GUIDE TO ADVANCED CONCENTRATION (2nd FIELD) PLACEMENT PROCESS 2017

STEP 1: Attend one of two required “2nd Field Placement process” Info Sessions -

- Wednesday, January 25, 12:30pm -2:00 pm in the Husted Amphitheater (HS 106A) or
- Saturday, January 28, 12:00pm-1:00 pm in the Husted Amphitheater (HS 106A) (SNOW DATE if needed: Thursday, January 26, 12:30 pm-2:00pm in HS 106A).

The sessions are designed to provide a general overview of the 2nd field placement selection process and will include important resource information.

STEP 2: Choose an Advanced Concentration for your MSW degree- either clinical practice or MACRO practice. Your advanced concentration will give you in-depth knowledge and skills for the practice of social work. However, it does not lock you into a single career path. Many clinical practice graduates eventually do some supervision and macro practice, while macro practice graduates find themselves doing some clinical work. This semester is the ideal time to explore options by meeting with your academic adviser, classroom instructors, current field instructor, field liaison and others, prior to registering for advanced practice courses in March. Your choice of concentration will also determine the type of field placement you select.

- The handout “MSW Advanced Concentration” defines the differences between the two concentrations. The SSW Spring course registration packet delineates the required coursework for each concentration.

STEP 3: Update resume –Include your 1st field placement on your resume. An updated, professional resume is important in any placement search, and it will be the first impression that prospective field instructors will receive of you.

- Refer to the handout “Spring 2017 Timeline for 2nd Field Placement Process” for information about upcoming workshops on Resume/Cover Letter preparation. These workshops provide guidance on developing strong resumes and cover letters, and they also offer individual feedback to resumes that are brought in for review.

STEP 4: Explore Specialized Field Options - The School of Social Welfare offers options for students related to field. Review the options below for potential interest and eligibility:
There are two field options that take into account a student’s significant previous human services work experience. Qualified students may request to do their field placement in the agency where they are currently employed (Work Study) or do a concentrated field assignment during the summer (Block Option). Eligibility requirements and applications are available on the SSW website. The application deadline for Work Study placements is April 1st. Contact Lisa DeLaMater (437-3686, ldelamater@albany.edu) if you need assistance with the Work Study option. The application deadline for Block placements is March 1st. Contact Estella Williamson (442-5334, ewilliamson@albany.edu) for information regarding the Block options.

Specialized internship options within the School of Social Welfare provide students with internship opportunities with specific populations, special areas of social work practice or practice in international settings. Some specialized internships may provide stipends, require seminar participation and/or additional time in the field placement. Please contact the coordinators directly for more information about their internships, application process, and deadlines. The internship options are:

- **Internships in Aging (IAP):** Linda Mertz – 442-5327  lmerz@albany.edu
- **Internships in Mental Health:** Eric Hardiman – 442-5705  hardiman@albany.edu
- **International Field Placements:** Estella Williamson – 442-5334  ewilliamson@albany.edu

**STEP 5:** Decide whether to obtain an appropriate field placement independently or request to have the Field Office find the placement. The advanced concentration field placement can be selected by the student, as long as the placement site meets field placement requirements (refer to the MSW Field Education Handbook). Students may have clear ideas of where they would like to do their field placements and can search on their own. If students request to have the Field Office secure the advanced concentration placement, an application for 2nd field and current resume have to be submitted to the Field Office by the due date of March 3, 2017. In these cases, every effort will be made to find a placement based on the student’s preference. Students requesting placement by the Field Office must accept the placement assignment that is given to them.

Carefully review the material outlining the 2nd year placement process. Consider your strengths as well as areas for growth to determine what might be the best fit for you. Clarify your goals, and remain open to a variety of options and settings that can provide you valuable learning experiences. It is important to work within the timeframes provided, so be sure to note the steps and deadlines on the Spring 2017 Timeline handout. Seek assistance early if needed.

**STEP 6:** Submit your “Letter of Intent” form

The “Letter of Intent” form notifies the Field Office of your decision to either locate your own 2nd field placement or request to have the Field Office place you. The due date for submission of the Letter of Intent form is February 20, 2017.
Whether you or the field office locates your placement, you must verify on the “Letter of Intent” form that you have read the handout *Required Reading for 2nd Field Placement* about the requirements for 2nd field.

**STEP 7: Attend the SSW Field & Career Fair** on Wednesday, February 15th, 12:30-3:00pm in Husted Hall on the Downtown Campus. The fair is an excellent opportunity to meet prospective field instructors and agency representatives. Students attending this event should come dressed professionally and be prepared to make initial contact with field instructors, ask questions about program services and leave an updated resume.

Attendance to the Field & Career Fair presents a valuable opportunity to network, learn about agency services in the Capital Region, and to interact with prospective field instructors and agencies. Some agencies bring current and former social work interns with them, presenting opportunities to learn from past graduates. Announcements about the Field & Career Fair will be available on Blackboard and will be emailed to you, including a list of agencies that plan to attend.

**STEP 8: Identify agencies with whom you wish to interview** – The Field Office provides two different agency listings for you to consider for placements, “Affiliated Agencies” and “Agency Survey Response”:

- One type of list identifies agencies that have previously had SSW interns, called “Affiliated Agencies”. These agencies have supervised our students in the past and/or have employed SSW graduates. Some agencies provide descriptions of field experiences students have had in placement. **This list of affiliated agencies is accessible on Blackboard immediately after the Field and Career Fair.** Keep in mind that listed agencies may have experienced staff changes that impact their ability to offer students field placement options in 2017.

- A second list shows those agencies that have specifically requested students for the coming year, and includes their preference for clinical or MACRO students. This list is generated from agencies submitting an “Agency Survey Response”. Agencies are organized by state/county, and will have names and phone numbers of current agency contact persons and current agency information. This list will also be posted for you on Blackboard beginning Thursday, February 16th and will continue to be updated bi-weekly as additional requests are received.

All placement agencies must meet SSW field education requirements, provide a range of learning opportunities, and have an affiliation agreement with the University.

Students wishing to identify other potential agencies not on the above lists can submit a New Agency Identification Form, which can be found on the SSW website, to the Field Office. The Field Office will investigate all new agency sites to determine appropriateness for field learning.

**STEP 9: Begin placement interviews with select agencies** - If you have opted to be placed by the Field Office, we will contact you with specifics about your placement process. Students
electing to find their own field placements can begin outreach to agencies after the Field & Career Fair on February 15th. Agencies will not be expecting to hear from students prior to that time.

It is your responsibility to contact these agencies to schedule interviews. Be mindful that the search process can be competitive, so it is important that you work through this Guide to Advanced Concentration Placement Process in a timely manner in order to be prepared for interviews.

In preparation for the interview, some sample interview questions were compiled. See the document entitled, “Guide to the Placement Interview” in Blackboard for guidance on how to plan for your interview. Dress professionally and bring a resume to your interview.

**STEP 10: Finalize placement**
Once you have secured your field assignment, please complete the following:

- **“Field Verification” form is due May 5th.** You and your prospective field instructor must complete and sign this form, and submit it to the Field Office. The Field Office does not consider you to have secured a placement until this completed form is received.

- **“Closure Contact” form is due May 5th.** Once you have successfully completed the placement process above, it is essential that you contact the other agencies/field instructors with whom you interviewed. Be sure to contact the same individual that you previously communicated with, so that the agency is officially notified that you wish to no longer be considered for a field assignment. Take time to thank them for their time and let them know that you are withdrawing your name from consideration for placement. This informs the agency’s decision about whether to accept other students.

*Congratulations on securing your placement!* Two things must happen in order for you to obtain a permission number to register for Field Instruction III (RSSW 752): you must complete 1st Field and received a final grade of Satisfactory, and you must submit the “Letter of Intent” form, “Field Verification” form, and “Closure Contact” form to the Field Office. You may then request your Permission Number to register for Field Instruction III (RSSW 752) by calling or emailing Mikaline VanKuren at (518) 442-5321 or mvankuren@albany.edu.