



The Division of
Social Work



MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

Policies and Procedures

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Foreword

This manual has been designed to supplement FGCU materials already provided to students. It is organized to provide students with the policies and practices of the MSW Field Education Program. Students in the MSW program should consider this their field education textbook and as required reading.

Every possible effort has been made to keep the information accurate and up to date. However, policies and procedures are developed and revised from time to time. Therefore, the Department of Social Work reserves the right to alter or change any policy or procedure contained in this manual at any time. Students and others (i.e. field instructors, faculty, etc.) will be informed of any changes made in as timely a manner as possible. Inquiries should be directed to:

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INTRODUCTION

The field education experience is where theory becomes real as students interact with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Field education performs an essential function in providing opportunities for students to apply and integrate conceptual and theoretical content from all curriculum areas with actual social work practice. The success of the academic experience is wedded to the field experience. The field education experience and the student's classroom learning should be mutually reinforcing. The graduate will be an advanced clinical practitioner who is able to work in relational systems of all sizes toward the ends of individual actualization of potentialities and social and economic justice.

The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum – classroom and field – are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies. (CSWE Educational and Accreditation Standards, Ed. Policy 2.3)

MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Social Work at FGCU is to prepare students with knowledge, skills, and values of professional social work practice. Graduates will demonstrate competence in strengths-based advanced clinical practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities.

(<http://cps.fgcu.edu/SW/mission.html>)

The mission of the MSW Program at Florida Gulf Coast University is to prepare competent and effective professional advanced clinical practitioners to develop critical thinking skills, promote lifelong learning, advance social work knowledge, and provide leadership in the development of service delivery systems. The program educates students with specialized skills for advanced clinical practice with diverse client systems of various sizes. The MSW program is grounded in the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy and is based on a body of knowledge, values and skills of the social work profession.

MSW Program Goals

1. To prepare students for advanced clinical practice and to use social work values and ethics in working with diverse client systems of various sizes to enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice.
2. To prepare students for competency agency-based practice with a strong commitment to promotion of social and economic justice, diversity, alleviation of oppression, and discriminating skills to address ethical dilemmas.

3. To prepare students with knowledge and skills for informed practice and including the development of critical thinking and lifelong learning based upon a solid liberal arts foundation.
4. To provide students with knowledge and skills to evaluate their own practice and programs based upon critical analysis and assessment.
5. To educate students about the behavior of communities and organizations within the social contexts of social work practice, and the dynamics of change from a local, regional and international perspective.

MSW Program Core Competencies

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
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.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Field Education Objectives

The Field Program is an integral part of MSW curriculum, representing 20% of a student's course work in the Department of Social Work. Its purpose is to provide students with the opportunity to integrate classroom learning with practice experience and to demonstrate readiness to practice at the beginning generalist practitioner level and advancing to the advanced clinical practice level. The Field Education Coordinator places students in supervised social service agencies where they are expected to demonstrate a variety of basic and advanced practice skills, knowledge, and values. The objectives of Field Education for students in the MSW Program are as follows:

1. To prepare entry-level graduates with sufficient knowledge and competence to provide service to a diverse range of clients in a variety of social service settings.

2. To examine and ensure the graduate's general aptitude and readiness for beginning supervised service delivery in public social agencies.
3. To enhance the student's ability to integrate classroom theory and the delivery of services in agency environments.
4. To strengthen the student's commitment to social and economic justice and to the values and ethics of the profession of social work.
5. To broaden the student's professional identity and build sound work habits.
6. To serve as a vehicle for the collaborative growth of the social work profession through the informational exchange between the academic unit and practice arenas.

The MSW Field Curriculum Design

Field education is an essential component of the MSW program. It is where theories and concepts are integrated with actual social work practice. The field placement is guided by standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the MSW Program's Mission.

The MSW Program at FGCU is a two-year, four-semester, 60-hour curriculum. The 1000 hour field internship represents 12 credit hours spread over fall and spring semesters of each of the two years. Students are assigned two separate placements: the first year focuses on generalist social work and the second year is in the concentration of advanced clinical social work. Students are concurrently enrolled in 12 credit hours of in-class instruction each semester of each year.

Students may choose to complete the MSW Program in four years as a part-time student. The 1000 hour field internship is spread over six semesters. For the generalist year, part-time students will complete the 500 hours during fall, spring, and summer semesters of the second year. For the concentration year, part-time students will complete 500 hours during summer, fall, and spring semesters of the second year culminating in graduation in this spring semester.

For a select number of BSW graduates FGCU offers an Advanced Standing MSW program of one-year, two-semester, 30 hour curriculum. The 500 hours of internship represents six credit hours spread over fall and spring semesters. This one year corresponds to the second year of the MSW program. The Advanced Standing program may be taken on a part-time basis.

ROLES

The Agency

Social service agencies provide the laboratory sites for student field placements. All public agencies and private non-profit agencies are prospective field placement sites. Private practices and insurance-driven organizations are usually not considered for student placements. Agencies must complete an agency profile sheet to become a placement host, be willing to cooperate fully with the field program's policies and procedures, and sign the affiliation agreement. Agencies selected by the school tend to be those with solid service histories and the ability to offer a broad selection of generalist or clinical experiences, or both, to students. Foundation year students are placed in a generalist social work experience. Concentration Year students are focused on developing advanced clinical social work skills. The prospective agency shall assign students to a variety of direct and indirect client practice experiences, provide office space and reasonable clerical support, schedule no less than one hour per week for student supervision, and be committed to a participatory role in the preparation of competent professional social workers. The Department views the agency as a full partner in the provision of quality education and welcomes feedback which leads to improvements in the MSW program and in this community-FGCU cooperative venture.

To be a field placement agency, the following criteria affect the selection process:

1. The agency has adequate stability necessary to provide a solid foundation for student learning and growth. It should have a history of service provision within sound ethical standards.
2. There should be a commitment to the development of social workers and to the agency role in that process.
3. Field Education staff should be seen as having a general educational role that goes beyond teaching of specific agency job(s).
4. An Agency Profile Sheet must be completed and the Agency Affiliation Agreement signed.
5. Qualified staff willing to be a field instructor and to take on this role are made available by the agency.
6. Allow adequate supervisory time, provide appropriate space and work materials for students to function satisfactorily, and pay standard mileage rates if a student must drive on the job.
7. The agency should have a sufficient number and a variety of assignments available so students will have a broad learning experience consistent with the Department's curriculum.
8. Suitable orientation plus inclusion in on-going basic agency activities such as staff meetings, in-service trainings, and safety measures need to be provided by the agency.

9. Students should not be asked to do anything that is not expected of paid staff (i.e. routine clerical work, transportation unrelated to assigned cases, fund raising activities, or going on home visits alone when proper safety maintenance calls for reinforcement).
10. The agency should have written policies in place with regard to sexual harassment, accommodations of persons with disabilities, affirmative action and non-discrimination, and commitment to diversity and social justice.
11. It is strongly encouraged to provide students with manuals containing all the information students need to have successful placement in the agency.
12. Willingness to allow students to bring to class examples of their work (psychosocial assessments, process recordings) for confidential discussion with all identifying items removed before bringing the materials to class either physically or electronically.
13. Willing to assist students in the completion of classroom assignments based upon field work.

The Field Instructor

Typically, field instructors are paid agency employees who are provided time by the agency to perform the field instructor role. Occasionally, persons who are not employed or who are in private practice are accepted in the field instructor role in order to accommodate a student placement in an agency which temporarily does not have a qualified field instructor.

Field instructors must have a master's degree in social work with a minimum of 2 years' practice experience and a minimum of one year of supervisory experience. All prospective field instructors are asked to clear their role with their agency and to provide the school with a current resume. All potential field instructors must agree to attend all sessions of the school's required field instructor training program even if they may have attended such training at another educational facility (unless they have a certificate of attendance for the Florida field consortium 16 hour curriculum). This must be done either prior to or during the first semester of assuming the field instructor role for a student.

The field instructor role includes a variety of expectations:

1. Interviewing prospective students,
2. Providing orientation and on-going educational experiences.
3. Designing broad and well-balanced placement experiences in conjunction with school expectations.
4. Overseeing the placement from start to finish.
5. Helping the student develop and execute his/her learning plan.
6. Providing supervision which includes weekly private supervisory conferences
7. Modeling sound ethical practice and appropriately mentoring students.

8. Maintaining a close interactive relationship with the school throughout the placement
9. Working with the student and school liaison to resolve any challenging situations which arise
10. Giving the student timely and honest feedback on his/her work and areas needing development.
11. Completing all student field evaluation forms required by the school.

The field instructor is viewed by the school as a full educational partner in the provision of a quality student education within a responsible cooperative framework. Among the intrinsic rewards reported by field instructors who assume this role are the impetus to remain current in their field, the intellectual stimulation, the exposure to contemporary curricula, the university affiliation, the opportunity to participate in student education and professional growth, the rewards of mentoring, the opportunity to "give back" to the profession, to contribute to a quality work force for social services, the opportunity to refine supervisory skills, and related personal growth. More concrete rewards include the services provided by the student on behalf of the agency and the opportunity to hire students who have been trained under agency auspices.

Specific criteria for selection of field instructors:

1. Have approval and nomination for such role from his/her agency.
2. Submit a current resume.
3. Possess an earned master's degree in social work with a minimum of two years direct service experience and a minimum of one year of supervisory experience.
4. Preferably have a minimum of six month paid experience in the agency in which the student is placed.
5. Possess sufficient competence in the pertinent practice areas in which she/he will be supervising.
6. Be able to perform the role described in the paragraphs above and make the necessary time commitment.
7. If new to the role of field instructor, attendance at the required field instructor training within the first semester of being assigned a student.
8. Provide a minimum of one hour private face-to-face supervision per student per week, plus other supervision time as necessary for completion of a satisfactory placement.
9. Make the necessary time commitment to student education and mentoring.
10. Possess demonstrated or probable capacity for teaching and assessing student educational needs and abilities.

11. Knowledge of or willingness to familiarize self with the educational curriculum of the MSW program at Florida Gulf Coast University.
12. Willingness to assume the partnership perspective required by this role and to perform all related functions.
13. Exhibit high standards in professional values and ethics and commitment to social justice and diversity.

Field Instructor Training

All field instructors must attend the 16 hour training series offered by the school either prior to becoming a field instructor or within the first semester of assuming the role. The training required is based on a state-wide curriculum which is offered in all Florida social work programs. Any field instructor who has taken this training since 1995 at any Florida school will not be required to repeat it. It will continued to be offered by all Florida schools at minimal cost. Sixteen continuing education contact hours will be given to all who are licensed under provider CE Provider #50-4944, Exp. 03/31/2011. Published by CE Broker www.cebroke.com.

The training is normally offered in two consecutive Fridays over the course of one semester. The content of the training consists of the following ten modules:

1. Field instructor roles and expectations
2. The Adult Learner
3. Development of Supervisor Skills
4. Overview of BSW/MSW Field Education Program
5. Evaluation of practice
6. Designing a successful internship
7. Diversity in field education
8. Ethics in field education
9. Legal issues in field education
10. Evaluation of students

Any questions or concerns about the training should be addressed to the Field Education Coordinator, Lori D. Carroll, LCSW, lcarrroll@fgcu.edu, 239-590-7726.

The Task Supervisor

Task supervisors are agency personnel who are selected by the field instructor to assume the day-to-day responsibility of providing direction and limited supervision to the student. Their responsibilities are similar to those of the field instructor. The task supervisor is not responsible for the weekly social work supervision meeting conducted by the field instructor. Typically, the task supervisor is not an MSW with two years of post-MSW experience.

The responsibilities are:

1. Participate in planning the field education experience.
2. Provide some supervision of student's daily activities.
3. Review with the field instructor the assignment of cases and projects congruent with the student's learning goals.
4. Orient students to the agency and their assignments.
5. Provide on-the-spot positive and constructive feedback to students regarding their performance.
6. Focus on the student's skill development.
7. Maintain records of student activities for the field instructor.
8. Consult with the field instructor about the student's skill development and coordinate planning for promoting optimal student development.
9. Provide ongoing feedback to the field instructor about the student's progress in meeting learning goals, identifying any performance issues requiring follow-up.
10. Be available to students in emergency situations or arrange coverage for the students for emergencies that may arise in their absence.

The Role of the Field Liaison

It is the role of the field liaison to oversee and monitor a field placement with two primary objectives:

1. To ensure that the student has a broad-based, adequately supervised, and satisfactory learning and growth experience;
2. To ensure that the student develops the necessary skills and knowledge for entry level practice in social work and that the student is well-matched with the profession.

The field liaison role may be fulfilled by the Field Education Coordinator, by any other faculty in the department of social work, or by adjunct faculty hired and trained for this purpose. Specific tasks that will be performed by the field liaison include:

1. Assistance in the placement process.
2. General oversight of the placement.
3. Visitation to the student and placement site once per semester.
4. Telephone contact and follow-up when needed.

5. Prompt response to requests from students and field instructors.
6. Problem resolution, including extra visits and phone calls to agency and student to help bring concerns to satisfactory conclusion.
7. Assistance to the student and field instructor, if needed, in developing placement and learning plan.
8. Assistance with evaluation process, if needed.
9. Review of final evaluation and assignment of grade.
10. Written record of field visits and documentation of problem resolution activities.

The field liaison is always the first point of contact for both student and agency personnel when dealing with concerns relating to a specific student situation in a field placement. The field liaison will have the back-up of the field coordinator and program director when complicated circumstances require it. Students will be advised at the start of the placement of the name of his/her liaison and how to contact that person when needed.

Site Visits

The field liaison will visit the student and field instructor at the field placement agency at least once a semester. During the visit, the field liaison will review the student's progress toward the goals outlined in the learning plan. There will be a review of the learning plan and discussion about the midyear/final evaluation of the student's progress toward competency. At this time, there can be discussion about future plans and about revisions in the learning plan. The field liaison may have recommendations to share in regard to achieving the goals of the learning plan. A grade for the semester will be the result of this visit.

The Role of the Student in Field Education

The field placement experience is for educational purposes; it provides the student with an opportunity to practice what has been taught in the classroom, and to assess his/her interest in and aptitude for the hands-on tasks that are part of the profession of social work. It permits and requires students to demonstrate their ability to implement the theories and develop the skills necessary for satisfactory performance in the field. It requires the instructor to determine the student's readiness for entry level professional social work. It provides a laboratory for the integration of theory and practice and identification with the values, principles, and objectives of the profession.

The student takes responsibility for her/his own learning in the field setting and is expected to perform the following tasks:

1. Attend the mandatory field planning session and the field orientation session offered by the Field Education Coordinator.
2. Complete and submit the appropriate application for field placement by the specified deadline.

3. Read the field manual and use it as the textbook for field education in terms of policies and procedures.
4. Perform within all guidelines provided by the university and the agency in which the student accepts a field placement, including the NASW Code of Ethics.
5. Reflect the profession's and the agency's standards in personal and professional behavior.
6. Prepare for and participate in conferences with the field instructor and field liaison.
7. Maintain confidentiality standards of the profession and agency at all times.
8. Be responsible for own transportation to and from the field placement site or sites.
9. Maintain his/her own health and accident insurance.
10. Use the procedures established by the Field Education Coordinator for resolving concerns or differences that arise during the course of the field placement.

Matters concerning learning plans, hours, leave time, field process, evaluation and grading, termination from field placement, and other topics of concern to students are covered in other parts of this manual.

It is not unusual for students to find the field placement to be the most rewarding and stimulating component of their educational program. The Field Education Coordinator will perform in a responsible manner to provide the foundation process and support that makes the field placement as instructional, fruitful, and growth-producing as possible for each student. In order to maximize the benefits, it is important that the student invest responsibly in his/her own learning, seeing her/himself as a primary player in designing, negotiating, and creating the successful learning and professional experience that an internship can be.

Additional Responsibilities of the Student

Professional liability insurance:

Each student is responsible for maintaining professional liability insurance. Prior to purchasing liability insurance, the student will need to become a member of NASW. Membership will also provide opportunities to network with other professional social workers. NASW offers liability insurance for students at affordable rates. A copy of the liability insurance needs to be submitted to the Field Education Coordinator. Students will submit verification of liability coverage to the Field Education Coordinator at the start of both the Foundation and Concentration Year field placement. Certification of liability insurance must be received by the Field Education Coordinator at least one month prior to beginning a field placement.

Background Checks, Fingerprinting, and Drug Screening

An increasing number of agencies, especially those dealing specifically with

children and the justice system, require the disclosure of conviction records for misdemeanors and/or felonies and a current screening for drug use. Therefore, students are often required to submit to state and federal background checks and drug screening tests prior to the initiation of the field placement. Findings in the background checks and/or drug screening tests may affect a student's ability to participate in field internship and complete the social work program. Some agencies may cover this cost for students, whereas others make this the responsibility of the student. The student must notify the Field Education Coordinator at the time of application for field placement if there is an issue with the cost of this requirement.

Home Visits

Home visits and visits to collaborative agencies are frequently an agency expectation. Home visits offer students an opportunity to learn firsthand about the client's home environment and community. They present opportunities to be perceived as less of a stranger, to show interest, and to enter the life of clients as a participant observer. Home visits also provide an effective outreach strategy to engage reluctant, fearful clients, and are seen as invaluable assessment and treatment tools by many agencies. Students are usually expected to use their own car to make home visits. Whenever possible, agencies arrange to pay students the same mileage allowance offered to their staff. If it is not possible to reimburse students for mileage, the distance traveled is often restricted.

Safety Policy

Social Work student interns need to be aware of safety risks associated with their field placement. The location of an agency, although accessible to clients being served, might present safety risks. Home visits, street interviews, and community group work are some assignments associated with additional risks. Clients experiencing severe distress, the prevalence of drug and alcohol use, and frustrations about obtaining needed services constitute further risk factors. Such risks are not exclusively student risks, but risks that social workers must cope with throughout their careers. Field Instructors are asked to inform students of known or unreasonable risks in their particular settings, and to provide relevant warnings, instructions, and training to help ensure the reasonable safety of all agency personnel and clients. Students also have a responsibility to request information and seek instruction to ensure their own safety, and to avoid behaviors associated with an unacceptable, increased risk of injury. Finally, students should always communicate any safety issues or concerns with the field instructor and the Field Education Coordinator.

Transporting Clients

Students are strongly advised not to transport clients or their family members unless the agency provides a vehicle for this purpose, and the student has the required license and insurance.

Students with Disabilities

The Field Education Coordinator will ascertain from students with disabilities if there are any special considerations and help arrange for aids or services that students may need in order to negotiate the field placement. The Field Education Coordinator in cooperation with the Office of Adaptive Services and Students with Disabilities at FGCU, and the student's liaison and advisor, are available throughout the academic year to assist students with disabilities and the respective field instructors in fieldwork related matters. Students with disabilities, particularly those with physical impairments and learning disabilities, are strongly urged to contact the Office of Adaptive Services and Students with Disabilities at (239) 590-7956.

To meet the requirements of federal and state law and FGCU policy, field education sites must be accessible to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should have the same kind of education opportunities-including field education in particular kinds of settings-as students without disabilities. However, given the wide range of disabilities, it is possible that not every placement site will have the capacity to accommodate every student. It may not be feasible, for example, for a site to accommodate students who use wheelchairs because of the site's location and existing architecture, but same site could easily accommodate students with visual or hearing impairments. Every effort is made by the Field Education Coordinator to ensure equal access to fieldwork opportunities.

Pre-placement Hours

At times, orientation and training is required before a student may begin his/her placement. These hours, once approved by the Field Education Coordinator, may be deducted from the required practicum hours.

Conference Attendance

The Field Instructor makes all decisions about conference attendance with one exception: when the Department of Social Work requests all students be excused from the field to attend a specific conference.

Workshops should provide instruction to enhance student learning. Students are expected to attend all sessions of any workshop they are given permission to attend, and to discuss the learning experience with their field instructor.

Absences from Fieldwork

The agency must be notified when a student is absent from field education. This is necessary to arrange coverage for the absent student. Absences from the field education placement are allowable for good and compelling reasons. In keeping with professional standards, the student is the arbiter of what constitutes cause. The clock hours accumulated from the absence must be made up before a grade can be assigned for that term regardless of the reason for the absence. The agency/field instructor is under no obligation, however, to agree to accommodate a student who falls behind in his/her hourly

commitment regardless of whether or not the absence was caused for a good and compelling reason. A student who is dismissed from field placement due to excessive absences may be subject to dismissal from the MSW program as well.

A student who has fallen behind on his/her hours for a good and compelling reasons and wishes to report to field placement during University holidays or semester breaks to help make up those hours may do so. However, students may not plan to work during university breaks or holidays in order to finish field placement early. Students must remain in field placement until the end of each semester, even if the minimum clock hours have been attained. Any exception to this policy will require pre- approval from the Field Education Coordinator.

In the event that a student is absent for good and compelling reasons from field placement for such an extended period of time that the absences cannot be made up in the term in which they occurred, and if the field instructor and liaison can approve a plan for the student to make up the absences in a subsequent term. A grade of "I" (Incomplete) will be entered and replaced by a letter grade ("S" or "U") once it has been documented that the hours have been made up. If this occurs in the Concentration Year, however, a grade of "I" (Incomplete) may negatively impact the student's semester of graduation.

Students are not required to participate in field placement during official University holidays or semester breaks (i.e. Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, etc.), legal holidays or other holidays officially observed by the field placement site. A student must, however, discuss with his/her field instructor and plan for University holiday or semester break absences (or any other type of anticipated absence) well in advance of the absence, in order to make the necessary arrangements for office and/or client coverage. Students can refer to the FGCU Academic Calendar to make note of and plan for University holidays and recesses.

Field Placement Time Sheets

Each student is responsible for keeping track of his/her hours and having the field instructor review them and sign off on the form. The Time Sheet forms are located on the MSW Field Education Website. Students should have the field instructor sign off weekly. Each student should keep track of the hours for the entire placement. At the end of the placement, the Time Sheets need to be signed by the field instructor and the student and submitted with the FINAL Evaluation. Grades cannot be issued without this information.

A Word About Using Supervision

Supervision is a tool in the field of professional social work. It is the primary resource on which we rely for guidance of the student through the internship. Its effectiveness is enhanced when the student views it as a user-friendly tool which has significant benefits for his/her learning and which also has benefits beyond the immediate job/internship environment. Supervision is designed to provide:

1. Overall guidance in enhancing the learning environment.

2. Timely feedback which results in growth and knowledge and skill development and confidence.
3. An advocate and buffer when needed.
4. A mentor who provides guidance about the profession as well as specific job training.
5. A source of contacts and networking for a variety of professional purposes.
6. General support during the educational process.
7. Role modeling for personal professional development.

The Role of the Field Education Coordinator

The Field Education Coordinator assumes the following roles and responsibilities to assure quality field experiences for students:

1. Develops the field Curriculum, in consultation with the faculty.
2. Provides policies and procedures for field to students, faculty, and field instructors.
3. Conducts the placement process for all eligible students.
4. Gives final approval for all field placements.
5. Distributes course objectives, evaluation forms, field calendar, to students, field instructors, task supervisors, and field liaisons.
6. Provides orientation for students, field instructors, task supervisors, and faculty liaisons on curriculum requirements, field placement requirements, and learning objectives.
7. Develops, monitors, and maintains departmental relationship with placement sites.
8. Assists field liaison with problem solving as needed.
9. Assigns grades for field education courses after consultation with the Field Instructor and Field Liaison.
10. Maintains student field records.

The Placement Process

The Field Education Coordinator is responsible for selecting and approving agencies, initiating placement interviews, and approving student placements. The Field Education Coordinator will evaluate an agency's appropriateness for student placements and confirm that the agency meets the Department of Social Work requirements. Field placements must be Department approved sites for field education.

Students must not initiate contact with any agency to seek placement without prior approval of the Field Education Coordinator. A student wishing to know if a particular agency of interest is on the list of Department-approved site, will direct this inquiry to the Field Education Coordinator, NOT to the agency in question. In addition, any placements initiated without the authorization of the Field Education Coordinator will not be approved. A student may bring to the attention of the Field Education Coordinator an agency that is not on the Department-approved list. It may be possible for the site to be developed and approved, if the agency meets the requirements of the Department. However, the Field Education Coordinator cannot guarantee that this type of arrangement can be made, particularly if there are sufficient agencies already on the Department-approved list that can meet the student's placement needs.

As part of the Department of Social Work New Student Orientation, which takes place every fall prior to the beginning of classes, the Field Education Coordinator facilitates a mandatory session exclusively on field procedures. This session will include a review of the resources such as the Field Manual and Field Forms. All of this information is geared toward helping each student successfully fulfill his/her field education requirements.

Step One: The Pre-Placement Field Interview

The Field Education Coordinator holds Pre-Placement Field Interviews twice a year: one in the spring and the other in the summer. The actual dates will be posted on the Field Education Director's office door. Students are responsible for participating in the Field Interview process according to the following guidelines. Students who do not interview as scheduled may have their field placement delayed for a semester.

A. Spring:

Interviews will be scheduled during the month of March for the following students:

1. Full-time students who are entering concentration year in the fall.
2. Part-time students who are entering foundation/second year in the fall.
3. Part-time students who are entering concentration/second year in the fall.

Students download their respective field application from the MSW Field website (<http://cps.fgcu.edu/SW/MSW/fieldeducation.html>) and contact the Field Education Coordinator to schedule their interview.

B. Summer:

Interviews will be scheduled during the month of June with the following in-coming students:

1. Full-time foundation students
2. Advanced standing,
3. Transfer students (foundation or concentration year) entering field in the fall.

Students are contacted by mail or email and provided with the field application and invited to schedule their field interview appointment.

The student may address questions or concerns s/he may have regarding field placement policies and procedures during the pre-placement interview. To help focus this part of the interview, students must read the MSW Field Manual prior to the interview. Students should consider this as the TEXTBOOK for all their field education courses.

The student will be provided with two agency referrals for potential field placements. A third referral will be available if for some reason the two agency referrals do not work out. Each agency has a designated contact person (who may or may not be a field instructor) who works with the agency staff to forecast the number and level (Foundation, Concentration) of students that can be accommodated by the agency for the upcoming academic year.

Various factors are taken into consideration with regard to determining possible "fit" between a student and an agency/field instructor. For example, population(s) served (i.e., elderly, children, adolescents, adults, etc.), modalities (i.e. group work, crisis intervention, psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, community development, etc.), and area of practice (i.e. substance abuse, mental health, health, domestic violence, homelessness, etc.).

Other factors include a student's volunteer experience, prior experience, educational, and employment background. The field placement should provide the student with opportunities for new learning, enhancement of existing skills, or both. Thus, every effort will be made to place a student in a setting where this can take place. For example, placing a student in an agency or program where he/she has been previously employed would not be appropriate, unless it could be documented exactly how the field placement experience would be qualitatively different from what the student had done there previously as an employee.

Finally, while a student's preferences for a particular agency based on area of practice, population, geographic location, etc. will be taken under consideration, the Field Education Coordinator, does not guarantee that these preferences can or will be met.

Step Two: Agency Interviews

The agency interview is the second step in securing a field placement. The student needs to arrange for the interview with the designated agency representative. The contact information will be provided during the field placement interview with the Field Education Coordinator. Some agencies prefer to interview more than one student before deciding which ones to accept for field placement. Second interviews are initiated by the agency not the student (i.e. the agency may have a coordinator who screens students first and then assigns the student to a field instructor for an interview). If an interview needs to take place outside of the parameters established by the agency and the guidelines of the MSW Field Education program, the Field Education Coordinator needs to approve it.

The agency interview is similar to a job interview which requires professional attire and behavior. You are representing the Department of Social Work and FGCU to the agency. An important part of the interview is for the student to learn about the requirements of the placement and the educational opportunities available. During the field pre-placement interview with the Field Education Coordinator, there will be discussion about appropriate questions to ask in the interview. Students need to be aware that they will be asked

questions about their background, educational and career goals, and why they have an interest in the agency.

The agency interview provides the opportunity to discuss and make arrangements with the field instructor regarding scheduling. Students need to be clear with the potential field instructor regarding any scheduling issues concerning class meetings and work schedules. Field instructors are aware that first year students have class on Wednesdays and second year students have class on Mondays. However, it is always good to remind the field instructor about your specific class schedule.

During the interview, the field instructor assesses the student's level of interest and suitability for the general type of assignments they have in mind. At this point, the placement decision can be finalized. If there are any reservations for the field instructor or student, the Field Education Coordinator needs to be informed and the student will continue the search process. It may require having a second interview so additional referrals can be provided to the student.

Step Three: Field Confirmation Form

If student and agency agree regarding the field placement, the student submits a completed Field Confirmation Form within two weeks for approval by the Field Education Coordinator. The form is reviewed and the approval is communicated to the student and field instructor. This process secures the placement slot in that agency with that field instructor. If the Field Confirmation Form is incomplete, it will delay approval of that placement. Frequently, other students are also interviewing with the agency. Each agency has a limit on how many students are accepted for field placement in an academic year. Therefore, following these steps in a timely manner, first to schedule the interview and successfully complete it, and then complete and submit the field confirmation form to the Field Education Coordinator, is extremely important. A field placement is not final, until the Field Education Coordinator approves the Field Confirmation Form. Once the placement is approved, the original is kept in the student's field file and a copy is forwarded to the faculty liaison. If the Field Confirmation Form is not returned to the Field Coordinator within two weeks of acceptance by the agency and student, the placement may be offered to another student. This can delay your field placement for up to an entire year.

Step Four: Placement Begins

All field placements begin the first week of classes. During the Fall Semester, full-time students begin the Foundation Year Placement and Part-time students begin the Foundation Year Placement. Full-time Concentration Year and Advanced Standing students also begin their Concentration Year Placement at this time. During the Summer Semester, part-time Foundation Year students begin the Concentration Year placement.

Planning to begin or end your field placement early cannot take place without authorization from the Field Education Coordinator. Students should plan to report to field placement weekly during the academic semester. The schedule of hours should be indicated in the Field Confirmation Form. Sometimes schedules change, the change in hours must be discussed and agreed to by student and field instructor. If adjustments in schedule are needed and do not affect the student being able to fulfill the 500 hour requirement, it is not necessary to report it to the Field Education Coordinator. However if the schedule change, speeds up or delays the field placement, the Field Education Coordinator must approve it. If a student, without authorization, completes the required hours in advance of the semester's end, he/she must continue to report to placement, even if this results in completion of hours well in excess of 500 (or 250 per semester).

Orientation to the Agency

During the first week of field, each agency is responsible for providing the student with an agency- based orientation. This provides an opportunity for the student to learn about the various services offered by the agency, the range and scope of assignments. The orientation period should be followed up with planning for identified specific assignments. Together the field instructor and student develop a written learning plan which will guide the learning experiences for the entire internship. The agency orientation provides the student with useful information which will enhance the student productivity.

Agency orientation meets two goals for the Department of Social Work. First, it prepares students to meet and engage clients by informing them about the professional roles and relationships in the agency, the nature of agency service delivery system, and acquainting students with agency staff and the communities served by the agency. Second, students are expected to gain knowledge about the range and type of specific agency services, agency structure, and staff roles and responsibilities in addition to inter-agency and community relationships.

Agencies take different approaches to the agency orientation. The following table provides examples of appropriate orientation activities. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

EXAMPLES OF AGENCY ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

Documents and Demographics	Meetings and Conferences
Characteristic of populations served	Consultations
Census data on community	Inter-agency meetings
Special reports; grant applications	Professional conferences
Relevant legislation	Staff development sessions
Attend new employee orientation	Staff, board, committee, department, and team meetings

Community Visits	Preparing for Direct Service
Neighborhood and community organizations	Assist in intake
Other units of placement agency	Shadow field instructor/other staff
Referral agencies and clinics	Assist with group work

The Learning Plan

To provide a successful field placement experience, there needs to be meaningful and logical planning. The learning plan is a tool for this planning. The learning plan requires thought and consideration about the competencies the student will be learning and will be implemented in a way that they can be evaluated. It is necessary to have a lengthy and detailed discussion about this document. The importance of the learning plan is discussed with students in the Field Orientation and with Field Instructors in the Field Instructor Training sessions. Therefore, each party should have a basic understanding of the learning plan and what is expected.

Collaboration by student and field instructor is essential in developing a comprehensive learning plan. It requires thoughtful and deliberate effort by both parties. The contract provides a clear and fair baseline for evaluating the student's performance. It can also be helpful in resolving any differences that could arise between the student and the agency during the placement. This document is always subject to revision. There may be a need to add items or even remove items from the learning plan and substitute other tasks/activities. The Field Education Coordinator needs a copy of the revised learning plan. This is to insure fair evaluation of student performance.

The Field Education Coordinator is available to assist in the development of this document. The work and concentration put into the learning plan will develop a solid foundation, which will contribute to making the field placement experience successful. The learning plan provides an opportunity for the student to state desired learning experiences and for the agency to agree how to provide for those experiences.

The learning plan is developed within the first 30 hours of the field placement and serves as a guide or road map for the entire placement. It needs to be completed by week two or three of the first semester in field placement and submitted to the Field Education Coordinator by week four. After the learning plan is completed, both student and field instructor sign it and submit it to the Field Education Coordinator. The Field Education Coordinator will briefly review it and forward it to the student's Field Liaison who will give final approval. The field liaison may make recommendations about ways to strengthen the learning plan. Once the field liaison gives final approval, the learning plan process is completed. The original copy of the learning plan will be kept in the student's field education file. As mentioned previously, if modifications are made, a copy needs to be sent to the Field Education Coordinator and the Field Liaison so it can be kept on file. It is important for all parties (student, field instructor, and field liaison) to agree to the modifications and sign the learning plan to indicate this agreement.

Terminating a Field Placement

There may be situations where a change of field placement site is necessary. There needs to be compelling reasons for this change. For some students, they may wish a different setting, but want to continue the field placement in another agency. There may be situations where terminating the placement may occur due to changes within the agency that negatively impact the student and field placement resulting in the necessity for change. For other students, it may mean withdrawing from field, the MSW program, or both. It is important to understand that changing a field placement is a serious task. In addition, it often requires going through another background check and orientation with the new agency which could take several weeks.

Steps that must be followed to assure that this is the appropriate action for the student. The steps are as follows:

Step 1:

Discuss your concern(s) with your field instructor.

Step 2:

Arrange to see the field liaison to discuss the educational concerns and steps already taken to address the concerns.

Step 3:

Decide with the field instructor and field liaison if a resolution has been reached for the student to continue the placement or not.

Step 4:

Meet with the field liaison and the Field Education Coordinator to explore options available before terminating the placement. It can take time to arrange and set-up another field placement. It can take 2-3 weeks. There also may be the option of transferring the student within the same agency.

Step 5:

When an alternative field placement has been identified, the student with assistance from the field liaison and field instructor will initiate the termination process. Students may not interview at other placements until approval for termination has been granted by the Field Education Coordinator.

If a student changes placements, the new field instructor will determine the grade on the student's field placement performance for that term. Efforts will be made to obtain evaluation of the student's field performance from the first field instructor if the student has been in placement at least one month, if full-time, two months, if part time. The field liaison will base the student's final grade on both the evaluation from the first field instructor and the second field instructor of the student's performance in the field. The completed evaluation will be submitted to the Field Education Coordinator who will place a copy in the student's field folder and forward a copy to the field liaison.

Employment-Based Field Placement

There are times when a student may have the option of doing his/her field placement in the agency where he/she is employed. The Department of Social Work is willing to consider this option. However, there are certain requirements that must be met for this type of field placement to be approved by the Field Education Coordinator. It is important to keep in mind that education is the main purpose of the MSW field education program. If a student has this type of opportunity, he/she must submit a proposal to the Field Education Coordinator. It is necessary to allow time for this process. It cannot be done quickly since there are a number of factors to consider. Therefore, early submission of the proposal will assure timely processing. A student cannot receive credit for employment-based hours until the proposal is approved.

The agency must meet the requirements to be a field education placement which includes an appropriately qualified field instructor. The field instructor will be expected to meet all criteria for all field instructors. If the agency meets the requirements, the student will be encouraged to submit the proposal. The following criteria must be met and will be used to evaluate the proposal:

1. Field placement assignments must be clearly delineated and separate from employment responsibilities (i.e. different tasks, located in a different program).
2. The proposed field instructor and work supervisor must be two different people.
3. The agency must be a Department-approved field education placement.
4. If the agency is not a Department-approved field education placement, it must meet all of the requirements for approval and there must be sufficient time for the approval process to take place. This approval needs to be in place prior to the beginning of the field placement.
5. Being on the approved list does not guarantee an agency meets the necessary requirements to be an employment-based field placement.
6. Field placement assignments and supervision must provide evidence that there are learning opportunities which are beyond the scope of the student's present work. (Therefore, the student is encouraged to attach a job description of current job responsibilities and a description of the role and responsibilities which the graduate social work student will fulfill).
7. It is essential that student and field instructor have release time for field education. Therefore, the student must provide a detailed schedule indicating which hours are as an employee and which are as a student. Experience indicates that agencies have difficulty keeping the separation. Therefore if the student is clear about the schedule, it decreases the problems).

Steps in the planning and approval process:

The act of submitting a proposal does not guarantee approval of the proposal. The following steps will be followed:

1. A complete Employment-based Placement Proposal is submitted by the student to the Field Education Coordinator.
2. The proposal is reviewed by the Field Education Coordinator who will if appropriate consult with the student's field liaison. The Field Education Coordinator will make the final decision.

3. Rejection may lead to two options:
 - a. There may be suggestions for strengthening and revising the proposal, or
 - b. There may be a recommendation to consider field placement at another agency.
4. If the proposal is approved, the following steps will take place:
 - a. If the field placement agency is already on the Department-approved list, the Field Education Coordinator will contact the student and inform him/her that the proposal was approved.
 - b. If the field placement agency is not on the Department-approved list, the Field Education Coordinator will arrange a site visit and work with the agency representative to confirm the agency meets the criteria. Assuming the agency meets the criteria, an Agency Profile Sheet and Agency Affiliation Agreement will be secured.

There may be times when the Field Education Coordinator will arrange a meeting in the agency between the student, the work supervisor, the field instructor, and the Field Liaison. The agency executive will be invited to attend and participate. The purpose is to ensure that the Department's field education curriculum and the policies and procedures are understood and that all educational requirements will be met by the agency.

Paid Field Placement

This type of field education placement refers to situations where, either at the initiation of the student or the agency, wages are paid to the student. Therefore, the student is an employee of the agency. In some situations, the student may work hours in excess of those required to fulfill their 500 field education hour requirement. For example, if hired to work a 20 hour week, the student may count only work 16 hours toward fulfilling field requirements, if full-time or 12 hours a week if part-time. In addition, the student may only count those hours completed during the official number of weeks in any given academic semester and cannot "bank" hours in order to complete field placement early unless a request for an exception has been submitted in a timely manner to and approved by the Field Education Coordinator.

If a student is offered a paid field placement, the student must notify the Field Education Coordinator of the offer immediately and upon approval of the field placement will provide the Field Education Coordinator with the effective date of employment, weekly schedule, hourly wage, and job description.

Licensure: Field Verification Letter Request

Graduates from the FGCU MSW Program who are submitting an Intern Registration Application to the Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling (http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/491/soc_lic_req.html) as part of the

process of getting licensed in the State of Florida are required to include with their application a Verification of Field Practice Letter. In addition, Advanced Standing Program graduates are also required by the Board to provide verification of courses waived upon admission.

In order to request this letter from the FGCU MSW Program, go the following webpage: <http://cps.fgcu.edu/SW/MSW/licensure.html>. Download the Request for Verification Letter for Licensure, fill in the applicable information, sign it electronically, save it to your computer's hard drive, and submit to the Field Education Coordinator as an email attachment as instructed. The form may also be submitted via fax or US mail.

Each request will be acted upon within 2-4 weeks. Thus, students are advised to plan accordingly when submitting requests. It is the policy of the FGCU Field Education Program to send the letter directly to the Board. When the letter is mailed to the Board, the graduate can expect to be notified via email. Graduates who would rather have a photocopy of the signed letter must provide a self-addressed stamped envelope along with their initial request; in which case, this will constitute notification.

Graduates who are applying for licensure to States other than Florida and need similar types of verification letters should submit their requests to the Field Education Coordinator with as much information as possible regarding what is required. The same policies with regard to turnaround time and notification apply.