

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 form 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 the student's field placement will be dependent on his/her employment status. If the student quits or loses his/her job for any reason, it will jeopardize his/her field placement, which in turn can jeopardize the 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.