MSW Field Education Program Overview for International Field Placements

Field Education is an integral part of the School of Social Welfare (SSW) curriculum, merging theory and instruction with real time practice experience. Students have the opportunity to apply what is learned in the classroom by working with clients, social work leaders and social systems.

Students starting their advanced concentration field are eligible to consider an international field placement. International field placements provide students the knowledge and skills for practice within the frameworks of global social and political contexts. As the U.S. grows in its diversity, social workers must possess skills that address the complex needs of a diverse nation. Skills learned from an international field experience will be transferable, enabling students to integrate practice with vulnerable populations from underdeveloped countries with diverse populations in the U.S. This opportunity differs from both Study Abroad and international service learning. In field, students are providing direct practice to constituencies reliant upon their specific skill sets as developing social work practitioners. As adult learners, students are expected to positively represent the University at Albany School of Social Welfare by demonstrating professionalism, maturity and initiative during their time abroad.

The School of Social Welfare currently has international field placements through partnerships with schools of social work or non-government organizations (NGOs) in Ghana, Scotland, the Dominican Republic and South Africa.

The SSW works to identify a field instructor/supervisor meeting the SSW’s qualifications for student supervision. Field instructors evaluate students’ competencies of practice skills using the SSW student field evaluation form. The SSW works with the host country to identify an appropriate field site for practice.

There is a different schedule for MSW students pursuing international field placements. Students do field during a block of time during the months of May through August, five days per week over 14-15 weeks. Registration for Field Instruction courses (RSSW 752 and 753) occurs during the Summer 2016 semester.

Criteria and Timeline over
Criteria for Consideration of an International Field Placement

- Completion of a formal application.
  - Completion of an interview.
  - Two years of full-time work experience, with one of those years having been in the field of human services.
  - Two professional references (one from the field instructor of the Generalist field practicum and one academic reference).
  - Cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 and in good standing with the SSW.
  - Successful completion of Field I and II and having earned at least 37 cumulative credits.
  - Registration in the course, SSW 786 (19163) Policy and Practice of International Development for the Spring 2016 semester.
  - Some experience with having traveled internationally is highly preferred.

Deadline for Expression of Interest

November 2, 2015 (applications will be forwarded at that time)

Deadline for Application

Scotland and South Africa Placements – November 13, 2015
All Other Placements – February 22, 2016

Financial Aid

The SSW will provide partial scholarships for living expenses to select students.