



# Field Education Handbook 2025-2026

*Revised May 2025*

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## I. Introduction

This Field Education Handbook has been developed as a guide for students, field supervisors, and faculty to use as they participate in the field education process with the WVU School of Social Work. Field education is an integral part of the professional social work curriculum and requires a close cooperative relationship between the School of Social Work (SSW) and the selected field sites who host our students for the placement experience. Field education is designated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as its signature pedagogy and is equal in standing and importance to the course work in social work higher education. Experiential learning complements the classroom learning and gives students the opportunity to build a sense of professional competence and identity that serves as a foundation for ongoing professional growth.

Located in Morgantown, West Virginia, the School of Social Work offers online and on-campus MSW and BSW programs. Our program is designed to prepare its graduates for professional generalist and advanced social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and institutions. All SSW students are governed by the same policies and guidelines described in this handbook, and all field placement sites are open to exploration by all students in our programs. It is our aim to provide consistently high-quality field education opportunities for all students. The SSW supports CSWE policies and guidelines, and the field placement policies included in this manual are designed to be consistent with our mission and CSWE guidelines.

Welcome to the West Virginia University's School of Social Work Field Education program!

*Let's go!*

### a) Mission of West Virginia University

As a land-grant institution, the faculty, staff and students at West Virginia University commit to creating a diverse and inclusive culture that advances education, healthcare and prosperity for all by providing access and opportunity; by advancing high-impact research; and by leading transformation in West Virginia and the world through local, state and global engagement.

## II. School of Social Work

### a) Social Work Program History & Rationale

Accredited by the Council on Social Work Education since 1942 for the MSW program and 1974 for the BSW program, the WVU School of Social Work develops leaders in solving the most demanding social issues of our day through rigorous research, academic innovation, and public service. Faculty and students are empowered to extend their reach, deepen their impact, and engage in real-world social change. They learn to critically analyze personal, familial, and environmental factors affecting practice settings and practice techniques, and to advocate for those who confront barriers to achieving their fullest potential. The school's programs prepare students for careers as professional social workers committed to public service in nonprofits, government, education, business, and higher education.

## **b) BSW Mission & Program**

**The mission of the BSW program is to educate students to become generalist social workers. The program mission derives from and incorporates the School of Social Work mission.** Generalist social work is grounded in the liberal arts, the person-in-environment framework, and competency-based education (CSWE, 2022). Generalist social workers use a range of prevention and intervention methods in social work practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (CSWE, 2022). Generalist social workers identify with the profession and apply ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice (CSWE, 2022). Generalist social workers recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resilience of people. They are strengths-based, and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice (CSWE, 2022). They incorporate an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective in support of respect for all people and the quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice (CSWE, 2022). They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on practice.

Graduates of the BSW program will be prepared to:

1. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities.
2. Model ethical and professional behavior in social work practice.
3. Apply a practice framework that engages diversity and difference while advancing human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. Critique practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Analyze policy practice.

## **c) MSW Mission & Program**

**The mission of the MSW program is to educate students to become advanced integrated practice social workers.** The specialization in advanced integrated practice builds on generalist practice and prepares students to integrate micro, mezzo, and macro practice skills across service sectors and within interdisciplinary teams to effectively address social and human problems pertinent to a wide range of professional practice areas. Advanced integrated practice provides an integrative approach to social work where students are prepared for both direct practice and administrative roles.

Graduates of the MSW program will be prepared to:

- Formulate and implement integrated service delivery models appropriate to advanced practice with diverse client populations at multi-system levels.
- Design and conduct brief and/or ongoing assessment and intervention methods consistent with integrated systems and context of practice.
- Construct an integrated, evidence-informed theoretical framework appropriate to the level and context of practice situations.
- Organize collaboration with other professions to coordinate intervention efforts suitable to the practice situation.
- Design and conduct collaborative, practice-based evaluation methods and apply findings to improve practice, policy, and/or service delivery effectiveness.

#### **d) Relationship of the Program to the Ethics & Values of the Profession**

The School of Social Work (SSW) has the ultimate responsibility to students in making the field experience positive and fruitful, and in making final decisions regarding the field placement. The BSW and MSW Program Directors, Faculty Field Liaisons, Field Education Director, and field supervisors work together to implement the field learning process.

The purpose of field instruction, as an integral and equal part within the total curriculum, is to provide opportunities for students to apply the concepts and theories taught in the classroom to actual practice situations, incorporating the knowledge, values, and skills that they have studied in class in their work with actual clients, communities, and systems. Social Work program goals are incorporated into the field syllabi and related field curriculum documents with the purpose of guiding Field Instructors and students in accomplishing these goals within field experiences. As students apply themselves to practice behaviors with the guidance of experienced instructors, they gradually grow into professional practitioners. They gain a growing sense of professional competence and confidence and are able to integrate theory with practice.

The [NASW Code of Ethics](#) provides the ethical base for social work practice and, therefore, the student, the Field Instructor, and the Faculty Field Liaison are bound by the NASW Code of Ethics throughout the field placement process. The Learning Contracts for both Generalist and Advanced placements include an acknowledged statement, affirming that all parties signing the learning contract commit to adhering to the NASW Code of Ethics. The Memorandum of Affiliation Agreement between WVU/SSW and all field placement agencies also contains such a statement for all persons who hold an academic degree and/or license in social work. The Code of Ethics is discussed with students at orientation and is reviewed, discussed, and referenced within courses, and is available for free download on the internet. All placement team members are expected to have an accessible copy of the Code of Ethics for reference throughout the placement period.

#### **e) The School of Social Work Anti-Racism Statement**

The West Virginia University School of Social Work believes Black lives matter and we are committed to anti-racism, equity, and racial justice. We denounce white supremacy, systemic and anti-Black racism, oppression, and bigotry in any form. We are bound to our core value of social justice and answer the call to challenge societal injustices. As leaders in social work at West Virginia's flagship university, we pledge to align our work with our professional values and actively engage in anti-racist efforts.

We understand that a commitment to anti-racism is not for one moment in time, but rather, a journey across our individual and collective lifespans. A commitment to anti-racism requires listening, learning, reflection, discomfort, dialogue, and action.

To ensure our own professional integrity, we must look inward and earnestly pursue our own transformation. We will conduct a thorough examination of our school's policies, curriculum and processes, as well as critical assessments of our own biases and prejudices as faculty and staff. With our findings, we will create actionable tasks and engage in change efforts at School and individual levels that bring about equity and racial justice.

To expand this essential dialogue, we are dedicated to creating brave spaces that challenge our individual and collective biases and affirm the dignity and worth of each person—spaces where we can courageously speak, even when our voices shake, and where we can demonstrate our own

vulnerabilities as we work to empower others. We will share our determination to fight for racial equity and justice and invite our communities to join us.

As social work educators and advocates, we are determined to dismantle the racist structures and culture of white supremacy that pervades our institutions, communities, profession, and relationships.

Our priority areas of action include the following:

1. Consulting and collaborating with faculty and students to effectively engage in difficult conversations, and facilitating education on anti-racism, equity, justice, and white privilege and supremacy.
2. Organizing and promoting professional development activities for students, faculty, staff and practitioners, on topics such as the Black Lives Matter movement, systemic and anti-racism, white privilege and supremacy, criminal justice reform, and institutional change.
3. Identifying and sharing curricular resources to further and enhance educational content on anti-racism, white privilege and supremacy, equity, and justice.
4. Exploring and leveraging opportunities across the university and in our communities for interprofessional and interdisciplinary collaboration in research, educational programming, and social work practice centered in anti-racism, equity, and justice.
5. Cultivating an inclusive learning and work culture that recruits, supports, and retains diverse students, faculty, and staff.

#### **f) The School of Social Work Land Acknowledgement Statement**

A land acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationships that exist between Indigenous peoples and their ancestral territories from time immemorial. WVU, with its statewide institutional presence, resides on land that includes ancestral territories of the Shawnee, Lenape (or Delaware), Cherokee, Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois – the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, Tuscarora), and other Indigenous peoples. In acknowledging this, we recognize and appreciate those Indigenous nations whose territories we are living on and working in. We also recognize that colonialism is a current ongoing process, and as social workers seeking social, economic, and environmental justice, we need to be mindful of our present participation in this process. We thank those in the WVU Native American Studies Program for their leadership and consultation in the creation of this statement.

### **III. Field Instruction**

#### **a) Course Descriptions & Requirements**

##### **BSW & MSW Foundation-Generalist Field Experience**

During the community-based Foundation-Generalist field placement and field experience course, students learn to apply generalist engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills. They develop an understanding of responding to social and human problems within a context of social work values and ethics, social justice, and affirmation of the human rights of diverse groups of

people. Generalist practice in the West Virginia University School of Social Work Program serves diverse client systems using an ecosystems approach as an organizing theoretical base in understanding the rural and small-town environment. Client systems may be communities, organizations, groups, families or individuals. Generalist practice is flexible and creative enough to support problem interventions that draw upon strengths, capacities and resources to determine the practice approach.

### **BSW - SOWK 491 Requirements**

The BSW Professional Field Experience occurs during the student's final year of the undergraduate program and is a 400-hour Foundation-Generalist Placement. The Foundation-Generalist Field Experience for full-time students consists of 17-20 hours per week over approximately 24 weeks, for a total of 400 minimum hours, plus required attendance and participation in SOWK 491 professional field experience course.

In order to begin the Field Practicum (SOWK 491), BSW students must be in good academic standing and have successfully completed all degree requirements with a GPA of at least 2.0. While engaged in the field placement, students are enrolled in SOWK 491, Professional Field Experience. This course is graded Pass/Fail and involves 2 consecutive semesters. Failure of either semester may result in students needing to repeat their entire field experience.

*See appendix E for specific hour and week requirements.*

### **MSW – SOWK 581 Requirements**

Regular Standing students are those students whose undergraduate degree is not in Social Work, or whose undergraduate social work degree is more than 8 years old. Regular Standing students are required to complete 18 credit hours of Foundation Courses plus 6 credit hours of Foundation-Generalist Field Experience within the first year of the full-time program. Part-time students complete this field experience in their second year. Advanced standing students are not required to complete generalist courses or the Foundation-Generalist field experience. The Foundation-Generalist Field Experience for full-time students consists of 13-16 hours per week over approximately 24 weeks, for a total of 300 minimum hours, plus required attendance/participation in SOWK 581 professional field experience course. The Foundation-Generalist Field Experience for part-time students consists of 12-16 hours per week over approximately 24 weeks, for a total of 300 minimum hours, plus required attendance/participation in SOWK 581 professional field experience course. The Foundation-Generalist field placement experience is graded Pass/Fail and involves 2 consecutive semesters. Failure of either semester may result in students needing to repeat their entire field experience.

See appendix E for specific hour and week requirements.

The required courses that make up the Foundation Curriculum are paired with the foundation placement to allow the students to experience and reflect on generalist practice, as well as to articulate concepts and develop practice abilities that reflect our understanding of generalist practice. Students take the following courses either prior to or concurrently with the Foundation-Generalist Field Placement Experience:

- SOWK 530 Professional Identity and Social Justice
- SOWK 520 Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE)
- SOWK 540 Generalist Practice I: Individuals, Families, & Groups
- SOWK 513 Social Work Research Methods



- SOWK 531 Social Welfare Policy and Programs
- SOWK 541 Generalist Practice II: Rural Community and Organizational Practice

### **MSW Specialized-Advanced Field Experience – SOWK 682**

The School of Social Work MSW Program admits both Regular Standing and Advanced Standing students. Both Advanced Standing and Regular Standing students are required to complete the community-based Specialized-Advanced field placement and integrative field seminar course. The Specialized-Advanced placement builds on the foundation and advanced courses and the previous Foundation-Generalist field experience, whereby students learn to apply advanced integrated practice skills. They engage with interdisciplinary teams to address social and human problems within a context of social work values and ethics, social justice, and affirmation of the human rights of diverse groups of people. Advanced content in the placement focuses on knowledge and skills that are appropriate to specialized social work practice.

During the Specialized-Advanced placement experience, the student is expected to apply greater autonomy, differentiation, elaboration, and integration with respect to applying theory to practice than was expected in the generalist experience. Students in Specialized-Advanced placement are expected to concentrate more intensively and autonomously in levels of intervention which reflect elements of the advanced integrated curriculum, which includes work at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. The Specialized-Advanced placement is meant to prepare the student for entry into social work practice employment, and the expectation is that the student has already grasped the generalist concepts, theories and roles, as well as appropriate professional behavior.

#### **MSW – SOWK 682 Requirements**

The MSW Specialized-Advanced field experience occurs during all MSW students' final year of the program. The Specialized-Advanced field experience for full-time students consists of approximately 20-22 hours per week over approximately 30 weeks, for a total of 600 minimum hours, plus required attendance/participation in SOWK 682 professional field experience course. The Specialized-Advanced field experience for part-time students consists of approximately 15-18 hours per week over approximately 36 weeks, for a total of 600 minimum hours, plus required attendance/participation in SOWK 682 professional field experience course. In order to enter SOWK 682, students are required to have successfully completed their Foundation-Generalist field experience or have Advanced Standing status. Students enroll in 9 credit hours of SOWK 682 and must complete 600 hours. The Specialized-Advanced field experience is graded Pass/Fail and involves 2 or 3 consecutive semesters (depending on degree plan). Failure of one semester may result in students needing to repeat their entire field experience. See appendix E for specific hour and week requirements.

#### **b) Course Competencies (Student Learning Outcomes) & Practice Behaviors**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) specifies core competencies and associated measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of CSWE explains that the curriculum prepares its graduates for generalist and advanced practice through mastery of the core competencies augmented by knowledge and practice behaviors specific to a concentration.

## **BSW & MSW Foundation-Generalist Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students are able to:

- Identify and demonstrate skills in engaging, assessing, intervening, and evaluating complex practice situations.
- Demonstrate professional use of self and ability to utilize the NASW Code of Ethics when engaging with client or organizational systems.
- Compare micro, mezzo, and macro practice skills across service sectors and within interdisciplinary teams to effectively address social and human problems across a wide range of practice areas, with a particular emphasis on effective models of rural service delivery.
- Discuss relevant evidence-informed theories, methods, and policies with respect to practice intervention.
- Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice.

\*The learning outcomes for this course address CSWE EPAS 2022 Generalist Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9

## **MSW Specialized-Advanced Integrated Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students are able to:

- Analyze and synthesize skills in engaging, assessing, intervening, and evaluating complex practice situations.
- Demonstrate professional use of self and ability to utilize the NASW Code of Ethics when engaging with client or organizational systems.
- Integrate micro, mezzo, and macro practice skills across service sectors and within interdisciplinary teams to effectively address social and human problems across a wide range of practice areas, with a particular emphasis on effective models of rural service delivery.
- Incorporate relevant evidence-informed theories methods, and policies with respect to practice intervention
- Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

\*The learning outcomes for this course address CSWE EPAS 2022 specialized Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9

### **c) Integration of Field Course & Internship**

#### **Foundation-Generalist Field Course**

The BSW Field Experience, provides the student with opportunities and experiences which demonstrate the multiple and varied roles that social workers perform, as well as day-to-day operations within social, human and health care agencies, programs and organizations. Students engage in professional field experience course (SOWK 491) throughout both fall and spring semesters; course must be taken and passed sequentially, Fall and then Spring. The course is facilitated by the Faculty Field Liaison and focus on integration of classroom theory with practice experiences. Classroom hours are not included in the 400 required placement hours.

All MSW Foundation-Generalist placement students (both full and part-time) engage in a professional field experience course (SOWK 581) throughout 2 semesters; course must be taken and passed sequentially. Part-time students complete a summer/fall sequence and full-time students complete a fall/spring sequence. The course is facilitated by the Faculty Field Liaison and focuses on integration of classroom theory with practice experiences. These hours are not included in the 300 required placement hours.

The following discussion topics will be integrated into the course: Orientation to Field; Professional Identify as a Social Worker; Safety in the Field; Documentation; Use of Supervision; Roles and Boundaries; Social Work Ethics and Managing Ethical Dilemmas; Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice; Conflict Resolution; Policy Practice; Evaluating Outcomes in Practice; Ending with Clients and Transitioning to Specialized-Advanced field; and Evaluating Professional Growth.

### **Specialized-Advanced Integrated Field Course**

All students in Specialized-Advanced field engage in an advanced level professional field experience course (SOWK 682) during the field placement. Students enroll in SOWK 682 throughout 2 or 3 semesters; course must be taken and passed sequentially. Full-time students complete a fall/spring sequence and part-time students complete a fall/spring/summer sequence. These hours are not included in the 600 required placement hours.

The following discussion topics will be integrated into the course: Orientation to Specialized-Advanced field; Skills Practice; Advanced Integrated Practice at Micro, Mezzo and Macro levels; Role of Social Work in Interprofessional Practice; Advanced Documentation; Licensure; Transitioning to MSW-level Practice; and other Special Topics determined through class discussion.

### **d) Learning Contract**

The Learning Contract is a living document that reflects the evolving learning needs of the student, their placement agency and the social work profession, and gives students direction and guidance during field placements. This individualized plan incorporates diverse contributions from the Field Instructor, student, and Faculty Field Liaison. They are developed by the student, with input and guidance from Field supervisors during the first 3-4 weeks of placement, and set the stage for evaluating student abilities, performance, and progress. The Learning Contract also includes a small number of required activities for all students relating to competencies. Learning Contracts are developed and utilized for both Foundation-Generalist and Specialized-Advanced field experiences. All Learning Contract activities must include: 1) the student action, and 2) the way in which activity completion will be verified by their field supervisor.

Sample Learning activities can be found in appendix H and can be customized for specific placements. Students and field supervisors may also consider incorporating some remote activities into the learning contract in order to plan for potential times away from the site, a temporary field disruption and/or agency closures.

The example below includes both the **action** and the **verification aspect**.

Activity Example: I will **complete research focusing on expanding services to marginalized groups**, such as immigrants and refugees, and **provide a “report out” during a staff meeting** to share my findings.

### **Learning Contract Guidelines**

1. **Two (2) activity minimums:** For each practice behavior listed within a competency, students should include a minimum of two fulsome activities, reflecting both the activity and verification aspect.
2. **Required activities:** Students should add to areas that already include a SSW required activity to meet the two-activity minimum
3. **Personalize activities:** Students should develop activities using 1<sup>st</sup> person language and use “I will” action statements.
4. **Tailor to issue/agency:** Activities should be tailored to reflect the placement agency, service arena, and strategies in working with the agencies target populations. Sample activities and examples may be used to inspire activities. Generic/vague activities should be tailored by the student to their specific placement, population, and goals.
5. **Verification** – Students should include a variety of ways that their completion of learning activities can be verified. Reflecting on the question, “How will my supervisor know that I complete this?” is a good way to think about the verification aspect in each activity. Students must include a 2<sup>nd</sup> step that closes the loop on the activity for assessment purposes.

Ways to verify activity completion may include:

- Discussing activity in supervision.
  - Develop a written document based on conducted research/exploration, such as a report, fact sheet or proposal.
  - Developing a presentation and then sharing the presentation during supervision.
  - Develop and discuss a written reflection that documents your thoughts and observation, such as a process recording, critical case incident, or competency reflection.
  - Attendance and/or participation at a specific event.
6. **Evaluation:** Students may consider including a student evaluation activity that expands on their major accomplishments, what worked well during the experience, what could be improved upon, and recommendations for improvements to student and client experiences.

### **e) Agency Orientation**

The SSW encourages each placement site to provide an agency orientation for students completing their field education experiences at the agency. Orientation should include a tour of the agency and a way of providing organizational context, policies, procedures, etc. to help the student gain a greater understanding of the mission, services, and activities for which the agency is responsible. Orientation packets are encouraged to provide students with written documentation, policies, and relevant materials that the student can review and keep as reference materials over the course of the placement.

Appendix G provides resources and suggestions regarding orientation practices.

## **f) Student Roles and Responsibilities**

The student, with the support of the Faculty Field Liaison and Field supervisors, has the main responsibility for their own learning and is expected to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of the field instruction experience. During the field placement, the student is expected to maintain the same ethical standards and practices as professional staff.

Student specific requirements include the following:

- Attend required Field Education Briefing sessions for foundation and advanced placements and follow all field placement instructions in a timely fashion. This includes discussion with advisor of appropriate placement choices.
- Complete HIPAA training and certification annually, and upload HIPAA certificate for verification by field faculty liaison.
- Communicate with Field Instructor about any pertinent information that may affect the student's ability to learn, such as the student's learning style and any accommodation needs.
- Advocate for self in pursuit of learning. The student is responsible for the discussion with their Field Instructor and the initial drafting of the learning contract, so that it can be finalized for submission to their Faculty Field Liaisons by the specified due date.
- Adhere to the agreed upon items in the learning contract, including required reports, etc. The student is required to participate in conferences with the faculty field liaison during the placement.
- Clarify with the agency any expectations related to transportation of clients and insurance coverage for these purposes.
- Respect client/agency confidentiality and abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Engage in appropriate termination activities with clients and agency at any point placement ends.
- Use of Supervision: The student is expected to prepare for and participate in regular conferences with the Field Instructor, focusing on the student's learning and application of social work concepts. To foster the integration of class and field, the student is expected to share with the Field Instructor course materials and syllabi in addition to appropriate classroom discussions and experiences. The student uses this professional mentoring relationship as a constructive tool in their total educational program.
- The student should take responsibility for a clear understanding between the agency, the student, and the SSW about the student's use of agency material in the classroom.
- The student must take responsibility for becoming a part of the field instruction setting and participate as a responsible member of the staff. The student is expected to be punctual and accountable for their time. A planned weekly time schedule should be developed by the Field Instructor with the student. Students are responsible for completing time reports that document the student's activities and hours in field placements.
- Attendance at meetings and conferences in the agency and community are encouraged. The student should take advantage of appropriate opportunities to broaden the learning experience within the field instruction placement consistent with educational and service obligations.

## **g) Field Instructor & Site Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities**

The SSW is proud and excited to work with many individuals to support students and provide educational instruction as part of their service to the community and profession of social work. The term “Field Supervisors” is used throughout this manual in reference to each of the roles and individuals working to supervise, instruct, mentor, and guide social work students in their field experiences. Field supervisors include 1) Placement Site Field Instructors with BSW/MSW credentialing and the required years of post-BSW/MSW experience that are leaders within the agencies where students are hosted, 2) External Field Instructors with BSW/MSW credentialing and the required years of post-BSW/MSW experience that are located outside of where the students spends the majority of their time, and 3) Site Supervisors that are usually onsite and work closely with students throughout their experiences but bring different educational backgrounds and skill sets. Each of these roles are important in providing exceptional field education, are appreciated, and included in student goal setting and evaluation.

### **Placement Site Field Instructor**

The process of field instruction is designed to foster the student's acquisition, application, and progressive development of professional knowledge and skills. The Field Instructor is a teacher and a role model and serves as the representative of the field placement site, regardless of whether the Field Instructor is on site, or off-site but within the same agency. To best support field supervisors, the SSW provides an online training that all supervisors are encouraged to participate in, as well as other opportunities for training and support, such as Lunch and Learn presentations and topic-based discussions.

Field Instructors (FI) take on significant professional educational responsibilities that include the following:

- Working with students to develop and implement the learning contract for field instruction.
- Providing appropriate learning experiences to enable the student to develop and integrate theoretical concepts with practice skills.
- Developing a placement schedule with the student and holding them accountable for meeting placement expectations.
- Providing an hour-long supervisory session each week in addition to informal interaction throughout the week.
- Providing initial and continuing assessment of the student's level of knowledge, educational needs and interest, in cooperation with the faculty liaison.

Importantly, Field Instructors complete a mid-term and final evaluation of the student's progress using the field assessment form provided by the SSW and discuss with the Faculty Field Liaison any serious problems that may arise. They assist the SSW in periodic evaluations of the appropriateness of the setting for providing sound educational learning/practice experiences for placement student, while also attending and participating in necessary meetings and training opportunities offered by the SSW.

BSW Field Instructors must bring the following experience and credentials: A bachelor's level social work degree from an accredited Social Work Program and a minimum of 2 years post bachelor's degree social work-related work experience, or a graduate level social work degree from an

accredited Social Work Program and a minimum of 2 years post master's degree social work-related work experience.

MSW Field Instructors must bring the following experience and credentials: A graduate level social work degree from an accredited Social Work Program and a minimum of 2 years post master's degree social work-related work experience.

### **Off-site/External Field Instructors**

Situations may arise where there may not be an individual within the specific program, department, or agency that could serve as the Placement Site Field Instructor. In those instances, the SSW will engage an Off-site/External Field Instructor that meets the standard criteria to serve as a Field Instructor. All parties, including the agency/program administrator, must agree to this arrangement. To best support supervisors, the SSW offers online training that all supervisors are encouraged to participate in, as well as other opportunities for training and support, such as Lunch and Learn presentations and topic-based discussions.

The supervisory requirements and frequency schedule for Off-site/External Field Instructor are the same as for traditional Field Instructors. However, dependent upon the geographic distance and other related issues, weekly supervisory sessions may be conducted virtually (video conference, zoom, etc.). Due to logistical needs, face-to-face supervision sessions may be conducted at an appropriate alternative site, but never in either parties' home.

*\*To decrease the potential for dual relationships and/or conflicts of interest as per the NASW Code of Ethics, the Faculty Field Liaison should not also serve as a Field Instructor for the same student within the same placement setting, and/or in the same agency in which s/he is employed (Adjunct Liaisons). The utilization of a Site Supervisor does not nullify this policy.*

### **Site Supervisor**

In situations where an appropriate placement agency does not have an individual who meets the requirements to be an approved Field Instructor on site, the SSW allows for an on-site, professional staff person to serve in the role of Site Supervisor and provide additional supervision for the BSW or MSW student placement. The Site Supervisor must be knowledgeable about the agency setting, its programs, policies, intervention strategies and tactics; social work roles and functions; and must be willing to undertake the teaching role.

Assignment of a Site Supervisor for any social work student does not preclude the need for an approved and trained BSW or MSW level Field Instructor to provide consistent, weekly supervision to students. The policies for selection of Field Instructors and Site Supervisors serve to set the minimum expectations for supervision of students in the agency and thus strengthen the SSW's ability to maintain a high-quality educational experience for students. To be accepted as a Site Supervisor for a BSW or MSW student, an individual must be an employee who has the support of the agency to take on this role and be committed to providing a robust learning experience for the student.

## **Dual Relationships in Field Supervision**

Placements where a student's field supervisor is also their academic advisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or a current instructor are generally avoided. If such a dual relationship is considered, the following guidelines apply:

- In accordance with the NASW COE, supervisors must set clear boundaries and discuss potential risks.
- Students should consider whether to accept the placement and consult with the field office about potential risks.
- Strategies to navigate dual relationships may include change of academic advisor, change of faculty field liaison, enrollment in an alternate course section, or ensuring clear roles and boundaries are in place.

## **h) SSW Field Team and Faculty Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Field Education Director**

The Field Education Director (FED) serves as the focal point for the development of a field instruction program that is educationally based on identified curricular objectives and includes both administrative and curricular responsibilities. In fulfilling this role, the FED establishes effective relationships with the SSW Director, MSW and BSW Program Directors, field team, faculty, field supervisors, practitioners, students, and support staff.

Using the policies established by the faculty of the School, the FED is responsible for the following items:

- Develops and oversees the implementation of appropriate policies and procedures for all aspects of Field Education.
- Evaluates both potential and existing placement sites and Field Instructors in consultation with Faculty Field Liaisons, other key stakeholders, and using relevant evaluation data.
- Advocates for the quality of the field education experience to all relevant groups and individuals.
- Serves as a resource for solving problems that may interfere with successful completion of field education.
- Maintains on-going ties with field community and develops avenues for communication between field community and academic faculty.

### **MSW Online Field Coordinator**

The MSW Online Field Coordinator facilitates the placement process for students in the MSW online program, working under the direction of the FED and collaborating with both the field team and the online MSW team.

The MSW Online Field Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- Communicating directly with students in the MSW online program to establish and maintain quality field placements.
- Vetting agencies for high quality placements and establishing formal partnerships.



- Serving as a liaison between the MSW online faculty team and the field team to ensure that field policies and practices work in synchrony with the online program.
- Developing and fostering relationships with potential field sites in geographic locations aligned with student enrollment.
- Maintaining and updating the online field management system.

### **Field Coordinator**

The Field Coordinator works directly with students and agencies to facilitate the placement process under the guidance and direction of the Field Education Director.

The Field Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- Coordinating and assisting in the field education match process for students and agencies.
- Maintaining and updating the online field management system.
- Assisting the FED with the overall coordination of the field education program for BSW and on-campus MSW students.
- Serving as a liaison between the BSW Committee and the field team to ensure that field policies and practices work in synchrony with the BSW program.

### **Faculty Field Liaison**

The faculty member who serves as Faculty Field Liaison (FFL) carries the major responsibility for placement agency contact regarding the design, implementation, and evaluation of the student's field education and field placement. Agency visits, typically initiated by the FFL, include a monitoring and coordinating function designed to assure that social work learning opportunities are made available.

The FFL is expected to make a minimum of one site visit during the placement period. For Specialized-Advanced placements, a second visit may be necessitated if there are any substantial changes to the placement or supervision, any concerns identified during the first site visit, or for students who's midterm field assessment averages less than 2.5. Additional visits may be made at any time a need is identified by any participant. FFL may conduct site visits virtually or in person.

While engaging in this role, the FFL is responsible for developing and maintaining collaborative relationships between agencies and the SSW by engaging in the following:

- Clarifying the educational and administrative expectations of the student, agency and school.
- Maintaining consultative and evaluative communication with the agency and students.
- Facilitating and assisting in the integration of classroom material and practice experience.
- Clarifying and reinforcing the educational role of the Field Instructor.

The FFL also participates with the Field supervisors and student in the evaluation of student performance, awards the final field instruction grade, and serves as the first point of contact in situations where problems occur in field learning.

Both BSW and MSW Faculty Field Liaisons bring the following experience and credentials: A graduate level social work degree from an accredited Social Work Program; A minimum of 2 years post master's degree social work-related work experience; and experience serving as a School Faculty Member, Field Instructor or Adjunct Instructor.

## i) Field Fee

The SSW will assess a flat \$160 field fee for each semester a student is registered in a field course (SOWK 491/581/682) to support field education expenses. Field fees are automatically applied to a student's university account and may not be waived.

Such expenses include, but are not limited to the following activities:

- Field orientation training for field instructors and students.
- Field faculty travel for placement site cultivation and institutional relationship building.
- Field faculty travel for agency-based visits with students and field instructors for evaluation of student performance.
- Educational materials.
- Field instructor cultivation, relationship building and workshop/training sessions.
- Field management technology access and utilization for students, field supervisors, and SSW faculty and staff.
- Field faculty meetings with other field faculty across the region for sharing information, coordinating placements, problem-solving, and maintaining currency with field instruction best practices.
- CSWE accreditation reaffirmation processes, compliance, and data collection.

## j) Tevera Field Management System

The Tevera online field management system is used by students, field supervisors, and faculty field liaisons for all timekeeping and documentation management in field education. Students are provided lifetime user license by the SSW and will use this system to search for and secure their placement, develop their Learning Contracts, record their field hours, and complete field assessment processes.

Each user has a specific role and set of privileges, and the system meets all WVU, HIPAA and FERPA data security standards. Students and WVU faculty use their WVU Mix email accounts to access Tevera, while field supervisors are set up in the system and associated with their placement agency. Tevera also integrates with eCampus and students can access it through their course shell while enrolled in field courses.

Tevera capabilities include the following:

- **Students** – Identify potential placement sites; enter time; manage all placement-related documents and deliverables; and lifetime access for licensing support and clinical supervision tracking
- **Field Instructors/Site Supervisors** – Student supervision dashboard; review/collaborate/approve placement-related documents and deliverables; and receive WVU -SSW updates
- **Faculty Field Liaisons** – Assignment tracking and managing student deliverables, documents, hours, etc.
- **Field Office** – Agency database, manage field supervisors, and ensure successful student progress.
- **SSW faculty** – Tracking learning outcomes and assessment data.

Support information and video tutorials for field processes and users can be found in the Support section of the [Tevera Knowledge Hub](#). Student, faculty and field supervisor users should submit service

tickets to Tevera Support should they experience any technical issues or challenges.

## IV. Field Instruction Policies and Procedures

### a) Field Site Identification and Approval Process

In accordance with the Council of Social Work Education accreditation standards, the following field site identification and approval process has been implemented.

#### Field Site Identification Process

To maintain a robust database of student placement opportunities, the field team engages in ongoing outreach to potential field sites. Upon connection with potential field sites, a representative of the site is invited to complete an Agency Profile Form in order to be listed in the database for students to view.

#### Field Site Approval Process

The approval process takes place before a student placement is confirmed but often not until after a student interviews with a new placement site **and** is interested in moving forward towards confirming that placement.

The process of approving a new site is as follows:

1. The field team will review the site profile form and schedule a site meeting to review the appropriateness of fit with the WVU SSW field education program.
2. Once a site meeting is completed, an Agency Site Visit Summary is completed in Tevera by the field team member leading the site visit. If the field team agrees that the agency or program is appropriate as a social work field site, based on the robust learning opportunities anticipated for students, the agency is tagged for the appropriate placement levels in Tevera.
3. Once the agency has been deemed appropriate for student placements, and a student is identified for that placement, the Field Office facilitates with WVU's General Counsel the process of establishing a Memorandum of Affiliation (MOA) with the organization. In the event the agency is a WVU affiliate, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be established following the same process. *\*Please note that any and all changes in the MOA language by the field site, must be reviewed and approved by WVU's General Counsel's office, which could delay the approval process, and potentially the student's placement start date.*
4. Upon return of the MOA/MOU, signed by the Agency Director, the Field Office then obtains the appropriate signatures from WVU administrators, and then emails a copy of the MOA/MOU to the agency. A digital copy of the MOA/MOU is maintained with the agency's site profile in Tevera.

As per University policy and liability insurance guidelines, **no student may begin logging field placement hours until a fully-executed MOA or MOU is received by the SSW and the student is enrolled in the appropriate field course.**

## **b) Approval Criteria for Field Agencies**

In approving agencies as potential settings for field instruction, the SSW looks for evidence of commitment to social work principles and values, as well as a commitment by the setting to the learning needs of the student. The following criteria may be utilized in the approval process:

1. The agency accepts professional education for social work as part of the philosophy and practice of the agency and is willing to work collaboratively with the SSW to maximize the educational nature of the field placement.
2. The agency has qualified and available employees who are interested in providing field supervision and who meet the criteria and standards of the SSW. Agencies who do not have an eligible field instructor will be approved on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to specific student learning and supervision needs, as well as availability of external field instructors.
3. The agency is willing to accept the student as a learner and to provide appropriate learning experiences. Agency will maximize the student's opportunity to have assignments which include work with clients of different races, genders, ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, income levels, and physical/mental abilities.
4. The student is accepted as a participant in the overall agency program and activities as appropriate. A supportive learning environment would include opportunities to participate in staff meetings, interagency meetings, in-service training, and other opportunities for professional learning.
5. Students should be provided with the proper environment and equipment, such as phone, desk, and a private space for interviewing clients, office supplies, clerical services, etc. The student is reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of agency responsibilities, such as travel and special agency activities.
6. The agency must agree to treat all information, including evaluations of students, as confidential. According to the provision of the Buckley Amendment to the 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the student must give written permission for the SSW or agency to release data concerning their attendance history or performance record.
7. The agency must be willing to allow students to use case records and other appropriate material, with confidentiality protected, in classroom discussions and assignments.
8. The agency must be willing to support the field supervisor by allowing time to plan the student's program, prepare for and hold supervisory conferences, and generally supervise the student's field placement progress.

Agencies that may be excluded from hosting students and/or partnership consideration include the following:

1. Agencies owned and/or operated by a student's relatives, either by birth or marriage, and creating a conflict of interest for the potentially hosted student
2. Agencies whose sole purpose is for the employment and coordination of independent contractors for time-limited services
3. Student's privately-owned businesses and/or consulting practices
4. Agencies whose missions and/or practices are in conflict with NASW Code of Ethics.

### c) Approval Criteria for Agency Field Instructors

The Council on Social Work Education requires either a BSW or MSW from a CSWE-accredited social work program and two years of post-social work degree experience in social work to serve as a Field Instructor for BSW students, and an MSW from a CSWE-accredited social work program and two years of post-social work degree experience in social work to serve as a Field Instructor MSW students (See EPAS B3.3.6 and M3.3.6). Individuals meeting the minimum CSWE requirements for BSW and/or MSW supervision are considered for Field Instructor roles with the SSW.

Individuals interested in supervising students, as either a Field Instructor or Site Supervisor, and providing supervision to social work students during field education experiences will complete a Field Instructor Profile form. Additionally, they will meet with a representative of the Field Office to discuss their interest in becoming a Field supervisor and will be oriented to the SSW field practices. Field Instructor profiles are maintained electronically as part of the individual's user profile in Tevera.

### d) Field Placement Schedules

Field Instructors and supervisors are expected to establish a weekly schedule with students and make clear to students what the expectations of the agency are regarding hours, taking into account the student's class schedule and other responsibilities. Regular business hours during the Monday through Friday work week are encouraged for placements due to increased agency, client, Field Instructor faculty, and community engagement during this time period. Self-directed and remote activities may be completed at times most convenient to students and are not restricted to regular business hours.

A student's schedule may reflect variations in relation to assignments, such as fulfilling evening, weekend or on-call responsibilities. It is important that there is a regular overlap of time when Field supervisors and students are working together. Appropriate access to field supervision must be available so that the Field supervisors may directly observe the work of the student and provide feedback and direction. If and when weekend or evening hours are part of the student's schedule, it is also important that the experience offers rich experiences that are professionally appropriate to the student's learning needs.

The Field Instructor and the student may jointly modify the placement schedule to accommodate for University and agency sanctioned holidays or recesses. Student schedules may also be adjusted to compensate for overtime hours and/or hour shortages caused by illness or other approved absences, as well as ramping up and winding down at the start and end of semesters, as long as the minimum field experience requirements of hours and tasks are met. Students should discuss scheduling requests with the Field Instructor in advance when possible, with **specific permission for extended absences of more than one week discussed and requested from the Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison.**

### e) Field Instructor Training

To best support field supervisors, the SSW provides an online field instructor training that all supervisors are encouraged to complete as part of their onboarding. This training is offered virtually at least one time per semester and is approved for 1 hour of continuing education (CE) in West Virginia. The training is also posted online and may be viewed at any time, however only the live

presentations are approved for continuing education. The field instructor training covers the following content areas: Placement process and overview of field education; agency orientation components, supervision best practices; learning contract development and evaluation completion, and incorporating the Code of Ethics into supervision.

The SSW works to offer other no cost continuing education opportunities to Field Instructors as a gesture of appreciation for the important service they are providing to students, the SSW, and the greater social work community. The Field Education Handbook, training information, and timeline information is shared with field supervisors as part of their onboarding. Supervisors are encouraged to review the Field Handbook with their students.

## V. Field Education Placement Process

For both Foundation-Generalist and Specialized-Advanced placement processes, students are encouraged to use the listing of field sites in Tevera as a starting place to explore field experience settings that reflect their practice, population, and learning interests. Students may recommend or suggest sites that are not currently listed, with the understanding that any new site must complete the standard application and review process. Students may not finalize their placements without involvement and approval from the field office. This is to provide students a placement where the sites and Field Instructor have committed to the expectations and standards described in this manual. **Students in the Morgantown region should only initiate contact with potential field settings regarding placement after consulting with the Field Office.**

### a) On-Campus Foundation-Generalist Placement Process

A thoughtful “matching” process is used by the field office to refer both BSW and MSW students to their Foundation-Generalist placement sites. This process enables the field office to be responsive to students with specific interests and needs, and to also consider the needs of the student cohort. This incorporates the Field Team and SSW faculty’s community knowledge in contributing to the experiences available to students. Students engaged in this process are only “matched” to one agency at a time.

**Step 1:** Approximately 3-6 months prior to the established placement start timeframe, students are required to **attend a Field Education Briefing session** to acquaint them with the matching process for field placement. During this session, the variables used in the matching process, which include the educational objectives of the program, the student's learning needs, the opportunities available at the agency (including the evaluation of employer-based proposals), and any specific issues related to location or special needs, are thoroughly discussed. Students are also provided with further details on placement options to assist them in identifying their preferred placement sites.

**Step 2:** Students **complete the Student Field Placement Application** in Tevera. This application provides students with the opportunity to describe their background, experience, and learning goals, and takes into consideration their personal concerns and needs during the referral process. Students will indicate the client populations, practice settings, and practice activities that they are most interested in engaging. Students may also indicate their preferred placement agencies and geographic locations, including potential new placement sites, and must submit an up-to-date resume for review. Students are encouraged to work with [Eberly Career Services](#) for resume support.

**Step 3:** Students completing a generalist field placement are required to schedule and **attend a field consult**. The field consult is a twenty to thirty-minute session with the student and a member of the field team to discuss the student's interests, needs, and potential matches with agencies. The consult also allows an opportunity for the field office to discuss any student questions or specific circumstances.

If the student is proposing an **employer-based placement**, they will indicate this preference as part of their application. The Field Office will discuss the employer-based plan with the student to determine if it meets the SSW's policy and consider how it will impact student's learning and educational goals.

**Step 4:** After the student has completed their field application and participated in a field consult, the **Field Office begins the matching process**. Students will be paired with the best site available, based on site and supervisor availability, student interests, limitations, such as transportation access, and the perspectives of the field team regarding the agency and student fit. Students are informed of the agency and site representative they are to contact and with whom they should arrange an interview.

**Step 5:** After receiving the match information, the **student contacts the agency to schedule and conduct an interview**. During the interview, both student and potential field supervisor will assess the appropriateness of this placement. Agencies have the option of declining the placement if it is not a good match for either Field Instructor or student.

**Step 6:** After the interview, the students **complete an Interview Feedback Form** to share the interview experience and if they are interested in moving forward to secure the placement. The Field Office will review the feedback and either 1) approve the student moving forward to secure the placement or 2) re-match the student to another agency for a second round of interviewing.

**Step 7:** Once a placement is approved following the interview feedback, the **Field office will send the Placement Confirmation Letter to the agency** to indicate agreement/disagreement to the placement. Once this form has been signed in the Tevera system, the placement is confirmed.

If the student is establishing an employer-based placement, they will submit a complete and fully signed **Employer-Based Field Placement Proposal** (see appendix F) for review by the Field Office. Upon approval the Employer-Based Proposal will be uploaded in Tevera as part of the student's documents.

## **b) On-campus Specialized-Advanced Field Placement Process**

More independent than the Foundation-Generalist process, **the Specialized-Advanced placement process is driven by the student** and supported by the field office. This enables the student to exercise independence and autonomy as they work to secure their Specialized-Advanced placement, while also incorporating the Field Office's knowledge and experiences with community agencies.

**Step 1:** Approximately 3-6 months prior to the established placement start timeframe, students are required to **attend a Field Education Briefing session** to acquaint them with the process for Specialized-Advanced field placements. During this session, the variables involved in the process, which include the educational objectives of the program, the student's learning needs, the opportunities available at the agency (including the evaluation of employer-based proposals), and any specific issues related to location

or special needs, are thoroughly discussed. Students are also provided with further details on placement options to assist them in identifying their preferred placement sites.

**Step 2:** Students **complete the Student Field Placement Application** in Tevera. This application provides students with the opportunity to describe their background, experience, and learning goals, and takes into consideration their personal concerns and needs during the placement process. Students will indicate the client populations, practice settings, and practice activities that they are most interested in engaging. Students will also indicate their site preferences. Students must submit an up-to-date resume for review. Students are encouraged to work with [Eberly Career Services](#) for resume support.

If the student is proposing an **employer-based placement, they will indicate this preference** as part of their application. The Field Office will discuss the employer-based plan with the student to determine if it meets the SSW's policy and consider how it will impact student's learning and educational goals. **All students considering employer-based placements are required to discuss with the field team.**

**Step 3:** Students may schedule a field consult with the Field office to discuss the agencies they are planning to pursue and their interests. The **field office will review the students' preferences and may provide additional feedback regarding** site and supervisor availability, student interests, limitations, and the perspectives of the field team regarding the agency and student fit. Students are affirmed of the agency and site representatives to contact and with whom they should arrange an interview. Once the Field Office approves the application, the student may begin contacting and pursuing their preferred agencies for interviewing.

**Step 4: Student contacts the agency to schedule and conduct interviews.** Students are encouraged to interview with more than one agency to assess and compare fit. During interviews, both student and potential Field Instructor will assess the appropriateness of this placement. Both have the option of declining the placement if it is not a good match for either.

**Step 5:** After interviewing, students **provide Interview Feedback** for each interview completed to share their impressions and indicate if they are interested in moving forward to secure the placement. The Field Office will review the interview feedback forms.

**Step 6:** If the placement is approved following the interview feedback, the **Field office will send the Placement Confirmation Letter** to the agency to indicate agreement/disagreement to the placement. Once this form has been signed in the Tevera system, the placement is confirmed.

\*Students participating in specific programs, such as RIBHT or Title IV-E, may be required by their program to consult with their academic advisor prior to finalizing their field placement site, and discuss their career goals, learning needs, and how the selected placement site will best facilitate this learning.

### **c) Online Placement Process (Foundation-Generalist and Specialized-Advanced)**

Students in the online program who live outside of the Morgantown region will work collaboratively with the field team to identify appropriate placement sites. This process recognizes the students' knowledge and connections within their own communities. Online students who reside in the Morgantown region will still work collaboratively with the field team, but their placement process will more closely match the



on-campus placement process.

**Step 1:** Approximately 6 months prior to the established placement start timeframe, students are required to **attend a Field Education Briefing session** to acquaint them with the field placement process. During this session, the variables involved in the process, which include the educational objectives of the program, the student's learning needs, the opportunities available at the agency (including the evaluation of employer-based proposals), and any specific issues related to location or special needs, are thoroughly discussed. Students are also provided with further details on placement options to assist them in identifying their preferred placement sites.

**Step 2:** Students **complete the Student Field Placement Application** in Tevera. This application provides students with the opportunity to describe their background, experience, and learning goals, and takes into consideration their personal concerns and needs during the placement process. Students will indicate the client populations, practice settings, and practice activities that they are most interested in engaging. Students may also indicate their preferred placement agencies and geographic locations, including potential new placement sites, and must submit an up-to-date resume for review. Students are encouraged to work with [Eberly Career Services](#) for resume support.

**Step 3:** Students completing a generalist field placement are required to schedule and **attend a field consult**. The field consult is a twenty to thirty-minute session with the student and a member of the field team to discuss the student's interests, needs and ideas about potential placement sites. The consult also allows an opportunity for the field office to discuss any student questions or specific needs. Students completing an advanced placement are encouraged but not required to attend a field consult.

If the student is proposing an **employer-based placement**, they will indicate this preference as part of their application. The Field Office will discuss the employer-based plan with the student to determine if it meets the SSW's policy and consider how it will impact student's learning and educational goals. **All students considering employer-based placements are required to discuss with the field team.**

**Step 4:** After the student has completed their field application and participated in a field consult, the student will work towards finding a placement site. With direction from the field office, the **student will reach out to potential sites** and work towards scheduling interviews. Upon finding a potential match, student will provide the field office with contact information for a representative of the site. The Field Office will work through the approval process with the site.

**Step 5:** After the student completes an interview, they **complete an Interview Feedback Form** to share the interview experience and if they are interested in moving forward to secure the placement. The Field Office will review the feedback. Upon a positive confirmation, the Field Office will ensure agency can be approved as a site and maintain communication with student through this process.

**Step 6:** When the agency is approved, the **Field office will send the Placement Confirmation Letter to the agency** to indicate agreement/disagreement to the placement. Once this form has been signed in the Tevera system, the placement is confirmed.

If the student is establishing an employer-based placement, they will submit a complete and

fully signed **Employer-Based Field Placement Proposal** (see appendix F) for review by the Field Office. Upon approval the Employer-Based Proposal will be uploaded in Tevera as part of the student's documents.

#### **d) Other Placement Policies & Considerations**

**Suggesting a New Site:** After exploration of approved agencies, the student may contact the Field Office to discuss the possibility of cultivating a new site. The Field office will evaluate the request and decide whether to pursue approval based on the same criteria used to evaluate other requests for affiliation, which also includes applicability for future students.

**Unable to Secure Placement:**

Students who are not successful in securing a field placement by the placement confirmation deadline will have a Student Success meeting with their academic advisor, the Field Coordinator, and/or the FED to discuss options for moving forward. Reasons for not securing a placement, which may be due to interviewing skills, communication and follow-up skills, or other challenges will be assessed. Students may be referred to resources such as career services for interview support. Students will not be permitted to continue in a field experience course (SOWK 491, 581, or 682) past the add/drop date without a finalized field placement. Failure to finalize a field placement may result in an academic review.

**Opportunities Lacking Traditional Supervision:** For both MSW and BSW students, and in instances in which field credit is provided for student activities but there is no field instructor with a CSWE-accredited social work degree or the required experience, the Field Office will assess if there are alternative methods for reinforcing the social work perspective, such as with an external field instructor.

#### **e) Students with Disabilities and/or Special Needs**

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. WVU does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. The field education experience concurs with West Virginia University's commitment and expects to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect. Any suggestions as to how to further such an environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Students will indicate special needs or disability accommodations in their Student Field Education Application. This provides the Field team with additional details for consideration during the match and placement approval process and greater insight for successful field experiences.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in field placement and/or field courses, please make appropriate arrangements with [WVU Office of Student Accommodations](#) (OSA). If accommodations are necessary for a particular class, it is the student's responsibility to contact OSA to register and make appropriate arrangements.

OSA will contact appropriate instructors and inform them of the agreed upon accommodations. It is the instructor's responsibility to provide students with all necessary accommodations as outlined by

OSA. In the absence of such documentation, instructors are not responsible for providing accommodations.

WVU recognizes the diversity of its students, many of whom must be absent from class to participate in days of special concern. Students must notify their instructors prior to the event regarding religious observances that will affect their attendance. Further, students must abide by the attendance policy of their instructors as stated in their syllabi. Faculty will make reasonable accommodation for assignments that a student misses as a result of religious observance.

## **f) Employment-Based Field Placement**

The SSW makes available the option of field placement where students are employed, with particular attention paid to the student's learning opportunities. For maximum educational growth, it is important that students be exposed to a range and diversity of practice experiences to support their professional development process. Proposals for Foundation-Generalist or Specialized-Advanced placements in a student's place of employment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The agency and student must be able to create and support an educationally based field learning experience as defined below. Students will indicate their interest in exploring an Employer-Based Placement in Tevera as part of their Student Field Experience Application. After discussing with the field office, students will work with their employer to develop an Employer-Based Proposal that outlines how the student will meet the social work competencies and supervision requirements in their work setting. When this proposal is completed and approved by the student, employment supervisor, field instructor, and field office, it is uploaded into Tevera to be kept as part of the student's placement documentation.

The following policies regarding employer-based field placements are in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation Standards and are designed to help recognize the role transition that is expected of employees who are engaging in employer-based field experiences in these circumstances.

1. Proposed field instruction assignment must be appropriate to the level of education that the student is pursuing and meet curriculum requirements.
2. The agency employs qualified staff, meets the established criteria for affiliated agencies in the program, completes the Application and Review Process, and has, or agrees to enter into an Affiliation Agreement with the University.
3. An individual who meets the criteria to be an approved Field Instructor is available to supervise the placement activities. When possible, this person is not the student's current employment supervisor. In cases where the field instructor is also the employment supervisor, supervision for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment. If off-site, or from another program within the placement agency, the proposed placement Field Instructor must be approved by all parties involved in the placement. All persons who will be supervising the student's placement activities are strongly encouraged to complete the SSW field instructor training.
4. Student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward required field hours if the tasks have clear links to the social work competencies, including any competencies added by the program, and their related behaviors.
5. Students have a maximum hour per week limit, which is the same as the hour range for non employment based placements. *See appendix E for specific hour requirements*

6. The agency must provide written endorsement of the rationale of the student's proposal, and agreement with the SSW's goal of providing a professional educationally-based learning experience, rather than performing needed tasks for the agency. The student, their employer supervisor, the Field Instructor, and Field Office must all agree to the proposed arrangement and provide their signatures before the proposal will be accepted. See appendix F.
7. Site visits will be conducted between the employer, field instructor, and field team representative as part of the approval process. This provides an opportunity to discuss the dual roles of learner and employee and to establish communication expectations with the employment agency about any potential issues that could impact the student's learner role.

### **g) Enhanced Field Experiences**

As the SSW continues to strive for high quality and innovative field learning experiences, students have the opportunity to include various shorter-term experiences as part of their field learning. For brief opportunities that occur while students are in field placements, they are encouraged to speak with their field instructor about incorporating such opportunities into their field learning. This may include attending outside trainings, engaging in interprofessional workshops through the HSC, short term volunteer opportunities, or other appropriate activities.

Enhanced Field Experiences are opportunities for students to engage in a targeted activity that can enhance their social work competency either before they are in a field placement, or an opportunity to participate in a significant experience outside of the current field placement. Students may apply to count approved experiences towards a current or upcoming field placement as an Enhanced Field Experience. These opportunities provide students with new and non-traditional environments in which to develop social work competencies, while also providing an enhanced view of social work in action. Such experiences have included participating in a Mock Trial as an expert witness with the WVU School of Law or completion of the West Virginia Center on Budget & Policy Priorities' Summer Policy Institute.

Students interested in completing an Enhanced Field Experience must formally apply to the Field Office to engage in the activity by [completing this application](#). Students will describe the proposed field activity, agree to complete required competency-focused documentation, and follow the NASW Code of Ethics. The social work perspective is reinforced through competency-related reflection activities and dialogues in which the student documents their growth in one or many specific social work competencies. All experiences will be approved on a case by case basis by the field office. Students can complete a maximum of 10% of their field placement in an enhanced experience.

Students who are approved for an enhanced field experience will complete a short Competency Reflection Essay that summarizes how the experience aided in their social work competency development as a final assignment. Students will then be able to record their time in Tevera, which will contribute to the hour requirements of their upcoming Foundation-Generalist or Specialized-Advanced field experience.

### **h) Partially Paid Internships & Agency Stipends**

Depending on the field agency and their resources, students may receive financial support during their field placement in the form of a stipend or partial payment for their placement hours from the agency.

These funds are typically provided to support student transportation costs, meals, etc. A partially paid placement or stipend from the agency does not qualify as an employer-based placement and the arrangement is made between the student and agency, with the student bearing the responsibility to complete any and all tax-related documentation and verification. Although a stipend or partial payment does not need approval from the Field Office, students are encouraged to discuss the arrangement with the Field Office to ensure the student's academic and field requirements are prioritized.

### **i) Dual Degree Field Experiences**

The time frame, settings, and minimum requirements for field instruction for all students enrolled in dual degree programs, such as the JD/MSW, must conform to the standards of the SSW, as well as to the other program's standards.

Students who are in the **JD/MSW dual degree** program should consult with their academic advisor and begin planning for their field education requirements for both programs from the beginning. A student's plan must be approved by both programs.

Regular Standing students must complete the Foundation-Generalist (6 total credit hours) and Specialized-Advanced Field placement (9 credit hours) experiences for the Social Work Program and Advanced Standing students must complete only the Specialized-Advanced Field placement experience (9 credit hours). Students should consult with both their Social Work and Law Academic Advisors to discuss the appropriate registration process. Dual degree students should note that the Foundation-Generalist Placement and Advanced Integrated Field Placements may include some LAW content, but do not count toward the completion of Law requirements.

### **j) Required Field Hours**

#### **SOWK 491 – BSW - Professional Field Experience**

400 total hours

The BSW Professional Field Experience occurs during the student's final year of the undergraduate program and is a 400-hour Foundation-Generalist Placement. The BSW Field Experience consists of 17-20 hours per week over approximately 24 weeks, for a total of 400 minimum hours, plus required attendance and participation in professional field experience course. All students will receive additional, detailed information regarding field placement requirements during Field Education Briefings scheduled during the academic year.

#### **SOWK 581 – MSW - Foundation-Generalist Placement**

300 total hours

Foundation-Generalist field placement requires 300 hours for all students enrolled in the program, regardless of full-time or part time.

Full Time Program: Students will enroll in SOWK 581 for 3 credit hours in Fall, and for 3 credit hours in Spring of Year One. Utilizing a delayed placement model, students begin foundation field at mid-term of the first Fall semester in the program and complete the placement by the end of the Spring semester. Students are expected to complete approximately 13-16 hours per week for approximately

22-24 weeks to reach the required minimum of 300 placement hours. This placement occurs while students are enrolled in a full-time class schedule of four courses.

Part Time Program: Utilizing a delayed placement model, students begin their Foundation-Generalist field during the Summer semester of Year One and complete in Fall of Year Two. Students enroll in SOWK 581 for 3 credits in Summer and 3 credits in the Fall. Students are expected to complete approximately 12-16 hours per week for approximately 24 weeks to reach the required minimum of 300 placement hours. This model is utilized by students enrolled part-time in the SSW's on campus and online programs.

### **SOWK 682 – Specialized-Advanced Placement**

600 Total Hours

Specialized-Advanced field placement requires 600 hours for all students enrolled in the program, regardless of full-time or part time, or regular or advanced standing.

Full-Time Program: Students will enroll in SOWK 682 for 5 credits in Fall and 4 credits in Spring semester of Year Two. All students take the advanced research course (SOWK 616) during the Spring semester of Specialized-Advanced field. Students will be in their field placement between 20-22 hours per week, depending on the student's schedule and the needs of the agency. Student must maintain a consistent presence in the agency throughout the placement period. Full-time students are enrolled in the advanced field experience course (SOWK 682) throughout the fall and spring semesters.

Part-Time Program: Students will enroll in SOWK 682 for 3 credits in Fall, 3 credits in Spring, and 3 credits in Summer semester of Year Two (advanced standing) or Year Three (regular standing). All students take the advanced research course during the Spring semester of Specialized-Advanced field. Students will be in their field placement approximately 15-18 hours per week, depending on the student's schedule and the needs of the agency, and must maintain a consistent presence in the agency throughout the placement period. Termination of field placement occurs during the final summer semester. The timing of termination is based upon completion of required 600 field hours, including a minimum of 100 completed during the summer semester, as well as completion of timesheets, final evaluation, and discussion of termination with supervisors. This model is utilized by students enrolled part-time in the SSW's on campus and online programs.

Students may not finish their placements more than two weeks before the end of their planned semester unless approved by their Field supervisors, Faculty Field Liaison, and the Field Office due to extenuating circumstances.

### **k) Time Keeping & Time Report Approval**

Students enter their completed field hours in the appropriate activity area each day in Tevera, with reports generated monthly. Regular timekeeping enables the student to document completed field hours and weekly activities, and to ensure ongoing accountability.

Time reports are required for each monthly reporting period while a student is in field and are submitted to field supervisors each reporting period for final approval through Tevera. Field Instructors, and Site Supervisor where applicable, are required to approve all time reports. Faculty

Field Liaisons provide final approval of completed field hours. Time reports are approved in the following order: #1) Site Supervisors (if applicable), #2) Field Instructors, and #3) Faculty Field Liaisons.

Students submit completed Monthly Time Reports by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each following month for the field hours completed during the prior month. For example, field hours completed during the month of August would need to be submitted by the student to their field supervisors by September 5<sup>th</sup>.

## VI. Evaluation Process

Evaluation of the student's performance in the placement agency by the Field Instructor is an on-going process through which the student receives continual assessment of their performance. Formal evaluations of the student's performance occur at mid-point and conclusion of each placement. During the Foundation-Generalist and Specialized-Advanced placements, both the student and the Field Instructor complete written evaluations at mid-term and one to two weeks prior to the end of the placement. All evaluation documentation is completed within Tevera.

It is imperative that the Field Instructor notifies the Faculty Field Liaison by the mid-point of the placement if there is any indication that the student's performance is less than satisfactory. In most instances where performance has been marginal, it is expected that discussions between Faculty Field Liaison, Field Instructor (and Site Supervisor if applicable), and student will have occurred before the formal evaluation.

During any evaluative process, students are expected to participate actively in the discussion. Should disagreements occur, the student has the right to submit a written appeal, to be attached to the Field Instructor's evaluation and included in the student's user profile.

### a) Evaluating Student Performance

Evaluation of student performance is integral to the instructional and supervisory process. To alleviate student anxiety, it is beneficial to discuss the evaluation conference and expectations. Close supervision ensures accurate performance evaluation, but students should also learn to self-assess their growth, strengths, and areas for improvement.

Honest and balanced feedback is crucial for professional development. Field supervisors should provide candid, objective feedback during site visits, including positive comments and constructive critique. The Pass/Fail grading system encourages open discussion of student performance and addresses elements not easily translated into letter grades.

Before submitting the evaluation to the Faculty Field Liaison, the Field Instructor and Site Supervisor (if applicable) sign the evaluation. The Faculty Field Liaison then reviews the evaluation and assigns a pass or fail grade. Students have the right to appeal the final grade as per WVU's Student Conduct Code.

**Midterm Field Assessment Criteria:** Students are expected to demonstrate significant progress towards competency by the midpoint of their field placement. It is to be expected that some competencies are harder to master and that students will progress at different rates on each competency. In order to demonstrate that students are progressing towards competency, midterm field assessments ratings

should average at 2.5 or higher. Midterm assessments averaging less than a 2.5 average may indicate that a student is not making satisfactory progress and will require further discussion between Field Instructor and Field Faculty Liaison; this may result in a non-passing grade.

**Final Field Assessment Criteria:** Students are expected to demonstrate competency in all 9 competencies and all practice behaviors by the culmination of their field placement. In order to demonstrate competency and earn a passing grade, students must achieve a minimum rating of '3' (Developing Competency with Assistance – Student demonstrates inconsistent competency with this behavior and thus requires assistance and/or coaching.) in each practice behavior.

## **b) Grading Policy**

Because performance in field instruction is a critical indicator of the student's readiness to assume professional responsibilities, and field instruction is a major formal requirement, SSW faculty will only grant academic credit to students whose course work meets minimum acceptability standards. Students must earn a Pass/Satisfactory grade for both Foundation-Generalist and Specialized-Advanced placements in field instruction in order to complete candidacy for the Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Social Work degrees, respectively.

Field Education is graded on a pass/fail basis. Students must achieve passing ratings on field evaluations and must demonstrate satisfactory participation in the field experience courses. Attendance of field seminar courses is part of professionalism and regular attendance and participation is expected. If a student cannot attend/participate in a scheduled seminar, they must work out an alternate way to make up the session that is acceptable to the individual instructor. Online students will complete field experience course content in asynchronous course modules.

To earn a passing grade in a Field Experience courses, students must have done the following:

- 1) Completed the assigned field Learning Contract.
- 2) Completed the required field hours for the appropriate section, either SOWK 491, SOWK 581 or SOWK 682.
- 3) Completed/attended all field experience course assignments, earning a minimum of 80% of course points.
- 4) Completed and submitted the assigned Time Reports.
- 5) Achieved satisfactory ratings on Field Assessments.

### **Field Experience Course Expectations**

Course participation expectations include the following:

- Participation in discussions and exercises.
- Timely completion of all assignments.
- Being prepared for discussion of assigned weekly topics, which includes bringing examples from field placement to facilitate discussion.
- Responding to questions posed during sessions.
- Asking relevant questions.
- Being a respectful listener when others are speaking.
- Being a respectful user of technology and adhering to technology policies.



- Using respectful language appropriate to a professional academic setting.
- Respectfully presenting alternative views to those raised by class readings, other students, or the professor.
- Making comments that encourage other speakers.
- Offering comments that clarify or summarize ongoing class discussion.
- Making contributions which demonstrate connections you discover between material in field, courses and other experiences you have encountered.

### **c) Student Site Visits**

While students are completing their field education experience, Faculty Field Liaisons will complete at least one site visit with the student and their field supervisors. This is an opportunity to discuss the student's comfort in the agency, progress toward learning contract goals and hour requirements, and any challenges or issues being experienced. Site visits may be completed in person or virtually (Zoom, Skype, Facetime, etc.), and should include the student, Faculty Field Liaison, Field Instructor (onsite or external), and the Site Supervisor if applicable to the student's supervision arrangement.

Site visits may be completed at any point during the field experience and are documented in Tevera by the Faculty Field Liaison. Additional visits may be made at any time a need is identified by any participant.

Site Visit Frequency:

- 1 site visit during the Foundation-Generalist placement
- Up to 2 visits during the Specialized-Advanced placement, one each semester
- At the request of the field instructor, or faculty field liaison

### **d) Evaluation of Placement Site, Field Supervisors & Field Process**

At the end of the placement, students are encouraged to complete a confidential online evaluation of the placement site, their Field Instructor, Site Supervisor (if applicable), and of their overall learning experience in the placement. The Field Office uses this feedback to inform future placements, ensure that appropriate supervision has been provided, and to improve the field placement processes.

## **VII. Placement Changes**

### **a) Employment Offers or Changes**

Should the student be approached about accepting employment at the agency during the field placement, the student should immediately contact the Field Office to discuss the potential implications to their placement. The student is expected to complete field requirements as planned; the field office can help the student navigate any changes that might impact requirements. Students who are considering accepting employment within their field placement agency will be required to complete an employer-based proposal to determine how the new role as employee will impact their internship role. Employer based proposals are reviewed on a case by case basis.

If the student is in an employer-based placement and is offered the opportunity to transfer to a new job with the current or a new employer, the student and/or the Field Instructor shall consult with the Faculty Field Liaison to assess how this will impact the placement goals.

If a student is an employer-based placement and their employment ends for reasons beyond the student's control, they must notify their field faculty liaison promptly. The field office will assess the circumstances and work to find a resolution which may include continuing the placement while no longer an employee, changing placements, or an academic review, depending on circumstances leading to this change.

If a student begins a new job before the scheduled placement start date, they may submit a proposal to use the new work site, as an employer-based placement. If a different placement site has already been finalized, the student must request approval from the Field Office to be released from this commitment.

Students who have already started their field placements in another setting, and then secure employment in a site where they would like to propose an employer-based placement must have the approval of the original placement site to be released from their commitment. Changing placement sites due to job changes may only be done with approval from the Field Office. This is a matter of professionalism and continuity for the current placement site and clientele and should be considered the same as having to provide a professional resignation notice.

## **b) Problem-Solving in Field**

The SSW makes every effort to keep students in their original placement locations when appropriate and safe to do so. In the event that a placement change is desired, and before initiating any action or making any decisions which could have an impact on the agreed upon placement plan, the student and/or the Field Instructor shall consult with the Faculty Field Liaison. If the FFL is not available, the Field Office is to be consulted. Under no circumstance will a student be removed from an in-progress placement without a meeting of all appropriate parties involved. The only exception to this policy is if the Field Instructor deems that the student, agency staff, and/or clients would be harmed by continuation of the placement.

The SSW utilizes a phased approach to problem resolution, whereby, concerns should be addressed between the student and Field Instructor first, with continued escalation and faculty engagement when issues are not resolved. This phased process is also inclusive of issues that may be presented by the Field Instructor regarding the student. The SSW believes that the process of problem solving on one's own behalf can be an important part of the student's education and respects the right of the student to raise and pursue issues regarding their field work placement. See *Appendix A: Problem-Solving Phases*

**Phase 1** involves the Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or the Field Director coaching the student to attempt to resolve the problem for themselves. While students may seek counsel from others, they should be encouraged to address problems in collaboration with their Field Instructor as a first step. If this approach is unsuccessful, the issue escalates to Phase 2.

**Phase 2** introduces consultation with the Faculty Field Liaison by the person raising the issue, seeking new ideas and solutions, and continued efforts to resolve the issue between the Field Instructor and the student with new insights and ideas. If this approach is unsuccessful, the issue escalates to Phase 3.

**Phase 3** enlists the active involvement of the Faculty Field Liaison, with the student, Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison engaging in a joint meeting to discuss the issue and work toward resolution. At this point the Field Education Director is also notified of the issue. If this approach is unsuccessful, the issue escalates to Phase 4.

**Phase 4** enlists the active involvement of the Field Education Director, with the student, Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison and Field Education Director engaging in a joint meeting to discuss the issue and work toward resolution. If this approach is unsuccessful, the issue escalates to Phase 5.

**Phase 5** enlists the consultation of the BSW or MSW Program Director for input regarding the issue. At this time, and with input from the Program Director, the Field Education Director will determine whether the situation should be referred to the appropriate BSW or MSW Committee for Academic Review, the placement should be changed, and student reassigned, etc. Final decisions for issues escalating to Phase 5 will be made by the Field Education Director. If the student wishes to appeal a decision made by the Field Education Director, or the Academic Review Committee, they are referred to the [WVU Student Conduct Code](#).

### **c) Addressing Performance and/or Problematic Behaviors**

Field placements are made after a thoughtful placement process that includes active student and agency participation and choice. Field placements, once confirmed and committed to, are not changed without considerable cause. If the conclusion is reached by the Field Education Director, Faculty Field Liaison and Field Instructor that a placement should be discontinued, an assessment will be made jointly whether a student should be reassigned to another Field Instructor in the same agency or to another agency setting. Students who disrupt a placement without prior consultation and approval of the Faculty Field Liaison and the Field Office risk receiving a failing grade.

Problematic behaviors leading to an unsatisfactory rating or termination are not typically illegal or immoral but are instead a recurrent series of minor problems indicating a lack of readiness for professional social work. Although placement terminations and unsatisfactory ratings occur infrequently, they present challenging situations for the student, the Field Instructor, Site Supervisor, and the Field Faculty Liaison.

Students entering their Field Experiences will be held accountable for their behavior and actions. Although not an exhaustive list, students should actively work to avoid the following examples of unacceptable and problematic behaviors. **Each of the behaviors listed could be a reason for justifiable termination of a student in field.**

- Disregard for WVU or agency policies, rules, and regulations.
- A hostile, resistant, or combative attitude toward learning, the Field Instructor, or others in the agency.
- Chronic tardiness and/or absenteeism.
- Behaviors that may demonstrate values inconsistent with core social work values.
- Emotional immaturity that interferes with the ability to effectively practice social work.
- Unprofessional behavior, including inappropriate communications and disrespect to agency staff and/or clients.
- Behavior that is emotionally damaging to clients.
- Boundary violations, inappropriate self-disclosure, or other concerns regarding the student's

- ability to maintain appropriate and professional contact with clients.
- Conflicts of interest; unforeseeable or previously undisclosed.

When student issues and unacceptable or problematic behaviors become evident, the Field Instructor and/or Site Supervisor should document the observed behaviors and arrange a meeting with the student to bring awareness to the issue and address the behavior. If the Field Instructor or Site Supervisor is unable to resolve the difficulties during the conference or sees no improvement following the conference, they should immediately contact the Faculty Field Liaison, who will fully engage the Phased Problem-Solving approach. If the difficulties remain unresolved and lead to an early termination of the placement, the field supervisor(s) will be asked to provide documentation around the issues leading to the decision.

#### **d) Termination of Field Placement**

Termination from a field placement may occur when either the Faculty Field Liaison, Field Instructor, or Field Education Director feels that there are concerns about a student's field performance or professionalism that have not responded to prior remediation efforts, or if there are concerns about opportunities to support students' learning that remediation efforts have not improved. Termination may also occur if a student's behaviors have resulted in a significant violation of the NASW Code of Ethics, agency policy, or state or federal laws. Termination from placement may result in an academic review with the BSW or MSW committees, respectively, in order to make decisions about the student's continuance in the program. Termination from field placement may result in the student receiving a failing grade in the related field experience course. The academic review process for both BSW and MSW students is outlined in the [MSW program manual](#) and the [BSW Student Handbook](#).

#### **e) Appeal & Grievance Procedure**

Students have the right to submit a formal grievance regarding courses, instructors, staff, or another aspect of the field education program at any time. Any issue or grievance involving a Field Instructor is handled as part of the phased problem-solving process. The steps for filing a formal grievance involving staff or faculty can be found in the MSW or BSW Handbooks.

### **VIII. Health & Safety**

#### **a) Inclement Weather**

In case of inclement weather, students should monitor their MIX email, as notification via the MIX email system will occur if class is canceled. Students may also check the School website at <https://www.wvu.edu/>.

In the event of inclement or threatening weather, students should use their best judgment regarding travel to and from campus, and to their placement site. Safety should be the main concern. If a student cannot get to the in-person seminar class or their placement because of adverse weather conditions, they should contact their seminar instructor and/or Field Instructor as soon as possible.

Students should discuss in advance with their Field Instructor the agency's notification process for agency closure due to inclement weather and a plan to adjust their schedule or complete hours

remotely due to inclement weather, per Field Instructor approval. Overall field hour requirements do not change due to inclement weather.

### **b) Personal Safety**

Students engaging in their field education experience should exercise both caution and good judgement in situations where there may be risks to their personal safety and/or harm to themselves or clients. Examples of such situations may include confronting an agitated, explosive, or violent client alone; intervening in an escalating situation involving more than one client where interpersonal violence seems likely; and/or any situation where a client has a weapon. In any situation where a student feels threatened or is concerned for their personal safety they should, 1) immediately contact their supervisor or the supervisor on site for support and assistance, and 2) contact the police or emergency medical services for immediate assistance. Any situation where a student has experienced a threat to their personal safety should also be discussed in supervision and documented by the Field Office.

If a student experiences any type of injury during their placement, a WVU [Injury Report](#) must be completed within 24 hours of the injury occurring.

### **c) Health & Medical Coverage**

While student injuries in field placement are rare, there is an element of personal risk for those who engage in the practice of social work. It is important for students to know that if an injury should be sustained while in the field placement, his or her own medical insurance will be the only source of medical coverage. The University is not responsible for accidents occurring to students in connection with class, laboratory, shop, field work, travel, or other activities. Students may rely on their own coverage or purchase a student health policy. Information about this policy may be obtained from the University Health Service.

### **d) Malpractice Insurance Coverage**

Professional liability insurance coverage is provided by West Virginia University for students enrolled in the School of Social Work, provided there is a written Memorandum of Affiliation (MOA) or Understanding (MOU), establishing an agreement between the placement agency and the University. Students must be enrolled in the correct section of the appropriate field course to be covered under this policy. It is important that students are acting within the scope of their role as a student learner within the field placement agency. This coverage is self-insured by the West Virginia Board of Risk and Insurance Management. The insurance program provides professional liability coverage on an occurrence basis with limits of One Million Dollars per occurrence. AIG insurance company is the third-party administrator for the State's insurance program.

Addresses are as follows:

**State Board of Risk & Insurance Management**  
4501 MacCorkle Avenue, SW  
300 Ghannam Building  
South Charleston, WV

**AIG Insurance Companies**  
300 Capitol Street  
Kanawha Valley Bldg-12th Floor  
PO Box 11177

### **e) Immunizations**

Many field placement agencies have specific requirements related to infectious disease immunizations, such as TB tests, Hepatitis immunity, etc. These requirements are reviewed prior to the student and Field Instructor finalizing the placement. Compliance with these requirements, as well as the documentation of immunizations, health status, etc., are to be discussed between the student and the field agency staff. Although the SSW may verify medical tests and/or immunizations provided by students, the West Virginia University School of Social Work does not require, nor maintain, records of student immunizations or health status as a condition of admission to the program.

The field site is responsible for providing interns with all necessary information about its safety protocols prior to the intern beginning any activity on-site. This should include safety protocols to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for trainees, staff and patients. Equally importantly it is your obligation to follow all safety protocols and requirements put in place at each site, including any vaccination requirements. If you are not willing or able to adhere to your field site's vaccination requirement and your site will not grant you a waiver, the SSW cannot guarantee an alternative placement. You should also familiarize yourself with and follow CDC and State guidance on safe practice during COVID-19.

### **f) HIPAA Training Requirement for Field Students**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) was enacted in part to protect the security and privacy of individually identifiable health information. Federal law requires every person who will be in contact with a patient's protected health information to have training in the HIPAA Privacy Standard.

Because students are covered by West Virginia University's malpractice insurance while they are in their field experience, the School of Social Work and WVU requires that students complete WVU's online HIPAA training annually and renew their certification every twelve months. Students must complete and maintain their HIPAA certification during their field experience and will find this to be a required activity as part of field experience courses. A copy of the student's HIPAA certification is submitted by the student and uploaded into the Tevera system with field documentation. The training is conducted with an on-line tutorial with quiz, which must be passed with a minimum of 80%, and may be taken as many times as necessary until they pass with the minimum percentage. Students may also be required to take the HIPAA training at their field placement sites.

### **g) Criminal Background Checks**

Field placement agencies may require potential students to submit to a criminal background check and/or an APS/CPS background check prior to acceptance for placement. Compliance with this requirement, as well as any related fees, are to be negotiated between the student and the field agency staff. Students are made aware by the Field Education Director, **that the existence of a criminal background has the potential to negatively impact placement, licensure and future employment within the social work profession.** The West Virginia University School of Social Work

does not require, nor maintain, records of criminal background checks as a condition of admission to the program. See appendix B for more details.

#### **h) Transportation**

Students shall not transport clients in their personal automobile as a requirement of their field placement, unless the agency can provide insurance coverage to them for this activity. University insurance does not include any coverage for the student should an accident occur while transporting a client in a personal automobile.

#### **i) Sexual Harassment**

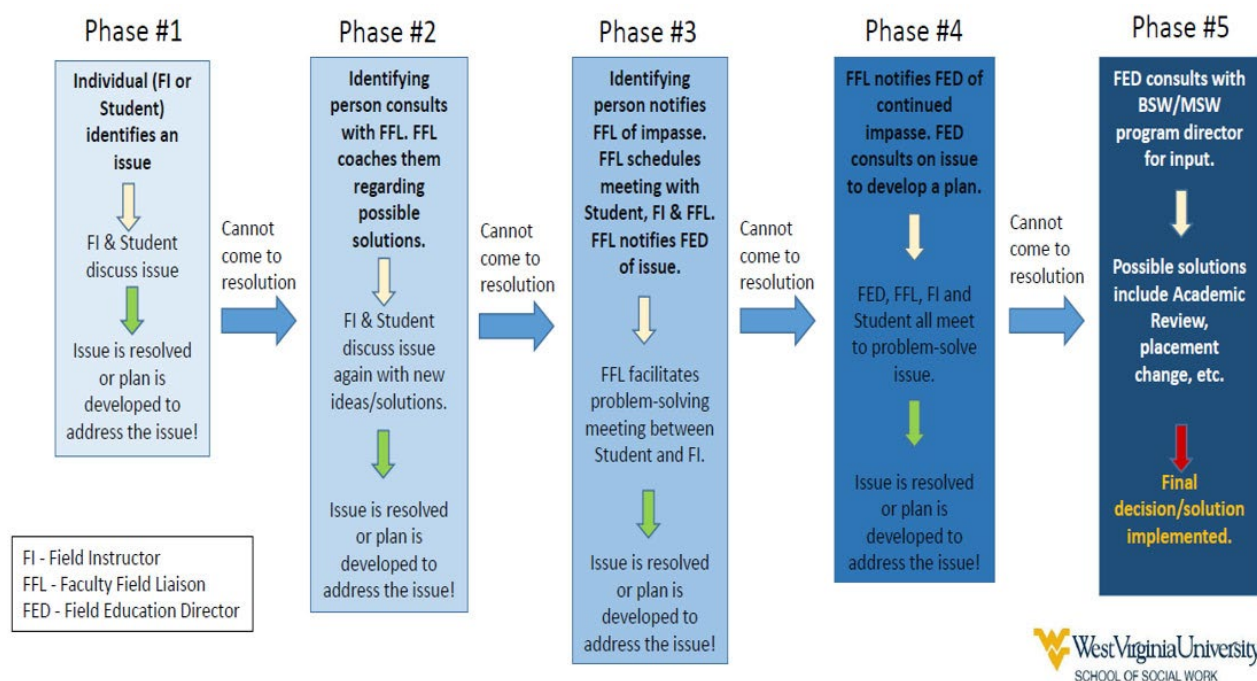
Per the [Board of Governor's Governance Rule 1.6](#), West Virginia University (WVU) does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence. It is important that students know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. Students may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff, but keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator.

If a student wants to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center (RDVIC), 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).

## Appendix A: Problem-Solving Phases

### Problem-Solving Phases in Field Education

We know challenges can arise during field placement experiences and members of the field triad (Student, Field Supervisors, Faculty Field Liaison) may need guidance to help develop a winning situation. The following flowchart outlines the steps Students, Supervisors, and Faculty Field Liaisons should follow when working through a difficult issue. Whether the issue is brought forward by the Student or Field Instructor, all problem solving will start in Phase #1. While we know that some may require more dialogue and input, we always aim to resolve issues early and not reach the later phases of this process. If or when an issue cannot be resolved by working through the process, Phase #5 may involve an Academic Review, placement changes, student not passing the field experience course, and/or other serious actions regarding the student's placement.





## Appendix B: Background Check Statement



### **STUDENT INFORMATION STATEMENT REGARDING IMPACT OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND HISTORY, DRUG SCREEN RESULTS, AND/OR RECORD OF CHILD AND/OR ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICE COMPLAINTS**

Students in a professional social work program are expected to demonstrate the capacity to practice with integrity and within the ethical guidelines outlined within the NASW Code of Ethics. Increasingly, students and employees are required by field placement sites or future employers to undergo a criminal background check, child and/or adult protective services check\* and initial baseline and/or random drug screen tests, prior to engaging in field work or employment. Felony convictions and some serious misdemeanors may negatively impact a student's forward progress and/or completion of their academic program as well as future professional licensure and future employment in the social work field. Additionally, open and/or substantiated child and/or adult protective services complaints may impact a student's ability to progress in the program and/or future licensure and employment.

Such information could impact the student in the following ways:

- 1.) The ability to secure and complete the required field placement experience, as most field placement agencies request criminal background investigations, fingerprint checks, child and/or adult protective services checks, and/or random drug screens. Additionally, in cases where there is a question of potential harm to clients, the School of Social Work has an ethical obligation that prevents the placement of students with open and/or substantiated adult and/or child protective complaints in field work with clients. In these cases, an academic review meeting with the MSW Committee may be required to discuss an appropriate continuance plan for the student.
- 2.) The ability to be considered eligible for licensure as a social worker by the West Virginia Board of Social Work (WVBSW), which requires that licensure applicants must provide a sworn statement regarding the existence of a criminal history. This is per the West Virginia State Code, which states that certain misdemeanor or felony convictions could preclude the possibility of acquiring one's licensure to practice social work.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.) The ability to be considered eligible for licensure as a social worker in other states in the U.S., per the corresponding state licensure laws.

4.) The ability to secure employment within the social work practice field, as most employers within the social work field require that the applicant either possess or be eligible for a social work license, as well as require criminal background investigations, fingerprint checks, child and/or adult protective services checks, and/or random drug screens as a condition for employment.

\*Note: Even if the SSW field placement site does not require one or all of these screenings/checks, a documented substantiated child or adult protective services complaint will disallow students from placement or employment at any West Virginia Department of Human Services (WVDoHS) Office as well as within ANY program, facility, agency, or organization that contracts with DoHs.

By my signature below, I verify/certify that I have read and understand the above information regarding the potential impact of certain backgrounds and/or behaviors/actions upon my ability to complete the social work degree program, my ability to participate in the social work field experience, and/or my ability to obtain employment. I agree to keep the field office and my advisor informed of any relevant past and/or current criminal charges and/or open or substantiated child/adult protective services complaints against me.

---

Signature

---

Printed Name

---

Date signed

<sup>1</sup>See W. Va. Code § 30-30-1, et seq.

## Appendix C: Contact Information

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## Appendix D: External Field Instructor Guide

### Field Instructor Requirements

The required credentials and practice experience for field instructors are specified in the Field Education Handbook. Those interested in becoming field instructors must complete and submit a Field Instructor Profile. The field office assesses each application to ensure prospective BSW/MSW field instructors meet the criteria.

#### BSW program field instructor criteria:

- A baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program.
- Two years post-social work degree practice experience in social work.
- Demonstrated interest in teaching, supervision, and continuing education.
- Ability to complete field instructor training
- Ability to provide weekly supervision to assigned students.

#### MSW program field instructor criteria:

- A master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program.
- Two years post-social work degree practice experience in social work.
- Demonstrated interest in teaching, supervision, and continuing education.
- Ability to complete field instructor training
- Ability to provide weekly supervision to assigned students.

If a sudden change in supervision occurs and a qualified Field Instructor is not available to supervise a student, the Field Office explores alternative supervisory arrangements within the agency and with the student to enable placement continuance. In rare situations, a Field Office or Faculty member may assume the role of External Field Instructor to ensure the social work perspective is reinforced and the student is able to maintain their agency placement and fulfill Learning Contract requirements.

### Field Instruction Training and Orientation

The Field Office orients new field supervisors to the functions of field instruction and their responsibilities as field instructors for the School of Social Work; the Field Office meets with new field supervisors individually to provide overview information and learn more about the supervisor. Supervisors are asked to complete an interest form and to review the Field Education Handbook.

To best support field supervisors, the SSW provides an online field instructor training that all supervisors are encouraged to complete as part of their onboarding. This training is offered virtually at least one time per semester and is approved for 1 hour of continuing education (CE) in West Virginia. The training is also posted online and may be viewed at any time, however only the live presentations are approved for continuing education. The field instructor training covers the following content areas: Placement process and overview of field education; agency orientation components, supervision best practices; learning contract development and evaluation completion and incorporating the Code of Ethics into supervision.

The SSW offers other no cost continuing education opportunities to field instructors as a gesture of appreciation for the important service they are providing to students, the SSW, and the greater social work community. Field instructors are provided with the SSW weekly Lunch & Learn schedule at the start of Fall and Spring semesters and encouraged to attend these sessions. Field instructors are also featured as Lunch & Learn guest speakers on social work topic areas and to highlight specific areas of practice.

### **Continuing Dialogue with Field Settings and Field Instructors**

Field Office members maintain regular communications with placement agencies and field instructors at numerous times throughout the year to ascertain their ability to host students during the placements, discuss new ideas for student learning projects and innovative placement possibilities, changes in field instructors at agencies, and gain their perspectives on potential policy and procedural changes in field education. Faculty Field Liaisons are also key connectors to agencies and field supervisors, interacting with them as part of student field experiences regularly and at specific points during the placement.

### **External Field Instructor + Site Supervisor Model**

In placement situations requiring an External Field Instructor and Site Supervisor, the roles work collaboratively to ensure student learning activities and agency engagement are aligned. Site Supervisors work with the student and provide guidance, mentorship, and participate in the student's Learning Contract development, time report approval, and assessment processes, while the External Field Instructor provides weekly social work supervision and primary oversight of the placement. The primary responsibilities for each of the roles are as follows.

#### **Off-site/External Field Instructor**

- Must meet criteria for BSW or MSW Field Instructor, as appropriate
- Lead student in integrating social work theory and concepts in practice environments and service settings and fulfill educational teaching functions.
- Work collaboratively with student and Site Supervisor to develop and finalize student Learning Contract.
- Provide weekly social work supervision sessions with student and review progress toward competency development and Learning Contract activity completion.
- Review, provide feedback, and provide final approval to students' time reports.
- Participate in student Site Visit with Faculty Field Liaison, Site Supervisor, and student and share updates and details around student progress.
- Provide insight around student competency development and finalize Supervisor Assessments of student progress for midterm and final evaluations and grade recommendations.
- Communicate and collaborate with Site Supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and student as needed for problem-solving and placement success.
- Assumes responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective with student.

#### **Site Supervisor**

- Must meet Site Supervisor criteria.

- Assume primary responsibility for student onboarding, agency orientation, and schedule development.
- Work collaboratively with student and External Field instructor to develop and finalize student Learning Contract.
- Assume primary responsibility for daily supervision of student and the student's work, as outlined in the Learning Contract and submitted in time reports.
- Participate in student Site Visit with Faculty Field Liaison, External Field Instructor, and student and share updates and details around student progress.
- Provide insight around student competency development and develop initial draft of Supervisor Assessments of student progress for midterm and final evaluations.
- Communicate and collaborate with External Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and student as needed for problem-solving and placement success.

#### **Tips for External Field Instructors**

- Get a basic overview of the setting your student is working in
- Establish a standing appointment for supervision
- Establish a pattern for meeting collectively with student and site supervisor (monthly?)
- Ensure you have a copy of the field syllabus
- Instruct your student to plan an agenda for supervision including: an overview of their activities, questions, any areas where they see course content applying to their work
- Discuss time management and professionalism
- For virtual students, help them to construct a weekly schedule and discuss ongoing low priority virtual work they can do when agency assignments are not available

## Appendix E: Field Dates and Deliverables

### 2025-2026 BSW/MSW Field Dates and Deliverables

The following schedule outlines the specific field activities and deliverables for BSW and MSW students completing field during the 2025-2026 academic year.

<b>Field Experience Activity</b>	<b>MSW Part-Time/Online Foundation-Generalist <i>Summer &amp; Fall 2025</i></b>	<b>MSW Full-Time Foundation-Generalist <i>Fall 2025 &amp; Spring 2026</i></b>	<b>MSW Full-Time Specialized-Advanced <i>Fall 2025 &amp; Spring 2026</i></b>	<b>MSW Part-Time/Online Specialized-Advanced <i>Fall 2025, Spring and Summer 2026</i></b>	<b>BSW Full-Time <i>Fall 2025 &amp; Spring 2026</i></b>
<b>Placement Start</b>	As early as June 9 but no later than June 16 2025	Week of October 6, 2025	As early as August 20, but no later than August 29, 2025	As early as August 20, but no later than August 29, 2025	Week of October 6, 2025
<b>Approximate hours per week</b>	12-16	13-16	20-22	15-18	17-20
<b>Engagement weeks</b>	24	24	30	36	24
<b>Placement Confirmation Deadline</b>	May 5, 2025	August 22, 2025	July 3, 2025	July 3, 2025	August 1, 2025
<b>Learning Contract finalized by</b>	July 18, 2025	November 7, 2025	October 3, 2025	October 3, 2025	November 7, 2025
<b>Midterm Assessment completed by</b>	September 12, 2025	February 6, 2026	December 5, 2025	December 5, 2025	February 6, 2026
<b>Minimum Midterm Hours</b>	80 hours by Aug 7, 2025	110 hours by Dec 11, 2025	280 hours by Dec 11, 2025	200 hours by Dec 11, 2025	144 hours by Dec 11, 2025
<b>Final Assessment completed by</b>	December 5, 2025	April 24, 2026	April 24, 2026	June 14, 2026	April 24, 2026
<b>Placement End</b>	As early as Nov 14, 2025 but no later than Dec 12, 2025	As early as Apr 17, 2026 but no later than May 1, 2026	As early as Apr 17, 2026 but no later than May 1, 2026	As early as May 29, 2026 but no later than June 26, 2026	As early as Apr 17, 2026 but no later than May 1, 2026
<b>Total Hours Required</b>	300	300	600	600	400

*\*Per Field Instructor approval, students may ramp up and/or taper field hours at the start and end of placements. Minimum time blocks of 4 hours are recommended for on-site activities; remote activity blocks may vary.*

## Appendix F: Employer-Based Field Placement Proposal



### Employer-Based Field Placement Proposal

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) states that student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward required field hours if the tasks have clear links to the social work competencies, and their related behaviors. A student's field instructor and employment supervisor may be the same person; however, in such cases, supervision time for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment.

While overlap between employment tasks and internship is allowed, you are encouraged to engage in new activities to grow and meet learning and professional goals.

#### **Student Information**

Name:

City:

State:

Phone #:

MIX Email:

Placement Start Date:

Placement End Date:

#### **Agency Information**

Agency Name:

Agency Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

#### **Student's Job Title:**

Number of years employed in this position:

#### **Current Work Supervisor:**

Name:

Title:

Email:

Phone:

#### **Proposed MSW Field Instructor:**

*(This is an individual who has an MSW from a CSWE accredited program with 2 years of post-MSW experience and is willing to serve as a Field Instructor. Whenever possible, this should not be your work supervisor.)*



Name:  
Title:  
Email:  
Phone:

**Proposed Site Supervisor (if applicable):**

*(This is an individual who works at the agency and will have regular oversight of the student but does not necessarily have a social work background. A site supervisor is necessary if the field instructor is external to the organization, or is sometimes utilized when this person will work more closely with the student than the field instructor)*

Name:  
Title:  
Email:  
Phone:

1. Please describe your organization, including its mission, program areas, size and approximate number of professional staff, main office location, and satellite locations (as appropriate). Provide 3-4 sentences about your current job responsibilities and explain where your current job fits within the organization and your program.
2. Some employers may be able to accommodate you taking on additional activities as part of your work week, while other may require you to do this outside of your role. Describe any additional activities that your agency would support as part of your internship that are not part of your current role.
3. Is this your second placement at this agency?
  - a. No
  - b. Yes (FOLLOW UP QUESTION)
    - i. Will you be in the same or a different role? If in the same role, what will you do to build on your foundation-generalist placement experience to make this an advanced placement? This may include but is not limited to adding tasks beyond the job duties, taking on a special project, spending time in another portion of the agency, etc.
4. Your MSW field instructor needs to provide at least **one hour per week of educational supervision** and will be involved in the development of your learning contract and evaluations. You may also have a site supervisor that is also involved in your day to day activities who will also be involved in the development of your learning contract and evaluations.

**Describe your plan to meet the above supervision requirements:**

5. Please provide a minimum of one potential activity that you will participate in that will provide you with opportunity to demonstrate each of the nine competencies. *You may attach this information on a separate page if needed.*

- a. Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- b. Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- c. Competency 3: Engage Anti- Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
- d. Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- e. Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
- f. Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- g. Competency 7: Assess with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- h. Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- i. Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

### **Organization Endorsements**

*We, the undersigned, attest to the accuracy of the attached statements and have read the proposed plan. We understand and will support the academic needs of this employee that go beyond and are in addition to the ordinary requirements of employment.*

*We agree to provide the experiences noted in the attached proposal. We also agree that if our organization is not already an approved site, that we will complete and submit a Site Application for Consideration for Approval as a Field Site. We recognize that no placement activities may commence until a Memorandum of Affiliation agreement has been executed. In the event that the agency is not approved, or all parties cannot come to an agreement regarding said Memorandum of Affiliation, we understand that the student employee may not conduct a field placement at this site.*

***All signatures must be completed for proposal consideration. No placement hours may be logged until proposal is authorized by the WVU SSW Field Office.***

_____ Student/Employee Signature	_____ Date
_____ Employment Supervisor Signature	_____ Date
_____ Field Instructor Signature	_____ Date
_____ WVU SSW Field Office Signature	_____ Date

**SSW Field Team Use**

**Date Site Visit Conducted:**

## **Appendix G: Orientation Packet**

### **Purpose of Orientation Packet**

This Orientation Packet is designed to support agencies and students in preparing for and engaging in meaningful, educational field placement experiences. It applies to both in-person and virtual/remote placements and serves as Appendix G of the Field Handbook.

### **Orientation Overview**

Orientation provides the foundation for a successful internship experience. It is the process by which students are introduced to an agency's culture, mission, policies, and expectations. A strong onboarding experience helps interns feel welcomed, informed, and prepared. To ensure a smooth transition into the placement, orientation should occur within the student's first week of placement, ideally as close to the start date as possible.

**Agencies are encouraged to include the following components in their orientation process:**

- Welcome and introduction to agency staff
- Tour of the agency (in-person) or virtual walkthrough (remote)
- Review of the agency's mission and services
- Overview of the agency's organizational chart
- Explanation of the student's role, expectations, and learning opportunities
- Discussion of confidentiality, ethics, and client interaction protocols
- Overview of the student's schedule, supervision structure, and communication preferences
- Review of WVU Field Handbook and Learning Contract

### **Orientation Packet Contents**

Agencies should provide students with a packet of written materials to help guide their field experience. This packet may be digital or printed and should include the following:

1. Agency Mission and Vision Statement
2. Organizational Chart and Contact Information
3. Agency Policies and Procedures Manual
4. Confidentiality Guidelines
5. Dress Code and Professional Expectations
6. Emergency and Safety Protocols
7. Agency Directory & Contact List/Information
8. Technology Use Guidelines
9. Schedule and Hours of Operation
10. List of Required Trainings or Onboarding Tasks

## 11. Supervision Expectations

## 12. Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution Process

### Virtual Placement Modifications

For students completing field experiences virtually or in a hybrid format, the following modifications should be implemented to ensure an equally engaging and productive onboarding experience, many of which also apply to in-person field placements:

- **Virtual Tour of Agency** (recorded or live walkthrough via Zoom)
- **Digital Access to All Orientation Materials**
- **Technology Setup and Support:**
  - Email account setup (if applicable)
  - Secure login credentials
  - Access to databases, shared drives, or client records systems
  - Mailed materials (if applicable)
- **Review of Remote Work Policies**
- **Clear Expectations for Communication:**
  - Preferred communication platforms (Zoom, Teams, email, etc.)
  - Supervision meeting schedule and format (video/phone)
  - Backup communication plans in case of emergency
  - Expectation for checking in and checking out of placement hours, and overall visibility of remote hours
- **Student Workspace Guidance:**
  - Quiet, confidential space for client interactions
  - Use of virtual backgrounds, headphones, and white noise machines when needed
- **Technology & Ethics Review:**
  - Review of NASW/CSWE Technology Standards
  - Reminder to disable smart devices like Alexa, Siri, etc., during work hours

As students and agencies prepare for remote field placement opportunities that include a considerable amount of virtual engagement, the SSW encourages both students and field supervisors to review the following short videos.

- [Video #1 – Before Intern Arrival \(1:36\)](#)
- [Video #2 – The First Day \(1:36\)](#)
- [Video #3 – The First Weeks \(2:40\)](#)
- [Video #4 - Final Points \(1:24\)](#)

**Acknowledgement:** Our sincerest thanks to the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, Office of Field Education, for providing the virtual onboarding videos and checklist.

## **Student Orientation Checklist (Suggested)**

This checklist may be tailored by each agency to suit their setting:

### **Pre-Arrival:**

- Complete background checks and/or HR paperwork (if required)
- Receive access to student email/agency systems
- Submit bio/photo for agency team introduction
- Receive information regarding accessing the building and parking
- Receive an agency contact list/information

### **First Day:**

- Meet with supervisor and team (video or in-person)
- Receive orientation packet and initial tasks
- Review expectations, schedule, and supervision plan

### **First Week:**

- Attend staff or team meetings
- Complete training modules or organizational learning tasks
- Hold the first field supervision meeting

### **First Month:**

- Begin Learning Contract development and goal-setting
- Complete any training modules or organizational learning tasks
- Participate in agency events or shadowing opportunities
- Continue meeting staff and learning the agency structure
- Receive early feedback and engage in reflective supervision

## **Student & Supervisor Agreement**

At the end of orientation, students and supervisors should sign a brief agreement acknowledging:

- Completion of orientation
- Review of agency mission, policies, and expectations
- Agreement on supervision schedule and communication norms

**For Questions or Additional Support,**

**Please contact the WVU SSW Office of Field Education.**

## Appendix H: Sample Learning Contract Activities

The following list is composed of sample activities that can be completed at your field placement. While some activities might reflect multiple competencies, a student cannot list the same activity under multiple competencies on the Learning Contract. These sample activities can be used to help you complete your Learning Contract; you may have to adjust the language to fit your specific field placement.

Sample Activities		Generalist	Specialized
<b>1. Demonstrate Ethical &amp; Professional Behavior</b>			
	I will discuss appropriate roles and boundaries at my placement in supervision.	x	
	I will use professional language (verbal/nonverbal) when communicating with clients and other professionals in the workplace. Discuss how you have accomplished this in supervision.	x	
	I will ask for and be open to feedback regarding documentation, oral and written communication during supervision.	x	x
	I will discuss an ethical dilemma that pertains to the agency in supervision.	x	x
	I will reflect on professional behaviors at my agency in a monthly reflection log.	x	x
	I will prepare questions to discuss with my supervisor regarding my social work experience, and questions about their social work career.	x	x
	I will review agency forms and/or signage that could be more inclusive and review my findings in supervision.	x	x
	I will complete an implicit bias test and discuss results in supervision.	x	x
Sample Activities		Generalist	Specialized
<b>2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice</b>			
	I will research population health for my agency community and share what I learn in a infographic for all staff	x	x
	I will discuss Anti-Racism Principles with my supervisor and the impact on our agency's culture/ client population.	x	x
	I will discuss a current event and the impact the event may have on my agency and policy with my supervisor	x	x
	I will identify forms of oppression or discrimination of client populations and discuss them with my supervisor.	x	
	I will conduct research to identify economic barriers to social services and care; discuss with supervisor.	x	x
	I will research specific policies that affect the agency's clients and discuss advocacy strategies in supervision.	x	x
	I will identify community events that promote advocacy for a specific population and share with staff and/or clients	x	
	I will ask my supervisor and staff agency what advocacy looks like for the agency and compile findings into a document that will be shared with all staff	x	

Sample Activities		Generalist	Specialized
<b>3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice</b>			
	I will discuss strategies to engage and improve ADEI in practice with my supervisor.	x	x
	I will share my own culture/beliefs/experiences with my supervisor and discuss when it is appropriate to share with clients.	x	x
	I will write a reflection about ways I engage in cultural humility within the practice setting.	x	x
	I will research the experience of a specific population of clients seeking services in my practice setting and determine any barriers to seeking services.	x	x
	I will discuss in supervision my personal strengths and limitations when engaging with clients of a different culture with.	x	x
	I will journal about a time that ADEI Laws impacted social work practice in my setting.	x	x
	I will discuss with my supervisor what diversity means to me and how my agency considers diversity.	x	
	I will seek external diversity training and discuss my experience in supervision.	x	x
	I will ask clients about their culture and how it has shaped their life, discuss in supervision.	x	
	I will develop a training for staff on a way that our agency can better serve a specific population.	x	x
	I will review agency policies and develop a recommendation for a policy update to improve equity or inclusivity	x	x
<b>Sample Activities</b>		<b>Generalist</b>	<b>Specialized</b>
<b>4. Engage in Practice-informed Research &amp; Research-informed Practice</b>			
	I will research trauma and discuss the effects of trauma on our clients with my supervisor.	x	x
	I will review evidence informed methods and evaluative tools utilized by the agency and create a presentation that summarizes the agency's evaluative tools to share with supervisor and agency workers.	x	x
	I will discuss in supervision common theories and perspectives utilized when working with clients in my agency and their effectiveness with different populations.	x	x
	I will research evidence-informed policies informing agency practice and client population; discuss with supervisor.	x	x
	I will read professional journal articles relevant to clients served by the agency discuss in supervision.	x	x
	I will develop and implement one evaluation process that engages clients as evaluators. Share your evaluation process in supervision.		x
	I will research why certain cultures do not engage in therapy and recommend steps to reduce barriers/ stigmas. Share your findings in supervision; or in agency staff meetings.		x

<b>Sample Activities</b>		Generalist	Specialized
<b>5. Engage in Policy Practice</b>			
	I will identify one piece of legislation and identify how it may impact my agency's policies.	x	x
	I will identify a policy that impacts my practice setting and critically evaluate its impact on the individual and/or community we serve. Discuss in supervision and share with agency staff members.	x	x
	I will critically evaluate the history behind a policy impacting services delivered at the agency. Discuss with supervisor in supervision.	x	x
	I will collaborate with my supervisor to make a potential policy recommendation that can be implemented at my agency.	x	x
	I will identify a barrier to services for a specific population and advocate for a low barrier solution.	x	x
	I will participate in a group discussion with clients, staff, or community stakeholders focused on collective problem solving.	x	x
<b>Sample Activities</b>		Generalist	Specialized
<b>6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, &amp; Communities</b>			
	I will discuss in supervision ways to engage with person(s) who may be of a different culture/background	x	x
	I will complete a monthly reflection focusing on how my role as a social worker may impact my engagement with clients	x	
	I will seek feedback from supervisors about ways to build rapport and trust, and to roll with resistance with clients.	x	x
	I will review literature on rapport-building/ interpersonal skills and practice in various communities and apply concepts in practice. Discuss in supervision.	x	x
	I will engage in active listening with clients, agency staff, and supervisors and review this skill in supervision.	x	x
	I will observe supervisor and agency workers during their interactions with clients. Discuss the client interactions with your supervisor.	x	x
	I will identify areas of comfort and discomfort in client engagement and discuss in supervision.	x	x
	I will role play with supervisor an initial interaction with a client.	x	x
<b>Sample Activities</b>		Generalist	Specialized
<b>7. Assess with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, &amp; Communities</b>			
	I will complete a literature review of an assessment used with the population our agency serves and discuss in supervision the appropriateness of this assessment with in the agency.		x



	I will help to complete a family genogram after client assessment.	x	
	I will discuss with supervisor appropriate terminology and documentation of interactions with clients	x	x
	I will observe client assessment and discuss my observations during supervision.	x	x
	I will complete documentation of an assessment within my agency and review the document with my supervisor.	x	x
	I will discuss in supervision how to navigate when an assessment makes a client ineligible for services.	x	x
	I will complete an ecomap of the community my agency services and discuss in supervision.	x	x
	I will complete an organizational analysis (including staffing, finances, etc) and share within my generalist class	X	
	<b>Sample Activities</b>	<b>Generalist</b>	<b>Specialized</b>
<b>8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, &amp; Communities</b>			
	I will write a treatment plan for a client and review with supervisor for direction and feedback	x	x
	I will develop a list of community agencies/referrals for clients that will be shared with all staff	x	
	I will facilitate a support group or psycho educational group. Discuss in supervision your feelings on group facilitation, and best group facilitation practices.	x	x
	I will develop a post treatment plan for clients and discuss this process in supervision	x	x
	Select a specific intervention used at the agency and at the micro, mezzo, and macro level with your supervisor.	x	x
	I will research an alternative form of therapy for the population served by my agency and share findings with staff and supervisor (via email, presentation or other means)		x
	<b>Sample Activities</b>	<b>Generalist</b>	<b>Specialized</b>
<b>9. Evaluate with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, &amp; Communities</b>			
	I will review evaluation and data collection tools/ methods used at agency. Discuss in supervision.	x	x
	I will complete an organizational analysis (including staffing, finances, etc) and share within my generalist class	x	x
	I will discuss in supervision how successful/unsuccessful treatment is evaluated within the agency	x	x
	I will assess my own internship and share my thoughts in supervision.	x	x
	I will complete my evaluative research project within my agency and turn in my completed poster for SOWK 616		x
	I will complete a presentation of my evaluative research findings to agency staff and supervisor		x
	I will interview agency staff about the strengths and limitations of the agency. Share with the agency supervisor your findings	x	
	I will complete an ecomap of the community my agency services and discuss gaps in supervision.	x	x