



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

BSW Field Manual Fall 2015

Kellye McIntyre, Field Director

kellye.mcintyre@wku.edu

	2
WELCOME	4
PROGRAM INFORMATION	4
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY	5
VISION-TO BE RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY AS A COLLEGE THAT OFFERS EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS IN HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.	5
MISSION-THE COLLEGE PROVIDES DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES LEADING TO EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES FOR A GLOBAL COMMUNITY.	5
CORE VALUES- COLLABORATION; SCHOLARSHIP; SERVICE; EXCELLENCE; PROFESSIONALISM; LIFELONG LEARNING; INTEGRITY; DIVERSITY; ACCOUNTABILITY	
PROGRAM MISSION	
GOALS	
STUDENT PLACEMENT PROCEDURES	6
? PREPARING FOR THE AGENCY INTERVIEW	7
? THE INTERVIEW	7
? SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	7
PRE-FIELD ONLINE TRAINING	8
FILD HOURS	8
EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FIELD STUDENT	9
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FIELD PLACEMENTS	11
BACKGROUND INFORMATION	11
OBTAINING PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE	11
DRIVER’S LICENSE AND TRANSPORTING CLIENTS	12
HOME VISITS	12
EMERGENCIES	12
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION	12
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	13
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL	13
EMPLOYMENT	13
WORKSITE PLACEMENTS	13
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT	14
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	14
Social Work Core Competecies and Practice Behaviors	15
Learning Outcomes	15
Field Practicum Evaluation/Grading	18
Agency University Relationships and Responsibilites	19
Expectations or the Agency	19
Approval of Agencies	20
Contracts	21
Orientation to the Agency	21
Learning Plan	22
Field Journals	22
Assignments	23
Documentation of Compleed Hours	23

Notification of Student Concern	23
Reassignment/Termination Procedures	24
Program Termination	26
Student Evaluation of Field Process	26
Assessments of Field Process	26
Roles of Field Staff	26

Welcome

We would like to welcome you to a very meaningful part of your social work education. Since its inception, the profession of social work has considered practical experience to be an important part of social work education.

Field Education is offered concurrently with academic study. Students are matched to a social service agency and complete an internship placement under the guidance and supervision of an experienced professional social worker called a Field Instructor. This vital interaction is designed to reinforce our students' academic study with real life experience. It permits testing theory in practice settings and provides students with field experience that is vital for academic and professional development. Affiliated social service agencies in several Kentucky communities, and surrounding areas, are utilized for field instruction. These agencies provide our students with a wide range of social service settings for generalist Field Education.

Field Instructors are provided with training prior to hosting student interns at their agencies. Field instructors are committed to the professional development of new social workers, and devote their time and expertise to our students' professional development.

We wish you well in this aspect of your professional education and encourage you to familiarize yourself with, and adhere to, the policies in this manual.

Dr. Dean May, Department Head

Dr. Dana Sullivan, BSW Program Director

Ms. Kellye McIntyre, CSW, Department Field Director

Program Information

The BSW and MSW Social Work Programs, at Western Kentucky University, are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The Programs make up the Department of Social Work located within the College of Health and Human Services. This Department, as a whole, has grown significantly over the past 20 years. Faculty has an extensive range of educational, practice and teaching backgrounds.

Click on site below to see pictures and educational background of all staff and faculty.

<http://www.wku.edu/chhs/socialwork/faculty.htm>

Western Kentucky University

VISION-A Leading American University with International Reach

MISSION -Western Kentucky University prepares students to be productive, engaged leaders in a global society. It provides service and lifelong learning opportunities for its constituents. WKU is responsible for stewarding a high quality of life throughout its region.

College of Health and Human Services

VISION-To be recognized nationally as a college that offers exemplary programs in Health and Human Services.

MISSION-The College provides diverse educational opportunities leading to excellence in Health and Human Services for a global community.

CORE VALUES- Collaboration; Scholarship; Service; Excellence; Professionalism; Lifelong Learning; Integrity; Diversity; Accountability

Departmental Mission

The mission of the Department of Social Work at Western Kentucky University is to provide quality BSW and MSW programs that prepare competent and responsible professionals to work successfully in a global society.

Program Mission

The mission of the BSW program at WKU is to prepare culturally competent professionals who work with diverse, multigenerational populations and client systems of various sizes. The program promotes a commitment to social justice and lifelong learning in order for students to work successfully in a global society.

Goals

- To prepare generalist social workers who are culturally competent and adept at integrating professional knowledge, values, and skills for practice with diverse populations and multigenerational client systems of various sizes
- To foster a respect for diversity and a commitment to the common good through the advancement of social justice.
- To instill a sense of oneself as a citizen of the world who is committed to ongoing professional growth and development.

In 2008, the accrediting body of social work education, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) switched to a competency based system for accrediting schools of social work. This new design helps schools to examine what we truly want students to be able to “do” at the end of BSW level education. In the words of CSWE, “Competency-based education is an outcome performance approach to curriculum design. Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.” (EPAS, 2008, p. 3)

Student Placement Procedures

The field process not only follows an orderly progression, it also attempts to seek an appropriate “fit” between students and their field environments.

Once the placement has been approved and finalized, the director will send an Approval Letter giving further directions.

- **Submit Field Application-** When you are notified by the field director, you need to complete a “Field Application” form and submit it immediately. All applications should be submitted six weeks prior to the beginning of the semester, or placement may be delayed or denied.
- **Attend Field Orientation and Meet with Field Director-** The director or designee will attend one of your classes the semester prior to your field placement. You may also need to schedule an appointment to discuss your field placement at any time.
- **Placement Interviews-** Watch your WKU email- The field director will review your application and suggest an agency for you to contact. Students are welcome to suggest new field settings, however, **PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT AN AGENCY WITHOUT THE DIRECTOR’S PERMISSION AND ONLY CONTACT ONE AGENCY AT A TIME.**

The director will notify you about possible placement options available and the contact information, so you can set up an interview for placement. It is the student’s responsibility to actively pursue the placement, and report back to the field director if a problem arises. If the student fails to set up an interview, as requested by the field director, placement for the semester can be denied. Once the interview has occurred, the student will report back to the Field Director about how the interview went and if they were offered/accepted a placement at that agency. If the student does not wish to accept the placement (with good

reason, as determined by the Field Director), another interview will be set up. Failure to accept a placement without good reason, or failure to accept the second placement offered, may be grounds for termination from field.

- Preparing for the Agency Interview

Placements require a preliminary interview. The Director of Field Education will inform the student of the agency placement contact information. The student takes the initiative to schedule the interview. If the contact person cannot be reached, the student finds out when that person will be available and calls back at that time. The student should also leave his/her name, a return number, and the best time to be reached by the contact person. When leaving phone messages, students should also mention that they are WKU social work students and are calling to set up an interview for field placement.

Once the agency contact person is reached, a date and time for the interview are set. Placement interviews should be handled like job interviews, which require appropriate professional attire, behavior, and some background knowledge about the agency.

Before the interview, the student might find it helpful to review the agency's website and check the agency files in the Field Education Office to obtain more information about the agency.

- The Interview

During the interview, the student learns about the requirements of the particular placement and the educational opportunities available at the agency. The interview is a two-way process. Students should have clear goals and learning priorities and be prepared to ask specific questions about learning experiences available, clients served, skills that can be developed, type of setting (structured or unstructured), and methods of supervision, etc. Suggested questions are provided below:

- Suggested Interview Questions

1. What kind of activities and programs does this agency undertake?
2. What activities, tasks, and/or projects will I be able to undertake?
3. What specific skills will I be able to develop at this agency?
4. Does this agency have a particular theoretical approach to intervention?
5. What are general characteristics of clients and communities served by this agency?
6. What is the approach to and structure of supervision?
7. What amount of interaction does a student have with other students and with permanent staff?

8. What opportunities exist for inter-professional collaboration or cooperation?
 9. What types of in-service training or workshops and conferences will be available to me?
 10. What kinds of cases and/or projects do you anticipate assigning to me?
 11. What kinds of skills to you hope a student will bring to the agency?
 12. How much independence and initiative do you expect me to demonstrate?
 13. How are students helped to handle issues of diversity regarding age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and mental and physical ability on both staff and client levels?
- Students should be prepared to answer questions about their background, educational and career goals, and why they might desire that particular placement. At the interview, agency personnel assess the student's level of interest and suitability for the general type of assignments they have in mind. Typically, it is at this point that placement decisions are finalized. However, if there are well-founded reservations about the suitability of the match between the agency and the student, the Field Education Office should be informed at once by the student and/or the Field Instructor.
 - Failure to Place-If the agency fails/refuses to offer a student an interview or placement based on students attitude, phone etiquette, appearance, maturity level, emotional state, reputation or performance in the interview (or with other good reason, as determined by the Field Director), another interview will be set up with another agency. If the second agency fails/refuses placement based on students performance in the interview (or with other good reason, as determined by the Field Director), this may be grounds for administrative withdrawal from field courses.

Pre-Field Orientation and Training

Pre-field Orientation and Training is mandatory. Students will complete pre-field training, which is a combination of online topics/assignments, classroom orientation and agency orientation with the field director. (Online assignments are not counted as field hours.) The field liaisons will monitor compliance of student's on-line activity. Failure to complete on-line assignments will delay placement and could cause withdrawal within 10 days of start date.

Field Hours

BSW Social work students spend a minimum of 400 hours (200 hours each semester) in a social service agency as part of the major degree requirements. Field hours represent a significant percentage of the student's academic credit hours. This credit reinforces the importance of field instruction as the laboratory of testing ground for social work majors. Pre-field hours will not count as field hours. Students may count up to 16 hours of training each semester as field hours, if the agency approves/sponsors the training/in-service.

Field hours begin the first week of class (each semester) and ends the week before finals. You cannot begin early or stop early. First year students in the traditional two-year program may begin placement within the first four weeks of the beginning of the first semester.

Field hours must extend over the entire semester. The only exception to this rule is "mandatory orientation" of the agency that is only scheduled prior to placement date. Exceptions (military duty, maternity, etc.) must be approved by the Field Director.

Students may complete no more than 20 hours during the school breaks, between semesters. These hours may be counted in semester two. This is done to provide continuity of services to the clients.

Field Policy

Students will be asked to sign a statement that they have read and understand this Field Policy Manual.

Expectations for the Student

1. The student is expected to meet the course requirements for each level of field instruction and be in good standing.

SWRK 480-Social Work Field Practicum 1 Prerequisites: SWRK 345, 378, 381, field director approval and senior standing. Co-requisite: SWRK 481. Social Work practice experience in a social agency.

SWRK 481-Social Work Field Seminar I Prerequisites: SWRK 345, 378, 381, and admission to the field internship, and senior standing. Co-requisite: SWRK 480. Integration of the knowledge, skills, values, and experiences gained in the internship.

SWRK 482-Social Work Field Practicum II Prerequisites: SWRK 480/481. Co-requisite: SWRK 483. Continued social work practice experience in a social service agency.

SWRK 483-Social Work Field Seminar II Prerequisites: SWRK 480/481. Co-requisites: SWRK 482. Integrates the knowledge, skills, values, and experiences gained during the second semester of the internship.

SWRK 480/481 and SWRK 482/483 are capstone courses in the BSW program major.

Students enrolled in the field practicum courses (SWRK 480 and 482) simultaneously enroll in the accompanying integrative field seminars (SWRK 481 and 483). The seminars provide a setting where students discuss ideas, professional concerns, seek information from peers and Department faculty, provide a forum for class-field learning integration, and offer the opportunity to process the frustrations, questions, and challenges of daily practice. Assignments and expectations are outlined in the course syllabus.

2. The student will adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics*. The student is expected to read the *Code of Ethics* prior to their first week of field placement. Failure to follow these ethical standards may result in termination from the field practicum and/or the SW Program.
3. Students enrolled in the university assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the university's function as an educational institution.
4. Students will engage in culturally competence practice.
5. It is mandatory that the students maintain the confidentiality of agency records.
6. The student will not alter the program requirements or any other condition of his or her field placement without the permission of the Director of Field Education and the Field Instructor.
7. The student will adhere to the Agency's schedule of holidays, closings, etc. Students must consult with their field instructor to negotiate time off during these breaks in the academic calendar. The student will adhere to the Agency's schedule of orientation and in-service training as a requirement of his/her practicum.
8. If a student misses field time, for any reason, the student must make up the time.
9. All students must keep a record of the number of hours they work in the field.
10. All students are expected to retain a copy of their Learning Plan/Evaluation, all journals/assignments, Timesheets and other related work products until they have completed the program.

Special Requirements for Field Placements

Background Information

A growing number of agencies serving as field sites require students to undergo a criminal background check, fingerprinting, and a child welfare check, immunizations, as well as other additional requirements. Students desiring to complete placement in these organizations must comply with agency requirements for special screening. Although most agencies cover all or at least some portion of the costs for these special requirements, students will be expected to obtain all required screenings at their own expense if not covered by the agency. All students must follow the agency's guidelines on Universal Precautions.

It is the responsibility of the student to be forthcoming regarding any issues that may affect his or her ability to perform effectively with clients or with other related field assignments.

Having a criminal history does not necessarily mean you will be rejected for a field placement, however, if a student does not disclose his/her criminal background on the application, and later a criminal history is discovered, this will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Obtaining Professional Liability Insurance

All students must have verification of professional liability insurance prior to entering field, NO EXCEPTIONS. Insurance forms are available from Field Website. Students who hold professional liability insurance through their employers should verify coverage with their carriers and the Field Director. The Field Director will require a written statement from the carrier that coverage will extend to practicum activities. The Department requires a minimum individual coverage of \$1,000,000 occurrence/\$5,000,000 aggregate. Failure to apply for coverage early in the application process (30 days prior to the first week of class, in any semester) may cause a delay in the start date of field placement.

Students will NOT be allowed to enter field placement and/or have client contact without proof of professional liability insurance. There will be no exceptions. Failure to qualify for or obtain liability coverage by the beginning date of practicum will result in a student not being allowed to begin field placement and possible withdrawn from the field courses. If students do not provide proof of coverage within 10 days of the start date of the placement, he/she will be withdrawn from field course and from the corresponding practice course.

Driver's License and Transporting Clients

Students must have reliable transportation to and from field placement. If students will be driving as part of their field experience, they must possess a valid driver's license as well as auto insurance. If the agency requests, and if the student chooses to transport clients, as part of the field duties, an insurance rider on your personal policy is highly recommended. WKU has no responsibility for any transportation issues.

Home Visits

Home visits may be a routine responsibility of a student's field placement, or indicated in a variety of situations. Agencies will be expected to take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of each student. At a minimum, the same security provided to the staff must be provided to the students. In certain circumstances students may need additional support and security. The Director of Field Education should be consulted by the student, Field Instructor or Faculty Field Liaison if safety is a concern.

If you are working in an agency and you do not have access to a telephone when working with clients, please make sure you have your own personal cell phone.

All personal safety incidents, (e.g. an accident which may have resulted in an injury or a case of sexual harassment or stalking) must be reported immediately to the Director of Field Education by either the student, Field Instructor or Faculty Field Liaison.

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency off campus (e.g. crime, injury, fire, etc.) call #911 and be prepared to report:

- a) the nature of the emergency;
- b) the exact location of the emergency;
- c) your name and call-back phone number in case further information is needed.

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

Western Kentucky University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. It is committed to the principle that access to study and employment opportunities afforded by the university, including all benefits and privileges, be accorded to each person, student, faculty or staff member on the basis of individual merit, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, sex or age. As required by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the university is committed to the broad application of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

Sexual Harassment

Western Kentucky University has a policy that seeks to guarantee each student a learning environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be condoned in any form at the University or at a practicum site.

Drugs and Alcohol

The abuse of drugs and alcohol by a field student is incompatible with the goals of the Social Work Program. Those in need of assistance in dealing with such problems are encouraged to seek the confidential services of the Counseling Center or the Student Health Center. *Abuse of drugs and/or alcohol will be grounds for termination of a student from the program. Substance abuse of any kind will impair a student's judgment and the ability to work effectively with clients in the field practicum setting.*

Field students may be asked to provide drug screens/assessments (of any type) as a part of the admission/continuation of field (at any time), by the program director or the field agency. Students refusing to provide requested assessments/test results or testing positive, must immediately notify the Director of Field Education. Failure to do so will result in termination from the program.

Employment

Many students in the program are employed either on a part-time or full-time basis. Those students are expected to negotiate with their employers the required time necessary to be available for their practicum during the usual business hours of the field agency. Evening and weekend placements are difficult to find and are not guaranteed. *(See Worksite Placements)*

Worksite Field Placements

Use of a student's agency of employment as a practicum site will be facilitated when possible as a means of meeting the program's mission to prepare social workers to meet the needs within the WKU service area. In order to maintain quality education, such placements are carefully developed and supervised. The student, employment supervisor, agency administration, field instructor, field liaison and Field Director are involved in this process. Policies have been developed that are designed to ensure new learning experiences in such situations. It should be noted that the program does not guarantee approval of worksite placement.

- The agency must be able to meet the educational outcomes of the program and requirements of CSWE. This includes the availability of a field instructor who holds a BSW (for BSW students) or MSW (for MSW students) from an accredited

program and two years of post-BSW/MSW practice experience. WKU includes the additional criterion of compliance with state licensure laws.

- A student who is employed at a social service agency and requests a “worksite placement” must submit a completed Worksite Placement/ Evaluation Request form to be approved by the Field Director. This form requires specificity and clarifies the distinction between employee and learner roles. (For example, students are asked to identify a minimum of three ways in which their practicum activities and responsibilities differ from their regular employment responsibilities. A table has been developed that requires students to map out in advance tentative activities and responsibilities for each semester that worksite placement is likely to be requested. This shows not only that each semester’s activities differ from employment responsibilities but also from other semesters.)
- Clear separation of the student’s learner and employee roles are emphasized. The student’s employment supervisor may not serve as the same student’s field instructor. They are asked how other agency personnel will distinguish between their two separate roles. WKU faculty or contractual community BSW/MSWs may act as field instructors. The same faculty member may not serve as the student’s field liaison and field instructor. If a suitable arrangement cannot be reached, the student must be placed elsewhere.

One of the disadvantages of a worksite placement is the fact of your field placement will be dependent on your employment status. If you quit or lose your job for any reason, it will jeopardize your field placement, which in turn can jeopardize your completion of the program.

The Field Liaisons will review the student’s WORKSITE EVALUATION approval prior to accepting/signing the student’s Learning Plan, to check for consistency.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 provides protection from discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. You may be qualified through the WKU Disability Resource Center, (703) 993-2474. *If you require special accommodations, you must provide the Director of Field Education with documentation from the Disability Resource Center explaining the nature of the required accommodations prior to the placement process.*

Conflict of Interest

To ensure each student an objective-learning environment, including a sound evaluation of student performance in the field setting, students are expected to immediately notify

the Director of Field Education if a conflict exists. The Field Director can then assess the appropriateness of the placement.

Social Work Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors

Field education is the “signature pedagogy” of social work education; it is the pivotal transformative experience in progressing from “social work *student*” to “social work *professional*”. The core competencies are the learning outcomes for this course. Upon successful completion of SWRK 480 and 481 (along with evidence drawn from previous social work coursework), students are expected to demonstrate achievement of the ten core competencies (left hand column below) as evidenced by the associated practice behaviors. Each competency will be measured in terms of knowledge, values and/or skills.

According to the Curriculum Policy Statement contained within the Council on Social Work Education’s Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures, students completing a BSW Program curriculum should be able to:

Learning Outcomes:

<u>Competencies</u>	<u>Expected Practice Behaviors</u>
1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly	1. Advocate for client access to the services of social work. 2. Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development. 3. Attend to professional roles and boundaries. 4. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication. 5. Engage in career-long learning. 6. Use supervision and consultation.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice	7. Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice. 8. Make ethical decisions by applying standards of NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable, IFSW/IASSW Ethics Principles. 9. Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts. 10. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments	11. Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom. 12. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.

4. Engage diversity and difference in practice

INCLUDES:

age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, spirituality and the full spectrum of beliefs, sex, sexual orientation

5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice

6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

9. Respond to contexts that shape practice

13. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

14. Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.

15. Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.

16. Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.

17. View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

18. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.

19. Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.

20. Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

21. Use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry.

22. Use research evidence to inform practice.

23. Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

24. Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

25. Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.

26. Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

27. Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.

28. Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

29. Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
30. Use empathy and other interpersonal skills.
31. Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.
32. Collect, organize and interpret client data.
33. Assess client strengths and limitations.
34. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives.
35. Select appropriate intervention strategies.
36. Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals.
37. Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities.
38. Help clients resolve problems.
39. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients.
40. Facilitate transitions and endings.
41. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

The goals of the field practicum and integrative seminar are:

- To provide BSW students in their final two semesters the opportunity to consciously reflect upon and critically integrate course knowledge, skills and values learned in earlier social work courses with real field experiences;
- To provide students with support and opportunities necessary to demonstrate their integration and application of the ten core competencies identified by the Council on Social Work Education.

Through practice of social work tasks identified in the students' learning plans, along with discussions, activities, and assignments in the integrative seminar, students will review concepts and practice integrative thinking/doing in their emerging professional work. In order for students to adequately demonstrate competence in each of the core areas, there will be an emphasis in seminar on students:

- Understanding each competency area and the discrete practice behaviors that together provide evidence of competent practice;
- Employing critical thinking and social work professionalism to approach field and seminar tasks
- Exploring what they do not know (or do not consider), and designing activities that will assist them in gaining required knowledge, skills, and values
- Reflecting upon and evaluating their practice in relation to the NASW Code of Ethics

- Learning to skillfully and graciously give and receive feedback related to performance as beginning professional social workers
- Becoming consultants and coaches for each other by asking questions that support critical thinking and principled actions in the field

Field Practicum Evaluation /Grading:

Students will be graded on a PASS/FAIL basis, for their agency work. Grades will be given by Field Instructors and based on completion of field requirements and their professional skill development based on meeting the Competencies. Grades will be given in the Seminar classes, as usual. Seminar grades will be based on Seminar Assignments and Field Journals. Letter grades will be assigned by field liaisons after consultation.

Students must demonstrate competency in each of the 10 Competency Areas. Each competency area has specific behaviors that students are expected to master in order to be competent in that particular standard. The field instructor places a check or a minus beside each behavior, as indicated below.

Check means they have mastered the behavior.

Minus means they have not mastered the behavior.

NA means they have not had a chance to do this yet (first semester only).

Example: If you have 6 behaviors under a competency with three (3) checks and three (3) minuses, then the competency score would be 3...and so on. Three (3) and above on each competency, would be a passing grade.

Students must pass (“C” grade or higher) SWRK 480/482, and score at least a “3” on each journal (based on the rubric in the syllabus), in order to advance to semester two. Students must pass (“C” grade or higher) SWRK 482/483 and score at least a “3” on each journal (based on the rubric in the syllabus) in order to graduate.

Planning for the final evaluation should actually begin at the start of the semester. All parties—the Field Instructor, student, and Field Liaison—should review the Field Performance Indicators in order to ensure that the criteria are met over the course of the semester. Each Liaison visit/contact will include a discussion of how the Field Performance Indicators are being met and to brainstorm ways of meeting any that seem to be problematic. Any such difficulties should be addressed well in advance of the final evaluation.

Students are evaluated at midterm and at the conclusion of each semester, according to the respective (Performance Indicators) Field Outcomes. Field Instructors and students are asked to complete evaluations using a copy of the Learning Plan independently, compare results, and reach an agreed-upon conclusion prior to the Field Liaison’s visit.

Spaces for commentary are provided at the end of the form. These should address strengths, areas for continued learning, and any other areas deemed noteworthy by any of the three parties. Again, it is anticipated that any concerns will have been addressed well in advance of the final evaluation.

Individual Liaisons have the option of requesting that a copy of the evaluation be submitted 48 hours in advance of the final visit. Liaisons are responsible for officially assigning final grades for field students.

Any student who believes that he/she has been unfairly graded must follow the University appeal procedures outlined in the Student Handbook, University Catalog, and Hilltopics.

Students will get two separate grades for field work. One grade for seminar class and one grade for field work in the agency.

Agency University Relationships and Responsibilities

The Agency and University share the responsibility for instruction of field students in a partnership relationship, each performing different functions in this relationship. Multiple individuals work together to make this partnership successful, including field instructors, the Field Director and faculty field liaisons.

Expectations for the Agency

1. The agency's director should be committed to the agency's participation in professional social work education, and there should be a commitment to enter into a long-term relationship with the University involving the training of numerous students over time.
2. An employee of the agency should be designated to serve as the contact person to work with the school.
3. The agency and the School will enter into an agreement regarding the mutual expectations for affiliation prior to a student being accepted for placement.
4. The agency will provide reasonable physical facilities necessary to accommodate the student and also provide a reasonable orientation to the agency (Appendix A).
5. The agency should provide the variety, quality and quantity of learning experiences appropriate for the level of field education: Foundation year (BSW and 1st yr) and/or Concentration year.

6. The agency will be expected to assure the availability of case material and work activities for instructional use by students. This material would be subject to the guidelines of confidentiality.
7. The agency should reimburse students for agency-related travel expenses from the agency to home visits, etc.
8. The agency should provide the opportunity for students to attend staff meetings and participate in other collaborative and professional exchanges.
9. In the case of working with a faith-based agency, the agency may provide the opportunity for students to attend and participate in spiritually-oriented activities; however they must respect the student's decision as to whether or not to participate.
10. The agency should allow its field instructors adequate time for student supervision and for attendance at seminars and other meetings pertinent to this role.

Agencies should have formal safety policies and procedures.

Approval of Agencies

The Field Director approves Instructors and Agency Task Supervisors for field placement. All placements, including work-site placements, must be in approved agencies and under the supervision of approved field instructors. All agencies, including worksite placement agencies, must go through the field procedure for approval prior to enrollment of students in field placement at that agency. The agency approval process for new agencies is as follows:

- An authorized agency representative completes and submits an Agency Application/Field Instructor Agreement
- The Field Director makes a determination of eligibility as a field site.
- Approved agencies will be encouraged to provide position descriptions.
- Approval is ongoing with the Field Director and instructors sharing the mutual responsibility for updating the Affiliation Agreement/Agency Application/Information Sheet as agency circumstances or personnel change.
- In the case an agency is denied approval, appeals may be made in writing to the Program Director. In consultation with the Department Head, the Program Director will then render a final decision of eligibility.

In the course of the above process, an agency is approved according to the following process:

- The Field Director or designee visits the prospective agency/staff.

- The Field Agency Application/Information Sheet indicates that one or more programs offer suitable placement opportunities for students. These opportunities are congruent with the goals and outcomes of the program.
- A BSW or MSW holding a degree from an accredited program and who has two years of experience and is in compliance with state licensure laws is available to serve as a field instructor. (Note: In some instances, an agency board member or community partner, a community practitioner with a relationship with the agency, a contracted community practitioner, or a faculty member may serve as a field instructor if this is agreeable to all concerned parties. In this case, the agency and Field Director agrees on an agency-based task supervisor.
- Being in compliance with the state Social Work Licensure Board (may be licensed or exempt)
- Willing to submit a current vita or resume and copies of their transcript and/or social work license
- Willingness to attend WKU's field instructor trainings and orientation sessions
- The agency and field instructor indicate willingness to participate actively in the student's learning process and to abide by the agency policies and the policies contained in this Field Manual.

Field Instructor Orientation and Other Training

- Field Instructors will have several opportunities throughout the year for training. WKU offers Multimedia training/information to instructors
- Free CEU credit during each semester
- Orientation (in person and online)

Contracts

Each agency will be required to sign a CHHS Affiliation Agreement or an approved agency contract prior to student placement. The Memorandum of Agreement between the agency and the Social Work Department is signed by the Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, the Social Work Department Head and an appropriate agency administrator/supervisor.

Orientation to the Agency

Orientation to the specific agency and its clients is the responsibility of the agency field instructor. It is generally recognized that some form of planned orientation is beneficial to students. Essential to the orientation process is agency-based HIPAA training, if applicable, worker safety and emergency procedures for the agency. Faculty field liaisons, in conjunction with agency field instructors and students, are responsible for planning and implementing an agency orientation program that will enable the students to become familiar with agency policies, procedures and the student role. During the first two weeks of placement, the student will complete the "Initial Placement

Information” form and submit this to the Field Liaison. This form includes geographical information as well as a list of orientation elements. Liaisons will review the orientation checklist to insure proper orientation.

Learning Plan

- Students submit a “Learning Plan” within four weeks of the beginning of their field placement. Since faculty want students to have the best practice experience possible, standardized learning tasks have been developed to enhance learning in the field. These tasks are based on knowledge, values and skills.
- Students are expected to develop one or more tasks, to add to this list, based on their specific agency situation. In addition to the standardized tasks, students are expected to determine additional tasks based on their agency: and must meet the requirements of the Field Instructor and Field Liaison. If the student fails to complete the Plan within four weeks of the beginning of their placement, termination from field may be initiated.
- The student will submit the Learning Plan to the Field Instructor and Field Liaison for approval/signatures and the student is responsible to retain the original document throughout the year. The same form is to be used for the student’s evaluations at the midterms and ends of each semester. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain all needed signatures and maintain the original documents. At the conclusion of the fourth week of field placement, each semester, it is the Field Liaison’s responsibility to file a copy of the Learning Plan into the student’s permanent file; and at the end of each semester, a copy of the final evaluation is to be filed in the student’s permanent file. At the end of the year, it is also the Field Liaison’s responsibility to submit the original documents (with ALL completed evaluation scores) to the Field Director for inclusion into the student’s master file.
- If the learning plan is completed online, then the student needs to keep the original in a soft and hard copy, to verify changes and have signatures available for their records.

Remember the Learning Plans are to encompass both semesters, so tasks and timeframes may vary from one semester to another.

Field Journals

Journals are essential in assisting the faculty field liaison in guiding student learning experiences to maximize the value of field placement. Journals are the major vehicle for communicating to the faculty liaison the full range of issues, both positive and negative, occurring in the field experience and form the basis for discussion and planning for

student/faculty conferences. All competency areas will be covered by a journal during the field placement. The term client is used in generalist terms and pertains to practice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Journal postings should be submitted timely. The field liaison will provide information to help guide appropriate discussion, emphasizing critical thinking and mutual support for professional learning and growth through respectful questioning and consultation.

Journals will be graded using a rubric provided by the field liaison. Students must pass all journal assignments with at least a score of “3” in order to show competency in each area.

Assignments

All field assignments are specified in the syllabi for each semester. Field liaisons and field instructors have the latitude to require additional assignments to assist students in acquiring relevant knowledge and skills.

Documentation of Completed Hours

At the end of each semester when the final evaluation is done, the liaison will sign it. This also serves as the Documentation of Completed Hours. Hours must be completed prior to liaison signature. This is the official documentation that all required field hours have been completed.

Notification of Student Concern

Any interested party having concerns regarding a student’s field or classroom performance, professional conduct, an ethical violation/dilemma, emotional state, or academic performance should express their concern to the A&R committee. Concerns should first be discussed with the student, faculty, field liaison and/or advisor. If the concern is field related, and cannot be resolved by the Liaison, the Liaison will submit the concern to the Field Director. If successful resolution cannot be reached, either for practical or for policy-related reasons, the Field Director will notify the program director to bring the issue before the A&R committee. The student’s advisor or the Program Director, will notify the student in writing of his/her concern and the A&R resolution. If the student does not agree with the resolution, the appeal process may be utilized at any time.

This policy is written only to assist with communication and in no way intends to circumvent the “termination process”, or the “student grievance policy. At any point, the student is free to follow the grievance policy set forth in the Student Handbook. Students are expected to adhere to this order of communication.

Reassignment/Termination Procedures

There are numerous reasons that arise which may cause a need for reassignment or termination after the student is in placement. Each situation will be explored and the outcome will depend upon the nature of the situation.

- Many situations may be resolved by the Field Director.
- Some situations may need to be resolved by engaging the Program Director and/or the Admissions & Retention Committee (A&R). The A&R committee will be convened as needed. The student may request to appear before the A&R committee to discuss the situation personally.
- The Field or Program Director will inform the student in writing of the committee’s decision. If the student does not concur with the decision of the committee, the student can appeal as specified in the Student Handbook, the University Catalog and Hilltopics.

When a placement is disrupted/changed, potential transferability of hours accrued will be determined by the Field Director and/or A&R committee. However, the student’s new agency must agree to accept a student for a reduced number of hours for the transfer of hours to be finalized. The student will be notified in writing of the outcome.

- **Agency Issues/No Fault of Student**
If the agency is unable to continue to offer educational opportunities and the student is doing acceptable work, the Field Director will consult with Field Liaison and make a reassignment as quickly as possible. In this case, all accrued hours will be transferable, pending agreement by the student’s new agency.
- **Student Request**
If a student is requesting a change in placement, the request must be made in writing to the Field Director and only after serious consideration and consultation with their Field Liaison and Instructor. Any reassignment is contingent on the availability of an appropriate substitute placement and determination of compelling reason for the change, by the Field Director. If the request is without a compelling reason, the Field Director will deny the request, or request the A&R committee consultation. If the reason is compelling, the Field Director will find another placement for the student and inform interested

parties. The student should understand that alternate placement options might be severely limited.

Transferability of hours is at the discretion of the Field Director and/or A&R committee and the student's new agency.

- **Involuntary Agency Termination/Reassignment Process**

If the student is involuntarily terminated from an agency, the agency Field Instructor is requested to state in writing the reasons for the termination after meeting with the Faculty Field Liaison. The agency's decision to terminate a student is final. If the student wishes to pursue a reassignment and continue in the program, he/she must submit in writing a request for reassignment and address the concerns of the terminating agency in writing, within five days from the termination notification, by the field director. The Field Director will either approve or deny the request for reassignment, based on the reason for termination. The student may appeal the field director's decision and ask the program director for an A&R committee to review and assess student's readiness for reassignment. The committee will determine the appropriateness of possible reassignment or termination from field and/or consequently, from the Program. Policies governing termination from the Program may be found in the Student Handbook.

If a student is involuntarily terminated a second time, during his/her social work program, the student will be terminated from Field without convening A&R committee.

If a student is involuntarily terminated from an agency and is given the option to remain in the Program, hours previously completed are not counted toward the fulfillment of required hours and total hours for that semester must be completed after the date of reassignment. In practical terms, this means that a student who cannot complete the total number of hours in the weeks remaining in the semester, must wait until the following academic year to enroll in practicum and the corresponding practice course.

- **WKU Administrative Removal of a Student from Field**

In rare instances, a student may be removed from a particular practicum site or from the field internship program. Reasons for such an administrative decision are congruent with the Student Handbook. In the event that such action is contemplated, the student will meet with her/his Field Liaison who will notify the Field Director and Program Director, who will convene an A&R committee. After careful deliberation, the committee will reach a decision regarding possible removal of the student from field course. If the student does not concur with the committee's decision, she/he may follow the grievance procedures outlined in the Student Handbook. Removal from field necessarily results in removal from the concurrent practice class and/or possibly, from the Program.

Program Termination

Students are subject to termination from the Program if removed from field courses for any reason; and, students are subject to termination or suspension from the Program during their participation in field under the same terms and conditions as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Student Evaluation of Field Process

Upon completion of the final semester of each year, students will be asked to complete an evaluation of the field process, the Field Instructor and Field Liaison and return it to the Field Director. The student has the right to request that information be kept confidential from the Field Instructor, should she/he so choose. Evaluation is a requirement of the field practicum.

Field Liaison Assessment of Field Process

Liaisons are asked to provide an evaluation of Field Process at the end of each placement.

Field Instructor Assessment of Field Process

Field Instructors are asked to provide an evaluation of Field Process at the end of each placement.

Sharing Evaluation Results

A summary of the evaluation information will be shared on the Program Webpage. All summary results will be compiled in an anonymous format in order to preserve confidentiality.

Roles of Field Staff

- Duties of Agency Field Instructor

Field Instructors, employed by community agencies, are selected by the agency on the basis of their practice competence and their positive approach to a generalist social work education. The social work students' whole practicum experience revolves around the Field Instructor. *The agency field instructor must schedule at least one hour of formal supervisory conference with the individual student on a weekly basis.*

Although they do not have University appointments, the contributions they (and their agencies) make to Social Work education are incalculable. Their responsibilities include:

1. Arranging for student orientation at the beginning of field placement
2. Consultation with the student and liaison in developing a Learning Plan
3. Providing on-going supervision and evaluation sessions for the student; preferably no less than once per week. If at any time the student's level of performance is questionable, informing the student and faculty liaison;
4. Providing instruction in agency recording requirements and other agency procedures and policies;
5. Providing a stimulus for students to be involved in department planning, relevant community and professional events, and suggesting appropriate reading materials;
6. Providing practice experiences, assisting students in goal attainment and providing feedback;
7. Assisting in evaluation, both oral and written, at the mid-term and final meetings as well as engaging in final evaluation sessions with the students; and
8. Attending training seminars conducted by the Department of Social Work when able.

- Task Supervisor

In recognition of the fact that the students' experience in an agency can be enhanced by interaction with non-BSW/MSW social service professionals, some agency field instructors may assign some supervisory responsibilities to a task supervisor. The task supervisor is selected by the agency field instructor based on the preceptor's experience or expertise in a particular area of service delivery. The preceptor may be from professional disciplines other than social work such as marriage and family counseling, psychology, occupational and recreational therapy, etc.

The involvement of a task supervisor is at the discretion of the agency field instructor, but a task supervisor does NOT replace the agency field instructor nor reduce or diminish any of the agency field instructor's responsibilities as listed above.

Both the task supervisor and agency field instructor are encouraged to develop clear avenues of communication as it relates to the students' progress through the practicum. Ultimately, the agency field instructor remains solely responsible for the student's field training experience and holds vicarious liability for the student's field performance.

- External Field Instructors

Occasionally there is an excellent educational opportunity with an agency; however, that agency may not have a BSW staff person available as a Field Instructor to supervise the student. In this circumstance, an external Field Instructor may be obtained to provide the BSW educational supervision for the student, while the agency employs a Task Supervisor who provides the student with daily assignments, tasks and supervision. The external Field Instructor will have a BSW or MSW degree and a minimum of two years post graduate social work experience.

The external Field Instructor is expected to work closely with the Task Supervisor in obtaining input regarding the student's performance. The external Field Instructor will fulfill all the expectations required of Field Instructors of the Social Work Department.

- Role of Field Liaison

The field liaison serves as a bridge between the practice community and the school, and to insure a valuable field learning experience for the student. The liaison is responsible for:

- 1) interpreting the curriculum to the individual field instructor,
- 2) where necessary, training field instructors in supervisory techniques,
- 3) assuring that the educational focus of the placement is maintained,
- 4) assuring that time expectations and practice assignments are appropriate, and, where not appropriate assisting the field instructor in developing additional assignments
- 5) participating in the development of student field tasks, and monitoring/revising educational learning plan as needed,
- 6) evaluating student progress at mid term and end of each semester
- 7) assessing the communication between the student and field instructor, and, where problematic facilitating problem solving,
- 8) responding to problems raised by student, field instructor or identified by the liaison,
- 9) assessing the experience provided by the agency and transmitting that information to the Fieldwork Director via formal or informal mechanisms,

10) reviewing and monitoring the student's pre field assignments, journals and recordings

11) bringing to the attention of Field Director and Social Work faculty any student who is experiencing difficulty in field,

12) monitoring the final evaluations and assigning a grade for student field work

These roles are implemented through telephone, e-mail, school, and agency visit contacts.

- MSW Field Liaisons are expected to have a minimum of two face-to-face agency visits per semester with the field instructor. The student should be present for at least part of the discussion with the field instructor.
- BSW Field Liaisons are expected to have a minimum of one face-to-face agency visit per semester with the field instructor. The student should be present for at least part of the discussion with the field instructor.

Suggested Time Frames for Liaison

Field Instructor Orientation

- Introduce yourself to your field instructors at Field Instructor Orientation, and assist in training.

First Contact

- Visit or call field instructor, introduce self, and give her/him your telephone, fax, and e-mail numbers.

- Make sure that field instructor has received the syllabus and Field Manual and/or has reviewed the Field Webpage.

- Determine how the student is settling in.

- Review field instructor's plans for student orientation.

- Review the potential initial assignments.

- Discuss, assist and approve the Learning Plan

- Discuss any potential problems raised by field instructor

- Arrange for the first agency visit

- Discuss with student his/her perception of the initial weeks

- Discuss with Field Director if an agency appears to be having a major problem, or seems to be unable to fulfill our expectations

Agency Visit/Contact

The purpose of the visit/contact is to determine if the student is settling in suitably, if the student is being assigned appropriate tasks, if there is a positive relationship between the student and field instructor, or to identify potential problems.

Prior to visits, tell students that you are scheduling visits. Tell them the purpose and process of the visit, and their role in the visit. Make sure that their Field Timesheets are available at the agency on the day of the visit. You will want to ask students to tell you if there are any specific issues that should be raised in the agency visit.

Preferably, the visit should be made on a day when the student is at the agency. Since one purpose of the visit is to assess student/field instructor communication and problem solving, and to learn about the student's perception of their learning experience, it is important for the student to be at least part of the visit. When both are present for part of the interview you will be able to assist in a problem solving process if any have developed.

Time should be set aside to meet with the field instructor alone, and with the student and field instructor together.

Topics for meeting with field instructor alone

- Relationship building – you and the field instructor
- Discuss how the student is settling in –ask how the student is beginning to integrate theoretical concepts. If this has not happened in supervisory conferences ask field instructor to begin to ask such questions of the student.
- Questions the field instructor has about the curriculum, Field Manual, expectations, assignments.
- Questions the field instructor has about supervision techniques
- Have field instructor describe assignments and their purpose
- Have the field instructor's describe the process of a typical supervisory session.
- Discuss necessary changes, particularly if supervisory sessions are not conducted on a regular basis for at least one hour a week.

- Discuss specific strengths and concerns about the student's work
- Discuss process for completing evaluation form (joint meeting between student and field instructor)

Topics for meeting with field instructor and student

- Review Learning Plan – discuss how student is making progress
- Plans for vacation during breaks
- Have student present to you and the field instructor what her/his assignments are, what skills the student is working on and what the student is learning
- Discuss problematic issues raised by either the student or the field instructor, or items that are of concern to you
- Develop plans for dealing with the problems (call back the agency and check with the student one to two weeks later to determine progress on the changes)
- Discuss future learning needs and additional assignments for the remainder of the semester or for next semester

Topics for meeting with student at the agency (at school if it is not possible at agency)

Review and discuss records/reports written by student

Discuss any issues raised by the site visit of concern to you or the student

Advise Field Director if problems are identified (using Student Concern/Deficiency form)

Present students with significant problems to the social work faculty

Second Agency Contact

The second contact should be scheduled about half way through the semester. This is a time to assess where the student is in the learning process and make any needed revisions to the learning contract. This is a time to focus on mid term evaluation.

Topics for this contact may be

Discuss changes, new assignments, and new learning plans

Discuss level of skill developed

Discuss problems identified and plans for solving

Review Records and Timesheets

Make sure that you have a current list of student placements, agency names, telephone and addresses, and field instructor names. If the field instructors change, or if you have names of contact persons or field instructors that do not match the list, please let Field Director know of the change. If the student has a task supervisor, please let Field Director know of the changes also.

Final Agency Contact

This visit should occur within three weeks of finals week. During this visit the final evaluation for the semester will be completed. Each outcome on the learning plan will be reviewed to determine if tasks have been completed and if the competency has been met. During the first semester, you may have NA for a few tasks, but for the second semester there will be NO non-applicable tasks for the competencies, since all must be met by the end of the year.

Complete Student Evaluation (first semester) and submit a copy to Field Director, to be placed in the student master file.

Complete Student Evaluation (second semester) and submit original to Field Director, to be placed in the student master file.

Complete Documentation of Hours form to Field Director to be placed in student master file.

Complete other evaluations and submit to Field Director's office. Write up the visit on the agency contact form and submit to Field Director

Advise Field Director if problems are identified (using Student Concern/Deficiency form)

Present students with significant problems to the social work faculty