

FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM MANUAL FOR STUDENTS 2023-2024



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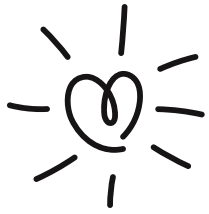
SW WEBSITE





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WELCOME TO FIELD PRACTICUM



PURPOSE OF MANUAL

This manual is intended to familiarize students with the policies of the Social Work Field Education Program at the University of Southern Mississippi. It is designed to be an ongoing reference guide for understanding the processes involved, both in the classroom setting and in the field education setting, in completing the field education requirement for the baccalaureate or a master's degree in Social Work.

INTRODUCTION

The field practicum is guided by a number of important principles pertaining to social work education. Knowledge, values, and skills first defined and learned in the classroom are reinforced and refined through professionally supervised practice. Curriculum content areas are, further, most effectively and most fully absorbed under conditions of planned and supervised integration and synthesis. Undergraduate and graduate students alike bring with them to the field practicum varied social, cultural, educational, and experiential qualities, about which they must become critically aware if they are to flourish as competent and effective practitioners following graduation. Educational opportunities and resources provided by field instruction must, moreover, address the promotion of social justice and institutional change, as well as the enhancement of social functioning of individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. Our field practica also provide students with an initiation into the traditions of the social work profession and the practice of the social work community. It provides students an intermediate space (Schon, 1987) between the “real” practice world and the academy. In this place they can learn particular ways of seeing, thinking, and doing that are consistent with social work practice and increase their professional social work confidence.

The educational activities which support the field component of the curriculum are the responsibility of the Field Education Office. A key element for the field program is the interaction between the community-based field sites and the field liaisons who monitor the students’ progress in their placements. Approximately 200 social service agencies serve the Field Education Office by providing diverse placement sites and day-to-day field teaching and supervision by qualified field instructors. These agencies are a critical component of the field curriculum and carry a large share of responsibility for the education of students in the field.

USM SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM EXAMPLES:

- Mental health facility
- Child protective services
- Hospital
- Neighborhood organizing agency
- Nursing home
- Domestic violence shelter
- Homeless shelter
- Addiction treatment center
- Social services at churches or other religious organizations
- Probation office or other correctional facilities
- K-12 school
- Advocacy organization
- Political action organizations
- Local, state or national government offices
- Environmental organizations
- Women’s centers
- Domestic violence centers or shelters
- Tutoring programs
- College or university counseling center
- Crisis line



THE PURPOSE OF FIELD PRACTICUM/EDUCATION

- The field practicum serves as a bridge between the classroom and beginning a career as a professional social worker, and
- Provides an opportunity for students to become more confident in their skills sets learned in the classroom.

THE FIELD EDUCATION OFFICE

The Field Education Office serves both the undergraduate and graduate programs. A full time Field Education Coordinator manages all aspects of field placement and serves on the school's administrative team.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS TEAM INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Assign students to field placements.
2. Review agency and field instructor applications.
3. Obtain and renew agency affiliation agreements.
4. Ensure compliance with Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) educational policy and accreditation standards (EPAS) requirements.
5. Consult with faculty, students, field instructors, field liaisons, and agency administrators regarding field policies and procedures.
6. Conduct on-going evaluation of the field curriculum.
7. Provide field instructor training on the school's curriculum, field supervision, practice behaviors, and other relevant content.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIELD EDUCATION SPECIALIST:

1. Maintain all records pertaining to agencies, field instructors, and students;
2. Facilitate communication to students, agencies, field instructors, and faculty;
3. Maintain current information on agencies approved as field instruction sites;
4. Assist with preparation for field instructor training and field-related workshops; and,
5. Assist with field interviews as needed.
6. Assist with student interviews and placement activities as needed
7. Assist with agency and field instructor recruitment



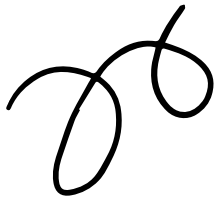


RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIELD EDUCATION COORDINATOR

- Recruit and assess social service agencies as field instruction sites;
- Establish and maintain cooperative relationships between the School and social service agencies;
- Consult with agency administrative personnel on matters involving the provision of adequate field instruction, selection and training of field instructors and maintenance of field instruction standards;. Interpret the School's mission, goals, objectives, and philosophy of education and field education standards to the community and community agencies;
- Develop seminars and staff development experiences for field agencies and field instructors;
- Approve assignment of students to specific agencies following consultation with students, advisors, field office personnel, and field instructors; and,
- Consultation with field liaisons, advisors, field instructors and students in situations involving student performance concerns.
- Provide training for field instructors;
- Revise field instructor training materials to keep current;
- Assist with student interviews and placement activities as needed.9.Initiate contact with the Field Instructor and the student.
- Conduct at least one agency site visit or make one agency contact during the semester.
- Assess and monitor the quality of supervision provided to the student.
- To be available to the Field Instructor and the student to deal with problems that may occur during the course of the placement.
- Mediate if problems arise between students and field instructor or between student and other agency staff.
- Review and sign the learning plan.
- Review the mid-semester evaluation.
- .Review the end-of-semester evaluation.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- The field office staff initiates all contact of potential field instructors to make ensure field instructors meet qualifications and to ensure that required agency paperwork is current and completed.
- Students are not to contact agencies or arrange their own placements.
- Once field placement has begun the field office staff are responsible for contacting field agencies to conduct face-to-face site visits, and have ongoing contact by phone , emails, or zoom. During the site visits the field office staff along with the field instructor, task coordinator and student communicate what the student is accomplishing during the field placement and supervision. If there are any areas of concern during placement, these can also be addressed during this time.



FIELD COURSES

BSW PROGRAM

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ENROLL IN SWK 430, FIELD EDUCATION, AND SWK 431, FIELD SEMINAR, DURING THEIR FINAL SEMESTER. STUDENTS IN SWK 430 MUST COMPLETE A MINIMUM OF 420 HOURS. STUDENTS ATTEND FIELD PLACEMENT 32 HOURS PER WEEK. THIS IS USUALLY ACCOMPLISHED BY STUDENTS BEING IN A FIELD PLACEMENT SETTING 4 DAYS A WEEK FOR 8 HOURS EACH DAY.

SWK 430. FIELD EDUCATION (9 HRS.) PREREQUISITES: MUST HAVE COMPLETED THE REQUIRED UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM, THE SOCIAL WORK CORE, AND THE PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION. THE STUDENT MUST HAVE AT LEAST A 2.5 CUMULATIVE GPA. CO-REQUISITE: SWK 431. THIS INTERNSHIP IN A SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY PROVIDES EXPERIENCE IN DIRECT SERVICE TO CLIENT SYSTEMS AND ENHANCES AND DEVELOPS GENERALIST PRACTICE SKILLS. THIS COURSE IS THE ONLY ONE IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM WHERE STUDENTS EARN A PASS/FAIL GRADE.

SWK 431. FIELD SEMINAR (3 HRS) CO-REQUISITE: SWK 430. THE SEMINAR ENABLES STUDENTS TO FURTHER DEVELOP GENERALIST PRACTICE SKILLS AND INTEGRATE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, SKILLS AND THEORY WITH PRACTICE.

PLEASE REFER TO THE UNDERGRADUATE BULLETIN AND THE BSW PROGRAM HANDBOOK FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON COURSES AND DEGREE PLANS.

MSW PROGRAM

GRADUATE STUDENTS' FIELD COURSES DEPEND ON THE STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT STATUS: FULL TIME, PART TIME, OR ADVANCED STANDING. ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS MUST HAVE 900 FIELD HOURS IN ORDER TO GRADUATE. ADVANCED STANDING STUDENTS MUST PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION OF UNDERGRADUATE FIELD HOURS THAT WILL BE USED TOWARD THE 900 REQUIRED HOURS.

MSW FULL TIME STUDENTS FIRST YEAR

SWK 659. (2 HRS.) FULL TIME FIELD EDUCATION I. STUDENTS ATTEND FIELD PLACEMENT THREE DAYS PER WEEK. STUDENTS ATTEND WEEKLY GROUP SESSIONS THAT PROCESS FIELD EXPERIENCES TO ASSIST WITH DEVELOPING A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY. STUDENTS SHOULD COMPLETE A MINIMUM OF 300 FIELD HOURS.

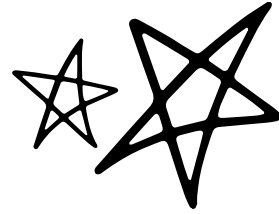
SECOND YEAR AND FULL TIME ADVANCE STANDING

SWK 661. (1 HRS.) FULL TIME FIELD EDUCATION II. STUDENTS BEGIN FIELD AT A DIFFERENT AGENCY, ATTENDING THREE DAYS PER WEEK

SWK 662. (1 HRS.) FULL TIME FIELD EDUCATION III. STUDENTS CONTINUE AT THE SAME AGENCY AS SWK 661, ATTENDING THREE DAYS PER WEEK.



FIELD COURSES



MSW PART TIME STUDENTS FIRST YEAR

SWK 626. (1 HR.) PART TIME FIELD EDUCATION I. STUDENTS ATTEND FIELD PLACEMENT TWO DAYS PER WEEK. STUDENTS ATTEND FIELD PLACEMENT THREE DAYS PER WEEK. STUDENTS ATTEND BI-MONTHLY GROUP SESSIONS THAT PROCESS FIELD EXPERIENCES TO ASSIST WITH DEVELOPING A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

SWK 627. (1 HR.) PART TIME FIELD EDUCATION II. IN THE SEMESTER FOLLOWING SWK 626, STUDENTS CONTINUE AT SAME AGENCY FOR TWO DAYS EACH WEEK. STUDENTS CONTINUE TO ATTEND FIELD PLACEMENT THREE DAYS PER WEEK. STUDENTS ATTEND BI-MONTHLY GROUP SESSIONS.

BY THE END OF SWK 626 AND SWK 627, STUDENTS NEED TO HAVE ACCUMULATED A TOTAL OF 450 FIELD HOURS.

SECOND YEAR AND PART TIME ADVANCED STANDING

SWK 641. (1 HRS.) PART TIME FIELD EDUCATION III
STUDENTS ATTEND A NEW FIELD PLACEMENT TWO DAYS EACH WEEK.

SWK 642. (1 HRS.) PART TIME FIELD EDUCATION IV
STUDENTS ATTEND A NEW FIELD PLACEMENT TWO DAYS EACH WEEK.

BY THE END OF SWK 641 AND SWK 642, STUDENTS NEED TO HAVE A TOTAL OF 450 HOURS.

PLEASE REFER TO THE GRADUATE BULLETIN AND THE MSW PROGRAM HANDBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COURSES AND DEGREE PLANS.

ADVANCED STANDING

STUDENT WITH A BSW DEGREE AND MEETING OTHER REQUIREMENTS MAY MATRICULATE THE MSW PROGRAM IN THE SECOND YEAR. STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE PROOF OF THE NUMBER OF HOURS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED FOR UNDERGRADUATE FIELD. THE UNDERGRADUATE HOURS AND THE GRADUATE HOURS MUST TOTAL A MINIMUM OF 900 HOURS. ADJUSTMENTS TO NORMALLY REQUIRED FIELD HOURS MAY BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MEET THIS REQUIREMENT.

NO CREDIT FOR LIFE EXPERIENCE

ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR LIFE EXPERIENCE AND PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE SHALL NOT BE GIVEN IN LIEU OF THE FIELD PLACEMENT OR ANY OTHER REQUIRED SOCIAL WORK COURSE.

TEVERA

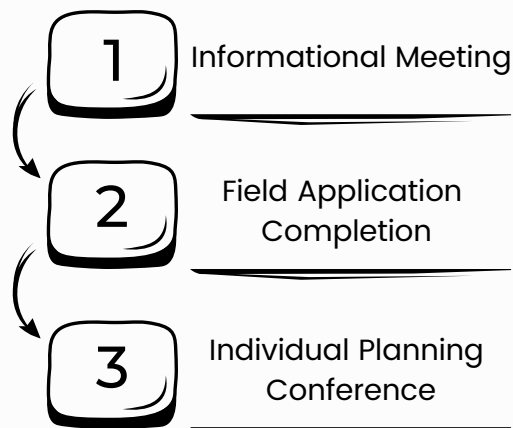
BEFORE ENTERING FIELD STUDENTS NEED ACCESS TO TEVERA, THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK'S FIELD TRACKING AND ASSESSMENT SOFTWARE. ACCESS CAN BE PURCHASED (A ONE-TIME FEE) THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY BOOKSTORE OR DIRECTLY FROM TEVERA. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PURCHASING TEVERA, PLEASE CONTACT THE FIELD EDUCATION OFFICE. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TEVERA, PLEASE VISIT THEIR WEBSITE AT TEVERA.COM.

AM I READY FOR FIELD PRACTICUM?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ENTRANCE INTO FIELD PLACEMENT

1. Prior to entering their Field Placement, students must complete all required courses in their Concentration, except for the concurrent Field Education seminar course, if applicable, and;
2. Undergraduate students must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (B) or better. Graduate students must have a GPA of 3.0 and be ready for field according to the student's plan of study, and;
3. All coursework must be graded. Students are not allowed to enter into their internship with an "I" (incomplete) in a class. If a student enters an internship with an "I" (incomplete), they will be removed from the internship until the course is graded, and;
4. Students must demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in the classroom.

ADDITIONAL PROCESSES & REQUIREMENTS FOR BEGINNING FIELD PLACEMENT AND SEMINAR COURSE



During classes the semester before entering field practicum and seminar the Field office staff will distribute information to students about the placement application, practicum planning and placement process. At that time, students will be given a deadline for purchasing TEVERA and completing a field application.

TEVERA

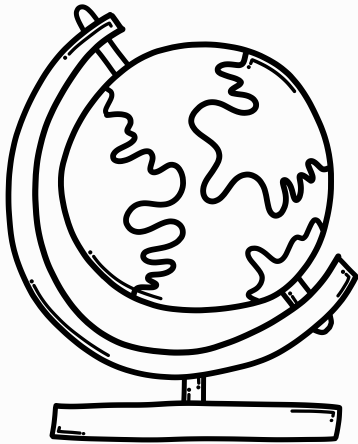
1. Students complete Field Application in TEVERA
2. Students provide electronic signature for confidentiality agreement, background checks, release of information and other possible agency requirement notification forms
3. Students upload a current resume to TEVERA

INDIVIDUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE

Each student eligible for internship placement will participate in an individual planning conference with a Field faculty member. During the Informational Meetings, students will be informed as to how to schedule the individual planning conference. Once the scheduling of these meetings begins, we strongly encourage students to schedule their conference in a timely fashion. Procrastination in scheduling an appointment will limit internship site choices and delay planning for an internship.

During the individual planning conference, the student and Field faculty will:

- Identify and clarify student's educational interests and goals.
- Discuss potential internship geographic site options and identify which sites interest the student and address educational needs of the student.
- Discuss questions and concerns the student may have related to field.



OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENT REQUESTS

Students are able to seek out-of-state internships. Students seeking this type of internship should let their Field Liaison know of their interest early in the internship planning phase. Students interested in an out-of-state placement should be aware that securing these placements may take more time than in-state internships, as the Field Education Office will likely not have standing relationships with these sites. Sites must agree to enter into an affiliation agreement with the School of Social Work.

TAKE NOTE...

- Field placement activities will not begin until the application and the individual planning conference are complete.
- Any costs associated with background checks and other agency requirements are the responsibility of the student. The University does not pay for the background checks, drug tests TB tests or other needs of an agency. The University does provide liability insurance for the student.
- Internship sites that agree to interview students will access students' cover letters and resumes via TEVERA, the internship management system. The Field Education faculty will inform students if the internship site will contact them to schedule an interview or if they are to contact the internship site.

INTERNSHIP PLANNING ROLES DEFINED:

The Field Education Office takes the lead in identifying the agency and for the initial contact of a Field Instructor to:

Explore the potential internship's interest, capability, and willingness to provide a high quality field learning experience

Assess placement site's ability to provide the desired learning experiences and meet specified criteria for being a placement site

Explore the availability of appropriate supervision

Obtain information from the potential internship site on how they desire to be contacted by the student for interviews

Secure agency affiliation agreement and field instructor application, resume

ALSO...

- Please note that the Field Office does not guarantee an internship placement, as there are many external factors that impact the success of a student securing an internship that are beyond the control of the Field Office. Among these factors are the availability of internship sites in the geographic location in which the student is interested, the ability of the School of Social Work to successfully negotiate an affiliation agreement with the internship site, the student's success in securing an interview and then being offered an internship.
- IN NO CASE MAY A STUDENT SEEK TO ARRANGE A FIELD PLACEMENT OR EXPLORE A PLACEMENT POSSIBILITY WITHOUT FIRST INVOLVING THE COORDINATOR OF FIELD EDUCATION.

FIELD AGENCIES

Eligible agencies are those that provide social work practice opportunities for students and employ social workers who meet field instructor requirements. Students may be considered for agencies that do not have social workers only if a qualified off-site field instructor (usually faculty) agrees to provide weekly supervision and an experienced person holding a degree in a related profession (e.g., psychology, recreational therapy) provides daily onsite supervision.

*A field agency/organization enters into an affiliation agreement with the University of Southern Mississippi before a student is placed.

Responsibilities of the agency per the affiliation agreement are listed below.

FIELD AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Field Education experience facilities will be provided without regard to age, race, color, creed, national origin, or gender of the parties involved.
2. Provide available space, instructional materials and social work experiences to the student(s) for the learning purposes. Provide adequate orientation of said agency to the student(s). Provide a planned educational experience to the social work student(s) in accordance with the Field Education Manual of the School of Social Work.
3. Honor student class attendance and school requirements.
4. Inform the field office of any changes in policy and/or procedures, which may affect student learning experiences and/or opportunities.
5. Inform the field office of any changes in the employment status or assignment of the assigned field instructor, which may affect student learning experiences and/or opportunities.
6. Inform field coordinator immediately of any inappropriate conduct of the student.



AS A STUDENT, WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

The primary role of a student is to meet the educational objectives of the field curriculum as an active participant in an agency setting.

As an intern you are expected to comport yourself in accordance to the profession's standards of ethical performance.

As a student you are assigned to affiliated agencies where you are administratively responsible to an agency supervisor (Field Instructor) and where you are expected to comply with agency policies and procedures.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Assist in developing and implementing the learning plan. Ensure the learning plan is signed and uploaded to TEVERA
2. Attend field seminar class weekly and be prepared to discuss experiences from the field experience
3. Adequately prepare for weekly supervision
4. Follow agency policies and procedures, especially confidentiality.
5. Abide by the NASW and State of Mississippi Codes of Ethics.
6. Adhere to standards and/or guidelines of the agency's monitoring or accrediting bodies.
7. Accept supervision and feedback from the Field Instructor and agency staff.
8. First consult with the Field Instructor if problems occur in the placement; notify field liaison if a resolution cannot be reached.
9. Complete the required minimum contact hours.
10. Complete evaluations of field agency and field instructor in TEVERA.

LIABILITY INSURANCE DURING INTERNSHIP

Since many MSW students will be providing services to individuals, families, and communities, there may be some liability risk, as there are for professionals in the field. Professional liability insurance protects people when they are accused of negligence or malpractice. USM, School of Social Work provides liability insurance for student in their field internship.

GENERAL FIELD PLACEMENT POLICIES

Attendance at Field Agency

Absences from the field agency must be reported in a timely manner to the field instructor or the field instructor's designee.

The field course syllabus provides information about attendance at the field agency relative to the course requirements. In general, however, any student – no matter which program or which field class – missing 32 hours of field must report this to the field office immediately. This much time is difficult to make up and will require a meeting with the appropriate program coordinator. Missing 32 hours or more at the field agency may result in the student being asked to withdraw from the field course.

Tardiness

When possible, tardiness to the field agency must be reported to the field instructor or the field instructor's designee.

Contact Hours

Students are expected to negotiate their field schedule (specific days of the week, specific hours, etc.) with the Field Instructor. Students may not complete the internship before the end of the semester. All students must complete the required number of contact hours. A contact hour is defined as time spent at the agency or time spent on behalf of the agency. Students follow the university academic calendar meaning that the student does not have to attend field during university scheduled breaks and holidays. If the student works at the agency during these times, the student may count the hours. The student may find that it is necessary to attend field placement during breaks in order to achieve the required number of contact hours.

It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the required number of contact hours is achieved. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the Field Instructor to make up any lost time. When a student determines that achieving the required hours cannot happen, the student must notify the field office immediately. Only hours in field will be counted. The only exception will be when the field agency and/or the university is closed due to a disaster.

Field Hour Requirements

BSW: 420 hours, block placement

MSW Full-Time	1st Year	300 hours	1 semester	3 days/week
	2nd Year & Adv Standing	300 hours	2 semesters	3 days/week

MSW Part-Time	1st Year	225 hours	2 semesters	2 days/week
	2nd Year & Part-Time Adv Standing	225 hours	2 semesters	2 days/week

CAN I DO MY FIELD AT PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT?

The field education program is designed with the belief that a more meaningful and integrated learning experience can take place if students are provided with a wide variety of field learning experiences. However, the School does recognize that expenses and the extremely limited amount of student financial aid are contributing factors in allowing some students to pursue graduate education. It is believed that agencies which have an on-going investment in a valued employee may be willing to make further commitment to the employee's professional development if the student is allowed to remain in employee status while in field placement within the agency.

This arrangement is possible only if planned learning experiences are sufficiently different from the job responsibilities that the student has been performing. The new and different learning experiences must be educationally focused; must be in keeping with the student's specific educational needs; must meet the requirements of the School and the Council on Social Work Education; and, can in no way diminish the educational quality of the field learning experience.

The student must be placed within a different unit of the agency and with an MSW field instructor who has never functioned as that student's supervisor in any work setting. A student already employed in a social service agency or an agency that provides social work services may, under certain circumstances, be allowed to complete field practica at the place of employment.

The following conditions must be met before an arrangement of this type can be considered:

1. The agency must be formally affiliated as an approved placement site with the USM School of Social Work.
2. The student's field assignment duties and responsibilities must be significantly and qualitatively different from his or her employment duties and responsibilities and must be in a different department, division or program of the agency.
3. A qualified, approved Field Instructor who is an employee of the agency but not the student's employment supervisor must supervise the student's practicum activities.
4. The student must be granted an appropriate amount of employment release time to complete the required number of clock hours for the semester.

A student wishing to do a field placement at place of employment must state this intent on the application. At the field office interview, the requirements will be discussed. The student will be given an Employment-based Field Placement application to complete and have signed by appropriate staff of the employer. Each consideration for this type of placement is reviewed on a case-by-case process. The Field Education Coordinator will have final approval.

The student's field instructor will be an MSW employee of the agency other than the student's regular employment supervisor. When this is not possible within the agency, utilization of an experienced field instructor from another agency can be considered. The School has the responsibility of approving the field instructor. The agency must agree in writing to accept an MSW field instructor from outside the agency, if necessary, to complete the placement for the student.

Rationale for the field instructor being an MSW other than the employment supervisor is that a field instructor who is not the employment supervisor is more likely to concentrate on learning objectives and processes rather than on the completion of agency tasks and can be more objective about a student's performance. Standards and scheduling for this placement must be the same as for any placement: the setting must be able to provide the required types of learning experience to meet the expectations of a field placement.

WHAT IF I HAVE A POSITIVE BACKGROUND CHECK?

The School of Social Work does not require background checks of its students. However, students need to know that background checks are required by more and more field agencies. Agencies differ in their requirements for type of background checks and types of offenses that prohibit internship. Students need to understand that a positive result on a background check may result in not being able to complete the field education requirements for graduation at a minimum a Student Performance Improvement Plan will be implemented by the Field Office.

CHANGES & INTERRUPTIONS IN FIELD

Sometimes it is necessary to consider the removal of a student from a field placement after the start of the semester. A student may be removed from a site for the following reasons:

1. Agency Request

Documentation of:

- Failure of the student to abide by NASW and/or State of Mississippi Codes of Ethics.
- Failure of the student to abide by agency and/or accrediting body policies, procedures, rules, or regulations.
- Lack of satisfactory demonstration of the learning plan practice behaviors.
- Repeated, unexcused tardiness and/or absence of the student.
- Lack of student's progress in correction of identified deficiencies.
- A student who is asked to leave a site under any of the above conditions will be subject to removal from the program and forfeiture of all completed hours at the discretion of the Field Coordinator in consultation with the School's Administrative Team and other relevant persons.

2. Field Education Office Request

- Evidence that the field site is not providing an adequate learning experience and/or adequate supervision for the student.
- Agency closure, agency restructuring that does not support internship requirements, and/or resignation or termination of the Field Instructor (departure of a Field Instructor will result in removal of a student only if satisfactory alternative arrangements for qualified supervision cannot be made).

In the above instances the student, the Field Instructor, and the Field Coordinator will consider the particular needs of clients as transition plans are made. The student may be given credit for some or all completed hours at the discretion of the Coordinator of Field Education. Credit will be granted, however, only if it is determined that the quality and integrity of the learning experience at the new site will not be compromised.

3. Failure of the student to abide by USM School of Social Work field policies and procedures.

- A student who is removed from a placement for this reason will be subject to a failing grade and forfeiture of all completed hours depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of the Field Coordinator, the appropriate program coordinator, and other relevant persons.

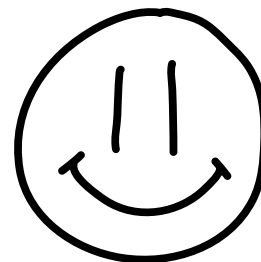
THE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

If at any point in the practicum a student's performance falls below an acceptable level, a Performance Improvement Plan should be completed. This plan is a tool designed to address problematic behaviors and/or situations that may arise. This allows the student the opportunity to correct the identified behavior(s) and successfully complete the practicum. This plan should be implemented as soon as a need for change is identified to allow time for the student to address concerns and successfully complete the internship.

TRANSFER TO ANOTHER AGENCY

A request by a student to be moved from the assigned field agency to another agency (after the start of the semester) for any reason other than those cited above will be considered on a case by case basis.

In all cases, transfer of a student from one agency to another during the course of a semester (regardless of circumstances) is dependent on the availability of an appropriate alternate site and cannot be guaranteed.



STUDENT REQUEST WITHDRAWAL FROM FIELD COURSE

A student who wishes to withdraw from field after the start of the semester must first consult with Field Education Coordinator. Once it has been determined that withdrawal is appropriate, University procedures regarding dropping courses must be followed (refer to the current University undergraduate or graduate Catalog and/or the current Registrar's Bulletin for specific procedures and grading policies).

A student may have legitimate extenuating, personal circumstances (as determined by Field Education Coordinator in consultation with other appropriate persons) that preclude completion of the placement in the semester for which the student is registered in the course. In such an instance, the student may be given a grade of "I" if late enough in the semester and will be required to re-enroll in the field course the following semester to complete the remaining hours at the same agency (if possible). In all such instances the integrity of the field experience must be a primary consideration.



TEVERA

Students are assessed a one-time fee associated with TEVERA and will have access to their TEVERA field records for a lifetime. Field instructors will submit time sheets, learning agreements, and evaluations through TEVERA. To learn more about TEVERA please visit their website at <https://usm.tevera.com>.

DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The field education experience involves much documentation: orientation to field, learning agreement, mid-term evaluation, final evaluation, and contact hours. The School of Social Work uses TEVERA software as an online tool to manage these field documents.



SAFETY IN FIELD PRACTICUM

USM School of Social Work recognizes that you may encounter risks to your personal safety during the field practicum when dealing with angry or hostile clients, making home visits or being exposed to clients who have an infectious disease and/or mental illness. It is important to learn what you can to minimize the risks to your personal safety. The USM School of Social Work has the following safety policy and procedures:

POLICY

- The School of Social Work is responsible for providing students with general information about safety in field placement.
- The School of Social Work expects each agency to be responsible for orienting student interns to the safety policies and procedures of that agency and setting at the beginning of each semester.
- The School of Social Work students should not be assigned to engage or to remain in assignments or at placements in which they feel physically at risk. We encourage all affiliated agencies to make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for their own agency staff.

PROCEDURES

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt it is the student's responsibility to immediately notify the field instructor. The field instructor or agency director should then contact the Coordinator of Field Education to discuss what actions the agency and USM School of Social Work should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being following the incident and moving forward.

The Coordinator of Field Education will document the incident and notify the Director of the School of Social Work.

SAFETY TIPS FOR STUDENTS IN FIELD PRACTICUM



AGENCY PROTOCOLS

It is important for student to know the Agency's safety and security protocols for office and home visits with clients at the very beginning of the placement.

Security of Belongings:

All students in the field are expected to have a secure place to keep personal handbags, cell phones or other belongings while at placement. Students should not leave personal belonging visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed.

Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Neither the agency nor USM School of Social Work can be held responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal items.

SAFETY ISSUES RELATED TO WORKING WITH CLIENTS

When working with clients, it is important to remember that the treatment process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. This can contribute to problems with impulse control and can lead to safety issues for the client, the social worker, the student intern and others.

There may be times when students work with clients who have difficulty with reality testing, dealing with overwhelming emotions, and controlling their anger. Some may be prone to violence while others may be intoxicated or have other medical or neurological disorders. It is recommended that students consult with your agency field instructor to prepare for handling specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide, homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presences of weapons.

SAFETY FOR OFFICE MEETINGS

When meeting with a client in the office one should take in consideration what is known about the client's mental status. It is helpful to think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person may sit. One should consider what time the meeting is taking place and whether or not many people are around, whether to include someone else in the meeting and even what to wear. It is important to discuss the plan for backup and assistance in the event that a client becomes agitated. As a general rule student's should never see a potentially dangerous client alone without someone else in the agency knowing the details of the meeting. Students should keep field supervisors informed about their schedules at the agency at all times.

SAFETY FOR TRAVEL BY CAR

When traveling by car to an agency or to home visits, it is important to know where you are going, and to look at a map before driving to unfamiliar areas. In general, remember to be alert, and to lock doors and close windows. Students should tell someone where he or she is going and the expected amount of time he/she will be away from the office. The field instructor and/or agency should have the cell phone number and information on how to contact you in the event of an emergency.

SAFETY FOR HOME VISITS

Prior to conducting a home visit, students should review the client's file. If there is a question of safety, plan accordingly with field instructors. It might be decided that meeting in a neutral location or going with another worker is advantageous. Once again it is important for someone at the agency to know your itinerary as a student. It is helpful to stay alert and to think about what to wear, which room to meet in and where to sit. If you feel threatened at any point during the interview, err on the side of caution and leave. If the client seems bothered by you entering their home, do not force the issue. If you hear a heated argument from inside the home as a student you may choose to leave and re-schedule the visit or call to assess the situation before entering. In general, a cell phone is very useful for students during home visits. Always staff with your field instructor safety protocols for home visits prior to conducting home visits.

HEALTH SAFETY

Students should receive training and information about how to protect themselves from infectious diseases from the field instructor and/or agency where the field practicum is being completed. Students should be alerted to the existence of any biohazards at the field practicum site if applicable.

FIELD SEMESTER AT A GLANCE



WEEKLY

TRACK FIELD HOURS IN TEVERA

SUPERVISION WITH YOUR FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Both the student and the field instructor should use the practice behavior list as a guide for weekly supervision discussions:

1. What opportunities did the student have during the week to demonstrate the practice behaviors?
2. What opportunities need to be created in order for the student to use the knowledge and skills associated with the practice behaviors?
3. Feedback from the field instructor on student's performance on particular practice behaviors.
4. Questions from the student regarding practice behavior challenges.



FIRST 2 WEEKS

ORIENTATION TO FIELD

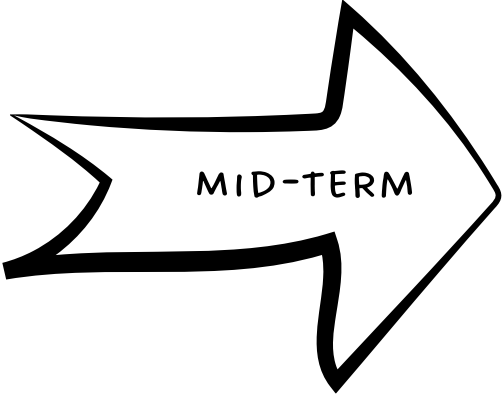
You are responsible for making arrangements through the field instructor to complete the orientation to the agency using the Orientation Checklist in TEVERA. The Orientation to Field Form is completed in TEVERA.

LEARNING AGREEMENT

The Learning Agreement is uploaded into TEVERA by the student and consists of two parts: (1) the agency's social worker job description and (2) the field course practice behavior list. The purpose of including the job description is to identify the social work tasks and responsibilities the student will be learning.

Some field instructors may want to circle those items that directly pertain to the student. In lieu of an agency job description, the field instructor may create a list of social work tasks and responsibilities to guide the internship. The Learning Agreement (see copy in appendix) has a section for adding other learning tasks the field instructor and/or student wish to include. An example is the student has an interest in understanding the agency's grant process.

The field course practice behavior list presents the focus for student development. These are the competencies that the field instructor will use to evaluate the student. Both the student and the field instructor should use the list as a guide for weekly supervision discussions:



MID-TERM

MID-TERM EVALUATION

Each field course requires a mid-term Evaluation. All evaluations use a 10-point scale for five descriptions (2 points per description) of each practice behavior. The field instructor completes the evaluation and reviews with the student.



FINISHING UP

FINAL EVALUATION

Each field course requires a final evaluation. The field instructor completes the evaluation and reviews with the student.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF FIELD EXPERIENCE

At the end of the semester, the student will complete a Student Evaluation of Field Experience in TEVERA. This evaluation is intended to provide feedback to the field office on the learning opportunities at the field agency. Evaluation information is not shared with the field agency or field instructor without permission from the student.

F.A.Q.

Q: WILL I BE EXPECTED TO PERFORM AS A SOCIAL WORKER RIGHT AWAY?

A: NO. DURING FIELD INSTRUCTOR TRAINING, WE ASK THAT STUDENTS FOLLOW A FOUR-STEP PROCESS:

1. ORIENTATION TO THE AGENCY (SEE ORIENTATION FORM IN APPENDIX).
2. OBSERVING AGENCY ACTIVITIES, CLIENT SERVICES, MEETINGS, ETC. THE STUDENT AND FIELD INSTRUCTOR SHOULD PROCESS ALL OBSERVATIONS.
3. STUDENT CONDUCTS SOCIAL WORK TASKS IN PRESENCE OF FIELD INSTRUCTOR OR DESIGNEE.
4. STUDENT BEGINS INDEPENDENT WORK.

Q: CAN I ADD HOLIDAY AND BREAK TIME TO MY FIELD HOURS?

A: NO.

Q: I WORKED DURING THE HOLIDAY. CAN I COUNT MY HOURS?

A: YES.

Q: DON'T HOURS WORKED DURING THE HOLIDAY GET DOUBLED?

A: NO.

Q: MY AGENCY IS CLOSED FOR A HOLIDAY THAT THE UNIVERSITY DOESN'T RECOGNIZE. I WAS SUPPOSED TO WORK THAT DAY. DO I GET TO ADD THESE HOURS?

A: NO. YOU MAY NEED TO ARRANGE WITH YOUR FIELD INSTRUCTOR TO MAKE UP THESE HOURS.

Q: ARE THERE WEEKEND AND WEEKNIGHT PLACEMENTS AVAILABLE?

A: FIELD PLACEMENT TAKES PLACE DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS, I.E., MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY DURING THE DAY. FIELD OPPORTUNITIES WITH NON-TRADITIONAL BUSINESS HOURS ARE ESSENTIALLY NON-EXISTENT. STUDENTS NEED TO PREPARE TO PARTICIPATE IN WEEKDAY FIELD ASSIGNMENTS.

Q: I DO NOT HAVE A CAR. CAN I GET A PLACEMENT WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE FROM WHERE I RESIDE?

A: WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT AN ELIGIBLE FIELD PLACEMENT AGENCY IS LOCATED NEAR YOUR RESIDENCE. ARRANGING TRAVEL TO AND FROM A FIELD AGENCY IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY.

Q: I DON'T THINK MY AGENCY IS PROVIDING ENOUGH SERVICES FOR CLIENTS. WHAT DO I DO?

A: THE SERVICES AN AGENCY PROVIDES OR DOES NOT PROVIDE ARE IMPACTED BY MANY FACTORS. TALK TO YOUR FIELD INSTRUCTOR ABOUT YOUR AGENCY'S MISSION, GOALS, AND SCOPE OF SERVICES.

Q: WHY CAN'T I GET THE FIELD PLACEMENT THAT I WANT? I NEED TO BE PLACED AT A CERTAIN AGENCY SO I CAN ADD IT TO MY RESUME FOR FUTURE WORK IN THAT AREA.

A: FIELD SITES ARE SELECTED FIRST AND FOREMOST FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS BEING PLACED AT ANY GIVEN TIME PRECLUDES PLACEMENTS BASED ON PERSONAL DESIRE.