

THE BSW FIELD INSTRUCTION EXPERIENCE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is the purpose of the field instruction experience?

A. *The field instruction experience is an integral part of the total curriculum and is designed to provide opportunities for students to apply the concepts and theories taught in the classroom to actual practice situations, thus incorporating the knowledge, values, and skills studied in class into work with clients and client systems.*

Q. I have a lot of work experience in social work settings, may I waive the field instruction requirement?

A. *While work or volunteer experience in the social work field is very valuable and will assist you in your academic social work program, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which is responsible for accreditation of social work education programs, does not allow work or life experience to be substituted for the field instruction component.*

Q. I am currently employed at a social service agency, may I do my field placement(s) at my place of employment?

A. *In an effort to assure that the BSW level student experiences a truly “generalist” placement experience, one which demonstrates and offers extensive new learning experiences and activities indicative of the depth and breadth of social work practices, employer-based placements are not typically encouraged for BSW students..*

Q. I work 5-6 days a week during daytime hours, can I do my placement in the evenings and on weekends?

A. *One of the main criteria of all Social Work Field Placements is that a qualified BSW or MSW Field Instructor be available for on-going student supervision, and that the activities be appropriate for the level of the placement. Although many social service agencies offer services 24/7, there may not be appropriate supervision available for the student. This type of placement proposal must be discussed with the Field Coordinator well **before** the placement application deadline.*

Q. I'm from out of state and/or plan to relocate out of state, but still commute for my classes, may I do my field placement at an out-of-state site?

A. *Out of state placements, (except those already-approved sites in MD, OH and PA, which are close to the border of WV) are only considered in cases where there is a compelling reason for the request. Students who have such a request, must submit to the Field Coordinator, in writing, justification for the request, as well as a detailed proposal regarding how this particular placement site will meet the learning goals of the student, as well as the criteria of the BSW program. Typically, sites must be within a 2 hour driving distance of Morgantown. The proposed placement site must meet the same criteria as all approved field placement agencies, and any BSW programs in the agency's catchment area must give permission for the student to utilize the placement site. Even if the request is approved, students are expected to attend **all other classes and field seminars on the Morgantown campus during field placement.***

Q. Are there other costs, fees, associated with field placement other than regular tuition and fees?

A. *Dependent upon the placement site, there may be additional costs to the student, such as parking, the cost of obtaining required health, criminal background or drug screenings, etc. **Also, since there are field placement sites located all over the North Central WV area, students may be asked to commute a reasonable distance to secure a placement at a site which will best meet the learning objectives and goals of both the student and the program.** Students are urged to ask these questions during the field placement interview, consider carpooling with other BSW students doing placements in the same area and/or accessing public transportation, as WVU students ride Mountain Line Transit buses free with a WVU ID.*

Q. What happens if I have or acquire a criminal record?

A. *If you have a criminal record, it has the potential to negatively impact your ability to secure a field placement, a social work license and/or employment in the social work field. If you have such a background, it is imperative that you inform your academic advisor and/or the BSW Program Director and/or the Field Education Coordinator immediately, so that you can make an informed decision as to whether or not to enter or continue the program.*