning; hours may vary week to week. See "Placement Format" for more information about format options.

1. Students must spend approximately 15 hours per week in field as a part of the two-semester format, and 30 hours per week in field as a part of the block format. Hours can vary based on agency and student needs, but students are expected to adhere to a regular schedule provided to the Field Instructor prior to the beginning of each week.

2. Students follow the academic calendar and are not permitted to accrue field hours while on academic break or when the school closes due to weather or emergency. Students must contact the field site when emergency closing occurs and arrange to make up the time. Students unable to report to the agency as scheduled (illness or emergency) must contact the field site to report off. Frequent absences will be noted in the field evaluation, so students should be cautious about absences.
3. Students are accountable for practice per the NASW Code of Ethics and the Ohio State Code of Professional Conduct (OAC 475-7-5-01). Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action according to college policy. Consequences may include:
  - a. Reduction of grade
  - b. Failure of field placement
  - c. Delayed graduation
  - d. Dismissal from the social work program and/or the college
4. Students must follow agency policies and procedures, including company dress code. Field Instructors reserve the right to send a student home when in violation of the dress code. Violation of certain agency policies and procedures may result in termination of the field placement (see “Termination” for more information).

## **POLICIES**

### **LIFE EXPERIENCE CREDIT POLICY**

The program’s field experience is of central importance to the educational development of the social work student; therefore, life and prior work experience are not considered substitutes. The structure of the field experience is critical to meeting program learning outcomes, and key elements of that structure are supervision and learning to work with others individually and in groups. **As a result, the BSW program does not accept academic credit for past life/work experience unless it is part of academic credit awarded by a social work program accredited by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE).**

### **STUDENTS WITH FELONY CONVICTIONS**

Felony convictions may limit where students can be placed for field work, where they can be employed as social workers, and whether they can obtain an Ohio license to practice social work. Decisions on these issues are often made on a case by case basis, considering when the felony occurred the level of the conviction/charge. Students are encouraged to note this on the field application and be aware that field agencies may require students to submit to a criminal background check and/or drug screen prior to field placement. Students are welcome to discuss their situations and questions with the Field Coordinator or the program director.

## **FIELD PLACEMENT FORMATS**

Two options exist for field placement, each requiring students to complete **420 hours** in the field practicum. These options include:

### **BLOCK FIELD PLACEMENT**

A block field placement is a one-semester placement in which a student spends three to four full days at an agency (**30 hours/week, 420 total hours**) and earns six (6) credits. The midterm evaluation (see the

“Field Evaluation Form” located in the Appendix) is scheduled at approximately 180 hours. Final evaluation will occur during the last weeks of placement.

## **TWO-SEMESTER FIELD PLACEMENT**

A two-semester placement requires the student to spend two days per week at an agency while earning three (3) credits/semester (**14-16 hours per week, 210 hours per semester, 420 hours total over two semesters**). Days of the week are flexible. The two-semester placement allows students to take other classes during each semester, but students are reminded that ALL required social work courses must be successfully completed (with a grade of “C” or above) before they can register for field placement. In a two-semester placement, the midterm evaluation is scheduled within the first **100** hours of each semester. Final evaluations will occur at the end of the second semester.

## **CRITERIA FOR FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

Field Instructors must have at least a bachelor level social work degree (BSW) from an accredited CSWE school. Individuals who hold only a master degree in social work (MSW) from an accredited CSWE school are also eligible to serve as a Field Instructor. Field Instructors must also demonstrate an interest in serving in a teaching role with students. Agency staff persons desiring to serve as a Field Instructor are selected following a review of their interest, training, experience, academic preparation, and ability to provide appropriate supervision for students. Agency administrators should participate in this selection process.

In instances where the Field Instructor does not hold a BSW or MSW from an accredited CSWE school, co-supervision by a BSW/MSW and the non-social work Field Instructor must be established. The social work program assumes responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective. The focus is on providing students with professional modeling and supervision appropriate to social work practice.

To ensure that the field experience provides students with professional modeling and supervision, the Field Instructor expectations are as follows:

1. Ability to reinforce the student’s identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession.
2. Willingness to assist the student with the integration of acquired empirical and practice-based knowledge into their field experience.
3. Ability to organize learning tasks and serve in a teaching role.
4. Ability to serve as a role model for students in terms of the sharing of knowledge and skills, a positive attitude toward issues in the profession, and identification with student needs and interests.
5. Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics.
6. A BSW/MSW degree in Social Work. Field Instructors should have been working in a social work position for at least 2 years post-graduation.
7. In those placement situations where MSW/BSW supervision is not directly available, but an individual possesses the personal qualifications for field supervision, arrangements must be made for a qualified BSW/MSW person to assume basic planning and evaluation of the field experience. Preferably this individual would come from the field agency but could be in a similar setting.

8. The credentials of the Field Instructors will be documented on the "Learning Contract". The Field Instructor will sign a statement confirming their degree and credentials. The Field Coordinator will verify the criteria of each Field Instructor by reviewing this information.
9. Agree to complete the Field Instructor's Orientation Training provided by the Field Coordinator.
10. Field Instructors will be evaluated by the field student upon completion of the field placement via questions on the required social work department exit survey.
11. Introduce the student to staff members and provide an orientation to the field setting, familiarizing the student with:
  - a. the functions, policies, and goals of the agency
  - b. the clientele served
  - c. the relationships of the agency to the community and other agencies
  - d. the agency's expectations of the student
12. Afford the student opportunities to observe staff members at work in specific situations (such as interviewing and other social work tasks).
13. Arrange for the field student to attend staff and board meetings whenever possible and participate where appropriate.
14. Select the work load of the student so that it is in harmony with the setting, taking into consideration the student's capacity, interests, past experiences, life patterns, and program competencies whenever possible. "Busy work" is not appropriate for the field student. The jobs assigned must allow the student to contribute meaningfully to the agency while learning and represent a broad exposure to social work roles and responsibilities.
15. Provide students opportunities to work directly, in-person, with individuals, families, groups, and the community. Assign research that helps foster integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge.
16. Schedule a one (1) hour (at minimum) weekly supervision conference for each student, who will document these meetings on a "Supervision Summary Form" signed by the Field Instructor. Topics covered should include:
  - a. Helping the student prepare for and participate in these conferences.
  - b. Explaining the purpose and process of documenting where necessary.
  - c. Emphasizing the student's application of basic social work concepts, values, and skills in field assignments.
  - d. Raising the student's awareness of the steps, skills, and knowledge he/she has used in performing each assignment, and the attitudes and feelings experienced during that time and afterwards.
17. Proactively address concerns about a student's performance. For serious concerns, violations, or other issues, the Field Instructor must meet with the student to address and resolve them. These discussions should be documented, including date and outcome(s).
18. If resolution does not occur in the student meeting, submit a "Field Agency Concern Form" to the Field Coordinator.
19. Participate in development of student performance improvement plans and/or terminations.
20. Participate and complete midterm and final student evaluations.

21. Evaluate the student in accordance with the “Student Field Evaluation.”
22. Evaluate, with the Field Coordinator, the field placement itself based on consistency with program competencies.

## **CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION INTO FIELD**

1. All social work courses must be completed with a grade of “C” or better.
2. All social work students must have a 2.0 overall grade point average before beginning field placement. There are no exceptions to this rule. Students with an incomplete in a social work course must complete course requirements **prior** to starting field placement.
3. Students must apply for field placement by completing the “Application for BSW Field Placement” which includes a checklist for eligibility and submission of the student’s resume. The checklist will indicate whether all criteria to enter field placement have been met.

## **STUDENT ORIENTATION TO FIELD PLACEMENT**

1. Students begin orientation to field placement the semester prior to entering the field. The Field Coordinator meets with students at the Field Orientation meeting during Social Work Practice I: Micro Lab (SWK 405L) to explain the entire practicum process and expectations of all parties. Students are instructed to read the Code of Conduct/NASW Code of Ethics section of the manual (also listed on the “Application for BSW Field Placement” form) which outlines the expected professional and ethical behaviors of students in field placement. Students are also required to review all forms in the field manual.
2. Students are oriented to the placement process, the experiences available in each agency, liability issues, and other professional matters. Students should review the Field Roster and consider three (3) agencies or areas of interest. They are encouraged to explore agencies in which they are interested by going online or arranging with the agency a day of job shadowing. Students discuss their interests further with a faculty liaison to determine “fit,” and when agencies are identified, the liaison contacts them to explore their interest in having a placement. Students then interview with prospective Field Instructors. All students are required to complete, at minimum, two (2) potential field site interviews. These interviews help orient students to placements and to identify their interests and learning objectives. Interviews satisfactory to both parties usually results in placements the following semester or summer.

## **PROCESS TO SECURE A FIELD AGENCY PLACEMENT**

1. Field students must begin the placement process while in the Social Work Practice Lab I class. All field placements are arranged by the social work department, not by students. Students must wait until their Social Work Practice I: Lab class to start the field placement process
2. The Field Coordinator will provide an orientation to the field experience (in Practice I: Lab course – SWK 405L) and support during the field placement application process. Students are expected to behave professionally during the field placement process.
3. The field student must complete the “Application for BSW Field Placement” form.
  - a. Students are encouraged to indicate whether they receive accommodations through the Student Success Center.
  - b. Students are encouraged to indicate whether they have been convicted of a felony crime(s).

- c. Students must indicate whether they are choosing block or two-semester placement.
4. The Field Coordinator and program director will review applications for BSW field placement and begin working to secure placements for approved applications that meet the criteria.  
**\*Students may not look for field agencies themselves. This includes calling or talking with field agencies (or having someone else call agencies on the student's behalf) without prior permission of the Field Coordinator.**
5. Once the application is approved, the Field Coordinator will notify the student and schedule a meeting to discuss areas of interest. They will work together to determine the best field placement site based on service areas desired and the agency preference list.
  - a. To prepare for this meeting, students are asked to identify three areas of social work (e.g., child welfare, geriatric, substance abuse, etc.) and potential agencies. While the program cannot guarantee placement according to student preferences, the Field Coordinator will make every effort to place students in preferred agencies/areas.
    - i. Students should be aware that faculty cannot ensure a placement at the sites the student provides. Additionally, indicating a preference for a specific agency means a commitment to placement at that agency if an opening is available. Therefore, students should thoroughly research placement options.
6. Students are responsible to be in constant, respectful, and professional communication with the Field Coordinator, including daily checks of emails sent to the Aultman College email address and phone messages. Timely return communications are also required.
7. The Field Coordinator contacts the prospective agency Field Instructor to determine if the agency is interested in interviewing one or more students for the upcoming semester. Students are required to complete, at minimum, two (2) interviews with different field sites.
  - a. If the agency is interested in a potential student, the student must call the potential Field Instructor to arrange an interview.
8. The field student should attend the scheduled interviews and communicate with the Field Coordinator by use of the "Field Agency Interview Form" which will indicate whether the agencies are willing to accept the student for field.
9. Some field placement sites may require additional steps, such as completing an agency application and providing references, completing a background check and/or drug screen, or providing medical records. Students must complete agency requirements and be financially responsible for any necessary costs to do so.
10. When the field placements are confirmed, students will complete, sign, and submit the "Field Agency Acceptance Form" to the Field Coordinator so that it can be signed by Field Instructor and Field Coordinator.
11. Students must complete the "Agency Selection Form" to indicate the field site chosen.
  - a. This form must be completed as soon as the placements are confirmed to ensure execution of contracts with the agencies and to allow the Field Instructors to receive appropriate materials before students begin placements.
12. The Field Coordinator will notify field sites of student decisions and confirm placements with the students. Once the field agencies are secured, students must contact their field sites to determine further agency requirements (e.g., background check, drug screen, physical, etc.).

## **FIELD EXPERIENCE AT CURRENT PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT**

We recognize that personal economic situations of some students may necessitate them to explore field placement opportunities where they are employed. While professional/employment activities and student learning are not incompatible, there is a difference between the goals of employment and those of educational development. It is important to remember that the focus of the field placement must be on student learning.

Students interested in an employment-based placement must submit to the Field Coordinator their request via the “Request for Field Placement at Place of Employment” form in addition to the “Application for BSW Field Placement” and a resume.

For a field experience to occur at a student’s place of employment, the following conditions must be met:

1. The agency has a qualified Field Instructor (BSW minimum) who is **NOT** the student’s regular supervisor and who is willing to fulfill the responsibilities of Field Instructor.
2. The agency must meet program’s social work field site guidelines.
3. The agency agrees to the terms of “Field at Place of Employment” furnished by the Field Coordinator.
4. The agency and student must clearly outline the differences between his/her current employment role and the role as a field student on the “Request for Field at Place of Employment” form.

Students who wish to be placed where they are employed must initiate the proposal to the Field Coordinator by following these steps:

1. The student must submit the “Request for Field at Place of Employment” form along with the “Application for BSW Field Placement” and an updated resume to the Field Coordinator.
2. The Field Coordinator and program director will review the request form, assess applicability, and recommend (approve, modify, or deny) a final decision.
3. The Field Coordinator will notify the student whether the field placement is acceptable and/or whether modifications will be necessary.
4. The Field Coordinator will send the approved placement plan to the student and Field Instructor. If the employment field placement is determined unacceptable, the student must agree to find another placement approved by the program.
5. The Field Coordinator may visit the agency to discuss with the administrator and/or Field Instructors how the program’s educational objectives will be met during the placement.
6. The Field Coordinator will determine whether the placement remains consistent with the program’s educational objectives and the proposal made by the student. Deviations from the placement plan may result in termination of the student’s field placement.
7. Students who are terminated from their employer in their non-field placement role will also be terminated from field placement with the agency. See “Change of Field Placement/Termination.”

## **RESPONSIBLE PARTIES IN FIELD**

### **FIELD COORDINATOR**

#### Expectations:

1. Administrative oversight of relationships with field placement sites on behalf of the college and in the best interests of social work students, including but not limited to risk management work with legal departments to reduce college, department, and student liability.
2. Recruitment and development of field placement sites.
3. Development and maintenance of appropriate records and communication with field agencies.
4. Collaboration with faculty to plan and implement Field Instructor training.
5. Development of field education resources.
6. Assessment and evaluation of student and program outcomes.
7. Adherence to and integration of field education accreditation requirements as mandated by Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
8. Representation of the social work program, as approved by the program director, at professional conferences and trainings targeted toward field education.
9. Supervision of assigned student project assistant(s).
10. Implementation of orientation and field instruction training to field agencies and Field Instructors.
11. Development of policies for field placements in organizations in which students are employees.
12. Participation in the student field placement interview process as a “facilitator” and “information provider” to students and agencies.
13. Orientation of students and agency Field Instructors to the expectations and mechanics of the field placement program.
14. Promotion of three-way open communication among field students, Field Instructors, and the Field Coordinator related to exploring innovative suggestions for improving the field experience and dealing with issues and conflicts associated that arise in field placement.
15. Monitoring student progress in field placement through “Time/Task Logs” and “Supervision Summaries” by giving feedback, telephone contact with the agency Field Instructor, and individual meetings with students as needed.
16. Development with Field Instructors of plans/programs to address student limitations that arise in field placement.
17. Presence at field agencies and in-person participation in the student’s midterm evaluation meeting.
18. Participation in final, in-person evaluation meetings for field students.
19. Support of Field Instructors and students during the placement, including additional in-person meetings or phone conferences as needed.
20. Awareness of situations with which the students or the Field Instructors need additional support.
21. Awareness of and involvement in changes of field placement or Field Instructors, student concerns, and/or termination processes.

22. Review of merits/shortcomings of field placements with students and Field Instructors at the middle and end of each field placement; explore suggestions for improving field placements.
23. Provide final grades to students each semester based on Field Instructor's evaluations, student logs, meetings with students during placement, students' written integration assignments, as well as students' demonstration of skills, application of knowledge, and satisfactory display of professional social work behavior.
24. Review of students who continually struggle during placement with persona and/or performance issues.
  - a. Work with students who do not successfully complete field placement to secure one alternate placement. The Field Coordinator not obligated to assist students with more than one alternate placement.

## **FIELD INSTRUCTOR**

The BSW program relies on the Field Instructor to provide a variety of learning experiences for students. Following are Field Instructor expectations:

1. Ability to reinforce the student's identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession.
2. Willingness to assist the student with the integration of acquired empirical and practice-based knowledge into their field experience.
3. Ability to organize learning tasks and serve in a teaching role.
4. Ability to serve as a role model for students in terms of the sharing of knowledge and skills, a positive attitude toward issues in the profession, and identification with student needs and interests.
5. Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics.
6. A BSW/MSW degree in Social Work. Field Instructors should have been working in a social work position for at least 2 years post-graduation.
7. In those placement situations where MSW/BSW supervision is not directly available, but an individual possesses the personal qualifications for field supervision, arrangements must be made for a qualified BSW/MSW person to assume basic planning and evaluation of the field experience. Preferably this individual would come from the field agency but could be in a similar setting.
8. The credentials of the Field Instructors will be documented on the "Learning Contract". The Field Instructor will sign a statement confirming their degree and credentials. The Field Coordinator will verify the criteria of each Field Instructor by reviewing this information.
9. Agree to complete the Field Instructor's Orientation Training provided by the Field Coordinator.
10. Field Instructors will be evaluated by the field student upon completion of the field placement via questions on the required social work department exit survey.
11. Introduce the student to staff members and provide an orientation to the field setting, familiarizing the student with:
  - a. the functions, policies, and goals of the agency
  - b. the clientele served
  - c. the relationships of the agency to the community and other agencies
  - d. the agency's expectations of the student

12. Afford the student opportunities to observe staff members at work in specific situations (such as interviewing and other social work tasks).
13. Arrange for the field student to attend staff and board meetings whenever possible and participate where appropriate.
14. Select the work load of the student so that it is in harmony with the setting, taking into consideration the student's capacity, interests, past experiences, life patterns, and program competencies whenever possible. "Busy work" is not appropriate for the field student. The jobs assigned must allow the student to contribute meaningfully to the agency while learning and represent a broad exposure to social work roles and responsibilities.
15. Provide students opportunities to work directly, in-person, with individuals, families, groups, and the community. Assign research that helps foster integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge.
16. Schedule a one (1) hour (at minimum) weekly supervision conference for each student, who will document these meetings on a "Supervision Summary Form" signed by the Field Instructor. Topics covered should include:
  - a. Helping the student prepare for and participate in these conferences.
  - b. Explaining the purpose and process of documenting where necessary.
  - c. Emphasizing the student's application of basic social work concepts, values, and skills in field assignments.
  - d. Raising the student's awareness of the steps, skills, and knowledge he/she has used in performing each assignment, and the attitudes and feelings experienced during that time and afterwards.
17. Proactively address concerns about a student's performance. For serious concerns, violations, or other issues, the Field Instructor must meet with the student to address and resolve them. These discussions should be documented, including date and outcome(s).
18. If resolution does not occur in the student meeting, submit a "Field Agency Concern Form" to the Field Coordinator.
19. Participate in development of student performance improvement plans and/or terminations.
20. Participate and complete midterm and final student evaluations.
21. Evaluate the student in accordance with the "Student Field Evaluation."
22. Evaluate, with the Field Coordinator, the field placement itself based on consistency with program competencies.

## **FIELD STUDENT**

Students in field placement must:

1. Dress appropriately according to the field agency's policy.
2. Arrive on time to field as scheduled.
3. Communicate professionally with the field site (e.g., phone, email, face-to-face).
4. Participate fully in planned activities including conferences, seminars, work assignments, etc.
5. Show initiative and creativity in the placement.

6. Call the agency when unable to report to work and arrange with the Field Instructor to make up the time within two weeks of the absence. Regular attendance is expected; frequent absence/tardiness may result in loss of placement.
7. Observe college holidays, vacations, and breaks. Students may **NOT** participate in field work at these times or when the college closes for weather or other emergencies.
8. Complete and submit weekly Time/Task Logs and Supervision Summaries to the Field Coordinator.
9. When uncertain, confused, or frustrated, see the agency Field Instructor in a timely manner for assistance.
10. Become involved in social work educational experiences.
11. Assume new responsibilities; learn by trying new things. Field placement is a unique opportunity to develop social work skills and techniques.
12. Follow confidentiality guidelines established by the agency and adhere to professional ethics. To ensure a safe learning environment, audio or digital recording of any part of your placement is strictly prohibited. Students who violate confidentiality, intellectual property policies, or video/audio recording rules will be removed from placement and subject to discipline as outlined in the college Student Code of Conduct policy.
13. Actively participate in appropriate indirect service activities such as planning and organizational tasks.
14. Attend and participate in periodic field seminars; time spent counts toward the required 420 placement hours.
15. Write the integration assignments and submit them to the Field Coordinator.
16. Remember that a successful placement (in grades and learning) is a result of the skills and behaviors students exhibit, the knowledge they employ, and the initiative they demonstrate.
17. Be aware of the agency's mission, function, and purpose prior to placement. If available review the organizational chart and job descriptions.
18. Adhere to all agency policies, procedures, and expectations.
19. Avoid personal use of agency computers (e.g. surfing the web, social media, email) unless approved by
20. Use cell phones and electronic devices appropriately. Avoid taking personal phone calls or texting unless approved by the Field Instructor.
21. Avoid office politics/turf wars, interdepartmental conflicts, and office romances.
22. Seek approval for schedule changes and sick days from the Field Instructor. Sick days do not count toward the 420 hours.
23. Seek approval for personal time off/vacation from the Field Instructor.
24. Read this field manual prior to placement; review it carefully, paying close attention to expectations.
25. Schedule and complete, at minimum, two (2) field site interviews at different agencies.

26. Review the Social Work Field Code of Conduct in this manual and in the “Application for BSW Field Placement.” It outlines behaviors and ethics/standards of practice expected of field students. Students will sign this document acknowledging understanding of these standards.
27. Inform the Field Coordinator of any issues/concerns about the field agency.
28. Meet with and address issues/concerns about the field experience/field agency with the Field Instructor.
  - a. If meeting with the Field Instructor does not resolve the student’s issue or concern and the student still wishes to change agencies, the student must submit a “Request for Change of Field Agency” to the Field Coordinator.
29. Complete, participate and give a copy of a midterm and a final evaluation to the Field Coordinator. Failure to submit these documents on time may result in the student receiving a zero in field.

## **SOCIAL WORK FIELD PLACEMENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Social Work field students must adhere to the standards/ethics of the profession advanced by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Prior to field placement, students must review the entire NASW Code of Ethics and sign off stating they acknowledge the Code of Conduct listed below as a part of the application process for field placement. Following are some major standards for practice in the field; this link goes directly to the NASW Code of Ethics. <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

**Note:** *At any time during field placement, students who find themselves in situations that raise ethical concerns should contact the agency Field Instructor or the program Field Coordinator.*

### **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.

### **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 during professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. In addition, to ensure a safe learning environment, the use of audio or digital recording of any part of your placement is strictly prohibited. Students who violate intellectual property policies, confidentiality, or video or audio recording rules will be removed from their field placement and referred to university administration for appropriate action.

### **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.

**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 to jeopardize the best interests of people 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, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

## **STAGES OF FIELD PLACEMENT**

Field placement consists of three stages for agency instructors who supervise students. At the beginning of the semester, the Field Coordinator conducts meetings to orient each Field Instructor regarding expectations and individual student needs. During the semester, the Field Coordinator will visit the site periodically to discuss student strengths and deficiencies. At the end of the semester, the student and Field Instructor meet with the faculty field liaison to discuss positive learning experiences, shortcomings (as seen by either student or Field Instructor), avenues for further growth of skills, and suggestions for improving field placements.

### **1. PREPARING STUDENTS FOR FIELD PLACEMENT**

Preparation steps include:

- Advisement for field placement begins early. Faculty advisors urge social work students to focus and shape their curriculum with a broad liberal arts base and select courses to help them understand the issues and processes of intervention. However, students are not permitted to set up their own field placement; rather, they must complete the Social Work Practice I: Micro Lab class to set up field placements. The Field Coordinator will work with students in special circumstances.
- Students are encouraged to plan financially for their placements. Placement is a six (6) credit hour course, three (3) hours per semester, for the two-semester format. Students wanting to complete placements in summer should speak with the financial aid administrator to determine whether financial aid will be available.

- In the semester prior to field placement, students attend a field orientation meeting held during the Social Work Practice I Lab: Micro course. Here students learn field placement expectations and their role as students. Field placement will provide a simulated work experience under the close supervision of an agency practitioner. Students are informed of professional ethics, client confidentiality, work responsibility, attitudes, and dress code expectations as well as grades and the evaluation of student performance.
- Students are briefed about the role and activities of social workers at various agencies and their roles as field students.

## **2. PLACING AND MONITORING STUDENTS**

When a placement is arranged (the interview has been completed and the agency agrees to take the student), the student is assigned to an agency staff member, the Field Instructor who will directly supervise the student. The Field Instructor is an experienced social worker with a BSW or higher credential and have, at minimum, 2 years post-social work degree experience. Prior to field placements, new agencies and/or Field Instructors will have an orientation meeting to review the role responsibilities of the agency Field Instructor, program Field Coordinator, and student.

Students will complete a learning agreement with the Field Instructor within the first two weeks of field placement and submit it to the Field Coordinator.

Student progress is monitored through student logs, emails, telephone calls, on-site visits, and evaluations.

Field Instructor concerns about student progress should be directed to the Field Coordinator who will schedule a meeting to discuss concerns and develop an action plan. Students may be placed on performance improvement plans at any time during field placement.

Student concerns about the level of Field Instructor supervision should be directed to the Field Coordinator who will decide how to address concerns.

## **3. EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING AND FIELD SITE EFFECTIVENESS**

During the placement, the Field Coordinator meets jointly with the student and Field Instructor to review progress toward explicit program learning objectives. This process is repeated twice each semester and augmented by telephone contacts, review of logs, and field seminar meetings (held twice per semester). In addition, each Field Instructor is given the freedom to structure student activities and assignments that promote student professional growth and the learning agreement.

Throughout the placement, by moving from simple to more complex assignments, the student gradually experiences greater involvement in the life of the agency. The meetings provide opportunity to link academic and field learning, identify areas needing attention, and reinforce positive achievement and strengths.

At the middle and end of the placement, students are evaluated using the “Student Field Evaluation” form. This instrument is systematically designed based on program objectives and is outcome based with criteria by which students demonstrate achievement of program objectives. It also identifies specific student strengths and areas for improvement.

Field sites are continually being monitored for effectiveness. The Field Coordinator will determine if any new field sites are appropriate. Student concerns about the level of Field Instructor supervision should be directed to the Field Coordinator who will decide how to address concerns. The Field Coordinator must visit sites at least twice during student placement. In addition, the student will evaluate the Field Instructor and field site at the end of the field experience as part of the required social work program exit survey. Concerns about field sites will be handled by the Field Coordinator with a call or visit to the site to discuss concerns. The Field Coordinator may terminate a site at any time due to concerns over effectiveness, ethical issues, or violating terms of the field agency agreement.

## **TERMINATION/CHANGE OF FIELD PLACEMENT**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) refers to field education as the “signature pedagogy” in social work education (Educational Policy 2.3).

Field placements are distinctly different from other social work courses in that they take place in the community. Not only do students have a learning contract to assess their competencies and practice behaviors, but their placements require professional responsibilities to the agencies, the community, and to the vulnerable populations they serve. Therefore, withdrawing or being terminated from a field placement is a very serious matter.

Listed below are the circumstances and/or processes for changing, terminating, or being terminated from a field site.

### **NO-FAULT TERMINATION**

#### *No-Fault: Student Initiated Withdrawal*

Students may initiate a request to withdraw from field placement for such reasons as serious illness, educational considerations, or personal crisis, circumstances which often necessitate an extended absence. This can affect a student’s ability to complete the academic requirements of field hours in the time allotted and/or to demonstrate competency in field placement. Each circumstance will be evaluated by the Field Coordinator and Field Instructor.

#### *No-Fault: Agency Initiated Termination*

A placement may be terminated due to circumstances beyond the student’s or the field placement’s control, including availability of the Field Instructor, closure of a program, or major policy change affecting the placement. The Field Instructor must notify the Field Coordinator as soon as possible when circumstances at the placement have changed.

The Field Coordinator will make reasonable efforts to locate another placement and facilitate the student’s completion of the placement during the same semester. The hours accrued in the first placement will be credited toward the total hours required for field.

#### *No-Fault: Field Coordinator Initiated Termination*

In very rare circumstances, the Field Coordinator may determine that the field placement cannot provide an acceptable field experience for the student and/or fulfill the learning contract and may decide to terminate the placement. At that time, the student should meet with the Field Coordinator to arrange a new field placement. The student whose placement is changed is still responsible for completing the

required number of field hours. Time spent at the original field practice placement will count toward the total hours required for field.

## FOR-CAUSE TERMINATION

### *Agency Initiated Termination*

If the Field Instructor has concerns about the performance, ethics, professionalism, or behavior of the field student that go beyond or have not responded to the usual supervision process, the following steps should be followed.

**Note:** The following steps can be skipped when the matter involves an allegation of one or more serious offenses by the student (see “Criteria for Automatic Termination”).

1. The Field Instructor meets with the student, expressing concerns and attempting to resolve the situation.
2. If this fails, the Field Instructor submits a detailed “Field Agency Placement Concern Form” to the Field Coordinator.
3. The Field Coordinator arranges a meeting with the student and Field Instructor to discuss the concerns regarding the student’s behavior or performance. This meeting can include key agency personnel, if needed.
4. The meeting will result in either the student’s termination from the field site or the student being placed on a Performance Improvement Plan.
  - a. If no resolution is found, the student will be terminated from the field site.
  - b. If the student is placed on a Performance Improvement Plan, a “Performance Improvement Plan” form is completed and signed by all involved.

Students terminated from field placement are subject to consequences or disciplinary actions according to college policy.

## CHANGE OF FIELD AGENCY

### *Student Initiated Request to Change Field Placement Location*

Students accepting field placements must fulfill the Learning Contract they developed with their Field Instructor. Changing placements may have serious implications including the following:

- If an acceptable alternative placement is not available, the student may be delayed another semester.
- Students leaving a placement without entering an alternate field site receive a failure for the first attempt. Failure to pass a second attempt will result in removal from the social work program.

Students should reflect upon the feasibility and possibilities of an alternate placement **prior to initiating a change request.**

Students who are truly dissatisfied with their placement should follow these steps to address the concern(s):

1. The student should first meet with the Field Instructor to discuss concerns and attempt to resolve the situation.

2. If this fails, the student must then submit a “Request for Change of Field Placement” form to the Field Coordinator.
3. The Field Coordinator will arrange a meeting with the student and Field Instructor where all will explore the issues leading to the change request and discuss avenues of resolution.
  - a. If no resolution is found, the placement will be terminated.
4. Students should arrange an “exit” meeting, if possible and appropriate, with the Field Instructor to ensure that the student has completed all crucial commitments to the agency and/or existing clients.

**Note:** When a request for change of placement has been approved, the faculty field liaison will make a reasonable effort to find **ONE** alternative placement to meet the student’s educational needs. However, an alternative placement may not be available or it may be too late in the semester to start a new placement. In certain circumstances, students may need to find their own alternate placements.

## **CRITERIA FOR AUTOMATIC TERMINATION**

Grounds for automatic termination from the field placement include, but are not limited to, the following. Students may also be subject to consequences or disciplinary action according to college policy.

1. More than three (3) occurrences of unexcused tardiness or absence from the field site.
2. Repeated failure to provide reasonable notice of an absence or failure to appear as scheduled for three (3) or more consecutive days without approval of the Field Instructor and Field Coordinator.
3. Withdrawal from a placement by the student without following prescribed procedure.
4. Serious or repeated violations of the NASW Code of Ethics.
5. Serious or repeated violations of the agency’s policies and procedures.
6. Sustained low level of performance or unresponsiveness to corrective action/Performance Improvement Plan.
7. Reporting to the field placement site under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
8. Student behavioral issues manifesting to the extent that they prevent the student from performing placement requirements.
9. Failure to maintain generally accepted professional boundaries and behaviors toward agency clients and staff.
10. Any sexual relationship with an agency client.
11. Failure to disclose critical background information in application forms, pre-placement and placement interviews, and criminal background checks if requested by the field site.
12. Failure to meet academic and behavioral standards specified in this Field Manual, the student social work handbook, and the college catalog.

**Note: Students who are automatically terminated but not dismissed from the program or college may have to wait until the following semester to restart field.**

## **FIELD FORMS**

### **LEARNING CONTRACT**

Within the first two (2) weeks of beginning field placement, students must complete a learning contract. This should be done collaboratively with the Field Instructor for agreement on goals, objectives, and tasks. Each goal, objective and task will reflect knowledge and use of all nine (9) competencies across all student field experiences.

### **TIME/TASK LOGS**

Throughout the semester, students must keep a **daily** log specifying their activities, impressions, feelings, and questions about their practical learning experiences. Students are also advised to describe in some detail how they handled complicated situations and log their hours. The Field Coordinator may provide a template or guideline for daily logs; please check with him/her. Logs are submitted to the Field Coordinator **weekly**. Students must code or disguise client names to preserve confidentiality. Field Instructors must sign off on these forms prior to the student turning them in.

The logs allow the Field Coordinator to monitor student growth and concerns and suggest additional readings. The Field Coordinator may meet with the student to discuss problems or may arrange a meeting for the agency, student, and Field Instructor to discuss problems the student may have. In difficult situations, the Field Coordinator may initiate more frequent contact with the student and the agency Field Instructor. Students with urgent issues to address should contact the Field Coordinator immediately rather than waiting for him/her to read the log.

Logs also provide students with opportunities to reflect on their learning experiences and serve as a vehicle to examine ideas and questions with an outside person. If an agency Field Instructor requests to review the log, the student should contact the Field Coordinator to make arrangements.

Field students should write in their logs **daily** as it is difficult to later reconstruct what happened on any given day. The log is important not only for recording daily student activities but also the thoughts, ideas, feelings, and reflections that occur because of the daily experiences.

**NOTE: Failure to submit logs to the Field Coordinator weekly will result in a failing grade for the placement.**

### **SUPERVISION SUMMARY FORM**

Along with the Time/Task Logs, students must write a weekly summary of discussion during their one (1)-hour weekly supervision sessions. This ensures that weekly supervision is being completed appropriately and proper conversations are occurring. These are due **weekly** to the Field Coordinator and must be signed off by the Field Instructor.

### **MIDTERM AND FINAL EVALUATIONS**

At midterm, and again at the end of each placement, agency Field Instructors must complete the "Student Field Evaluation." These evaluations will reflect the student's knowledge and successful application of all nine (9) competencies with clients and constituencies throughout the student's field experience. Field Instructors are to share and discuss these evaluations with their students. The Field Coordinator participates in the midterm and final evaluations of field placements and student performance. The Field Coordinator also must conduct a final evaluation meeting with the Field Instructor and student, which

may be conducted in-person at the agency or by web-camera. The final evaluations become part of student permanent files.

## **GRADING GUIDELINES FOR FIELD**

Grades in the Social Work Field Practicum I & II (SWK 415 & SWK 430) relate to how students develop skills, their actual performance, how they translate knowledge into skills and interactions, and generally how they conduct themselves in a productive and professional manner. Success is not based solely on good intentions or potential, but on performance. Lack of success may relate either to the inability or reticence to use one’s self appropriately or to difficulty assuming the social work role. Grades will reflect evaluation of student performance by Field Instructors and other professionals in the field setting.

	<b>Percent of Grade</b>
1. Field Coordinator’s overall evaluation of the student’s performance in the placement in conjunction with the agency Field Instructor’s evaluation	80%
2. Logs (Time/Task Logs and Supervision Summaries)	20%

## **SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR FIELD STUDENTS**

### **SUPPORTING STUDENT SAFETY**

Student safety is a priority in the field program, and the orientation process includes safety education.

### **VALUABLE SAFETY INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS**

#### *Environmental Signals of Danger*

The environmental context has many signals that may indicate a potentially violent situation. Certain situations can be more violent than others, such as: a protective service worker decides to remove a child from a home in which one (or both) of his parents are abusing him; a social worker at a battered women’s shelter takes one of the residents to her home (where the batterer may be present) to pick up belongings; a social worker at a police department goes with a police officer to a home in which domestic violence is reportedly occurring; or a social worker at a neighborhood center is working with juvenile gang members to curb criminal activity.

#### *Client Signals of Danger*

<b><u>SIGNAL TYPE</u></b>	<b><u>BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES</u></b>
Angry	Verbalizations Swearing, threatening statements, complaining, sarcasm
Emotional Distress	Suspicious, hostile, irritable, unhappy, angry
Thinking Difficulties	Confused, disoriented, hallucinations, paranoid ideas
Bodily Changes	Trembling, heavy breathing, shakes, sweating
Speech	Sharp, loud, pressured speech
Signs of Intoxication	Slurred speech, flushed face, unsteady gait, dilated pupils, lack of coordination

Body Movements	Exaggerated movements, pacing, shifting positions, flailing arms, threatening gestures, clenched fists, pounding of fists on objects, wringing of hands, tense muscles
Facial Cues	Muscle tension in face and neck, pale, gritting teeth, dilated pupils, glaring, scowling
Agitation	Hyperactive, tenseness, ill at ease, overly anxious

The best predictor of violent outbursts is a history of violent expressions. Therefore, whenever possible, the field student should read a client's records prior to meeting with him or her. Diagnoses of antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality, and schizophrenia have been associated with proneness to violence.

Another indicator is a history of substance abuse. Alcohol intoxication lowers inhibitions towards violence, and it interferes with a client's judgment. Use of drugs such as cocaine, PCP, and amphetamines increases the risk of violence as they increase the potential for agitation, suspicion, grandiosity, and delusional beliefs.

### *Signals of Danger*

In assessing the risk of potential violence, it is crucial that field students attend to their intuitive responses ("gut feelings"). Students who know themselves well will be better able to identify their feelings and thoughts and use gut feelings to assess the risk of potential violence. It is important to note, however, that intuitive feelings can be affected or distorted by the student's personal and cultural biases or misinformation. For example, facial gestures, body language, and verbal expressions may communicate different meanings across cultures (e.g., Native Americans generally find direct eye contact to be rude, and a sign of aggressiveness). In general, however, gut feelings are an important source of information for assessing the risks of violence, and students must access and attend to them. Students should immediately reach out to their agency Field Instructor and/or the Field Coordinator with any concerns about safety.

### *Assault Cycle*

Most assault occurrences follow a predictable pattern of five phases:

1. **Triggering phase:** All persons have a baseline of normative behaviors. In this triggering phase, an event occurs that ignites the first deviation from these baseline demeanors. A wide variety of events, such as receiving criticism or a speeding ticket, can be triggers.
2. **Escalation phase:** Clients become increasingly emotionally aroused. Speech, behavior, and emotions move further away from normative expressions. The best time to intervene is early in this cycle. The intervention, for example, may involve active listening, nonjudgmental listening, and problem solving to prevent further escalation of the client's agitation.
3. **Crisis phase:** At this stage clients are so aroused physiologically and psychologically that they are unable (or not inclined) to control angry, hostile feelings. Instead, they become verbally or physically aggressive, and interventions of active listening and problem solving are no longer likely to be effective. Students must attend to their own safety, the safety of others, and the safety of the aggressive client.

4. Recovery phase: Clients begin returning to baseline behaviors but are still in a precarious state. If further upsetting events occur, they may rapidly return to being verbally and physically abusive. To support recovery, students must pace interventions in response to the client cues and perhaps reassure clients they will be safe. Students should avoid disapproving comments and should not yet seek to explore the reasons for and consequences of the behavior.
5. Post-crisis depression phase: At this point, clients have calmed down and returned to baseline behaviors. They may even be more subdued than normal baseline behaviors or may be mentally and physically exhausted. They are apt to have feelings of remorse and shame, which then make them more receptive to social work interventions.

These five phases suggest when and how to intervene with communication skills to deescalate the situation. For example, during the crisis phase and during the recovery phase, this paradigm suggests that active listening and problem solving should not be used even though they are used during the other three phases.

### *Preventing Violence*

The best way to deal with violence is to prevent it from happening. The most constructive way of doing this is to lessen the perceived threat and feelings of helplessness. Fortunately, students can choose from a variety of options to prevent violence.

### *De-escalating Verbal Communication*

To de-escalate verbal communication, field students can facilitate client expression of feelings and thoughts, which may have a ventilating effect. Students can use active listening and reflecting client feelings to facilitate ventilation. Reflecting feelings validates a client as a worthy person. Students may also use the technique of disarming by finding some truth in what the client is saying and expressing "agreement." Disarming results in the client feeling understood and validated and, consequently, more apt to be open to examining the student's point of view.

Additionally, when helping a client express thoughts and feelings, students should use empathy by paraphrasing the content of what they say. Restating the meaning of their thoughts and feelings may help them reflect about the issue and begin to problem solve.

Encouraging clients to problem solve and assisting in problem solving is another de-escalation strategy for verbal communication. Clients prone to violence have greater difficulty generating nonviolent solutions to problems. Suggesting nonviolent options to clients may facilitate their choice of nonviolent courses of action.

Redirecting client attention to less emotionally charged subjects can de-escalate verbal communication. For example, saying, "It's really getting warm in here. I think both of us need a little time to cool down. Let's take a short walk and talk about something else for a while. Once we're more relaxed, we may be better able to come up with some creative ideas to resolve this." It is also important that students avoid using aggressive, confrontational, or macho responses when a potentially violent client is emotionally upset. Such responses increase the likelihood of violence.

### *De-Escalating Nonverbal Communication*

Field students should maintain some distance from the clients so they don't feel their personal space is being violated. Individuals with a history of violence tend to need greater territorial space for personal comfort than do less violent individuals. Students should avoid touching clients (other than shaking

hands) as touching may be perceived as a challenge, or it may psychologically arouse clients who connect it with past physical abuse.

Some eye contact with a potentially violent client may be useful as it conveys interest, and it also enables the field student to be watchful. However, students should avoid sustained eye contact and glaring as it may be perceived as hostile and heighten aggressive arousal.

### *Setting Limits*

Many angry clients fear losing control. Students might say something like, “It’s okay to be angry, but it’s not okay to strike out. What can I do to help you feel more in control right now?” This helps clarify to potentially violent clients that physical aggression is not acceptable. The tone and wording involved in setting limits should be supportive of the client’s worth and should not increase feelings of powerlessness. In setting limits, students should use confident, assertive tones rather than parental, nonassertive, or aggressive tones as they may trigger additional arousal.

### *Staying Calm and Generating Options*

Field students should seek to communicate calmness verbally and nonverbally even if aroused and frightened. An even, slow, soft-toned voice and a confident, nonjudgmental, non-authoritarian approach will help facilitate clients feeling reassured rather than pressured. Students who become agitated and convey agitation may subtly provoke client aggression.

Remaining calm also helps students creatively generate constructive options (including escape strategies). In contrast, fear and high anxiety will interfere with generating and assessing appropriate options. Students can use relaxation techniques to remain calm.

### *Mobile Phone Use (From NASW Safety Standards)*

Mobile phones have become a necessity for communication outside the office. Wherever possible, social workers should use agency phones, rather than personal phones, to reduce exposure of their personal information. Although excellent tools for communication, mobile phone can also potentially escalate an aggressive situation, and the social worker should therefore use it in a sensitive and sensible manner. To increase the safety provided by a mobile phone, social workers should:

- keep the mobile phone fully charged, have a replacement battery on hand for emergencies, and keep a phone charger in the car
- be familiar with limitations of cell phone coverage in areas where they may visit
- ensure that they know how to use the phone properly before going into the field
- keep emergency contacts on speed dial
- keep GPS-enabled mobile phone applications always activated while in the field
- agree on and use “code” words or phrases to help social workers convey the nature of threats to their managers or colleagues
- remember to not use handheld mobile phones while driving
- send text messages of knowledge of circumstances, instead of calling, but not while driving
- use the phone discreetly, so as not to inadvertently escalate a potentially volatile situation and to avoid becoming a possible target for robbery

## *Home Visits*

Specific safety precautions must be tailored to the individual situation. Use the following guidelines to plan for safety when conducting home visits.

- If possible, clients should come to the office, where student safety is more easily achieved. If an office meeting is not possible, perhaps another public place such as a library or restaurant can be arranged.
- If the visit must be held in the home, the situation may warrant that two persons conduct it. If the potential for violence is heightened (as in helping a woman at a battered woman's shelter retrieve some of her belongings from her home when the batterer may be present), perhaps the woman and the field student should be accompanied by a police officer.
- Students should obtain as much information as possible on clients prior to home visits. Review files for evidence/history of violence and for risk factors related to violence (such as alcohol or other drug abuse). It is also important to determine if others in the household might present a risk of violence or if there is an aggressive dog in the home or yard.
- As field students enter homes, they should note entrances and exits in case a quick exit is needed. Students should wear shoes that facilitate a rapid exit and avoid wearing expensive jewelry and clothing in deteriorating neighborhoods as clients may perceive them as signs the student belongs to a different socio-economic class that is unlikely to relate to client circumstances. Students should dress professionally in attire that presents them as nonthreatening. They should ensure the agency knows their home visit itineraries including location and approximate arrival and departure times. Students should also carry a working cell phone programmed with agency and emergency numbers for quick dialing.
- Students should present themselves confident and assertive. Being timid or aggressive may elicit aggressive responses. If other people near the destination appear threatening or if a noisy argument is occurring, the field student may choose to return another time or day, perhaps taking another staff member along.
- Students should park their vehicles where quick escape is possible.
- When entering homes, students should visually scan to look for signs of danger such as weapons or drugs, ask who else beside the client is at home, and carefully watch everyone present. If signs of danger are evident, students should promptly and politely postpone the visit, saying something like "I'm sorry, please excuse me. I just remembered I'm supposed to be at another meeting. I'll call you this afternoon to arrange another time when we can meet." It's best, at least at first, to stay near the entrance door in case a quick exit is needed. The bottom line when conducting a home visit is for students to remain calm, creatively generate and assess safety options, and trust "gut feelings" about signs of danger.

## **IMPORTANT NOTES FOR A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT FIELD EXPERIENCE**

1. Students should ask Field Instructors questions, be assertive, and take initiative. When students do not understand why something was or was not done, or why something was done a certain way, they should ask. When students want to take on more responsibility, they should ask.

2. When students are unhappy or dissatisfied about something, they should first discuss it with the Field Instructor. Open three-way communication is necessary among students, Field Instructors, and the Field Coordinator. Field placements come with some frustrations and discontent; this is what makes them valuable, challenging learning experiences.
3. Each field placement uses a variety of acronyms and terminology specific to their genre of generalist social work. Students are encouraged to be acquainted with the acronyms and terms associated in their field of interest.
4. Students are also advised not to get involved in the internal politics of an agency. For example, students should not take sides if a staff member is unhappy about his/her salary or take sides if internal friction between staff members arises. Agency politics are a complex and sensitive matter; student involvement only fuels complexity and sensitivity.
5. Because some agencies do not operate on an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule, student work schedules may vary and should be worked out with the Field Instructor. Students should be present at their agencies when the optimal learning experiences are likely to occur, so evening or weekend hours may be advisable.
6. The Field Instructor is responsible for overseeing student field work and will familiarize students with the agency and its procedures and direct them to necessary resources. Because the Field Instructor oversees student work, students should first address questions or concerns to him/her. If questions and concerns are not being addressed if a second opinion is needed, students should contact the Field Coordinator for assistance. Field Instructors should deal with concerns at the agency level first, contacting the Field Coordinator when assistance is needed.
7. Learning occurs best with enjoyable experiences. Students who give field placement their best effort usually have an enjoyable experience. The few students who fail in placement are generally those who try to bend the expectations, exert little effort to learn and grow, or who make an otherwise lackadaisical effort.
8. It is important to remember that everyone makes mistakes—people who don't make mistakes aren't trying anything new. Both the agency and the faculty understand this and work with students, asking that they give the placement their best effort, work to correct problems as they arise, and meet expectations.