FIELD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

FIELD LIAISON MANUAL

2013–2014

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INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the fall of 2013, the Field Education Department will be implementing an enhanced field liaison model that will provide more proactive support to students and field instructors. Field liaisons, comprised of faculty and social work practitioners, serve an important role in the development of cohesive working relationships between students and field instructors. Additionally, they work to ensure that learning in field reinforces the tenets of academic instruction. Field liaisons are generally the first contacts for students and field instructors. They are often called upon to interpret and reinforce the MSW curriculum, field education policies and procedures and the timely completion of field evaluation and monitoring tools.

The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education affirm that the intent of field education is to link classroom curricular content to the real-world practice setting. Field and classroom content are given equal importance in the MSW curriculum. Because field education presents unique challenges and rewards for student learning, field liaisons are assigned to help preserve the quality of learning and to provide mentorship to field instructors (as teachers) and students (as learners).

The Field Liaison Manual was created to help guide field liaisons:

- To serve as gatekeepers of the social work profession in field;
- To understand key learning objectives of the MSW program;
- To practice, with fidelity, tasks and duties of the liaison role;
- To understand and navigate different issues that emerge in field instruction;
- To utilize resources and forms that serve to monitor and evaluate student learning.

The Field Education Office is grateful for the tremendous contribution of its field liaisons. Our ability to ensure quality learning in field is enhanced by the dedicated professionals and faculty who mentor, monitor and mediate all aspects of the field instruction process. The field liaison manual evolved from the experiences and learned skills of our dedicated field liaisons.
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PRACTICAL MATTERS FOR FIELD LIAISONS

**Appointment Status**
Field liaisons are appointed on a yearly basis. They are given the title, “Volunteer Field Instructor” and are subject to the same employee benefits of an adjunct instructor. Field liaisons are eligible for employee benefits designated by the State of New York University at Albany. The salary is set by the Director of Field Education and is not subject to merit increases.

**Payroll**
Liaisons are paid bi-weekly, in accordance with the payroll schedule set by the University at Albany. Persons recruited to serve as liaisons will be required to complete personnel and tax documentation prior to hire. The School of Social Welfare’s fiscal administrator or Human Resources department may be contacted for questions regarding the hiring process.

**Time and Attendance**
Employees are required to notify the Field Education Office when taking a leave of absence during the academic year. This can be achieved by emailing or calling the Director of Field Education at least two weeks in advance of a planned leave from work.

**SUNYCard**
All employees of the University at Albany are required to obtain a picture ID card. SUNYCards are used to gain access to University buildings outside of general office hours. The card is also used for access to University equipment, facilities and library resources. ID cards remain active throughout the employee’s employment. There is no cost for obtaining your initial University at Albany SUNYCard. There is a fee for replacement of a lost or stolen SUNYCard. You can obtain your SUNYCard at the uptown campus in Campus Center B52. Further instructions about how to obtain a SUNYCard can be found on the website: [http://www.albany.edu/uas/sunycard.php](http://www.albany.edu/uas/sunycard.php).

**Parking**
Employees of the University may purchase faculty/staff parking permits at a cost of $25, renewable annually from September 1-August 31. Employees with a parking permit on their registered vehicle(s) may park in designated faculty/staff parking lots during posted hours. Employees of the University at Albany must adhere to the parking regulations of the City of Albany. The Field Education Office will not be held responsible for payment of City of Albany permit parking violations.

**Office Equipment Resources**
University employees have access to office copy machines, located on the first and second floors of Richardson Hall. The SSW fax machine is located on the first floor across from the Field Education Office. Office supplies needed for the completion of liaison functions may be obtained through the Field Education Office.

Field Liaisons may conduct meetings with students in a designated office space provided by the Field Education Office. The office space has a desk, chairs and phone line.
**Travel Reimbursement**

Field liaisons will be reimbursed mileage for travel related to their liaison duties. The mileage reimbursement rate is set annually by the NYS Department of Labor. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted to the Field Education Office monthly. Field liaisons should not accumulate multiple months of travel reimbursement requests; this will delay reimbursement and may be denied. Field liaisons should not schedule non-vehicle travel or hotel accommodations for the purposes of liaison-related work without receiving prior approval from the Director of Field Education.
MSW FIELD EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Field education is an integral part of the SSW curriculum, integrating 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 in practice settings.

Generally, MSW students complete two full years of field over four semesters, with the field practicum taken concurrently with coursework. Students work 500 hours or two full days per week for two semesters each year. Field Instruction I is a three-credit course and Field Instruction II, III and IV are each four-credit courses. The field courses taken during the first field (generalist) year are RSSW 650 and 651. The field courses taken for the advanced-concentration (clinical or macro) placement are RSSW 752 and 753. Full academic credit for field is given at the time of successful completion of RSSW 650 and 651 for first field and the completion of RSSW 752 and 753 for second field. As a result, the grades for the first semesters of each field sequence (RSSW 650 and RSSW 752) are always “I” Incomplete. Students receive a final grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (S/U) at the end of the second semester of field each year. This occurs because field requirements are determined through demonstrated competency of skill over the course of two semesters. In the assignment of the final grade, the Director of Field Education considers input provided by the field liaison.

Students are assigned a field liaison each year. Field liaisons provide a variety of supportive services designed to create cohesive working relationships between students and their field instructors. Some of the responsibilities of field liaisons include: ensuring match between field learning and classroom instruction, mediation and problem-solving and coaching on professional development. Students have contact with their liaisons a minimum of once per semester and can request meetings with them anytime regarding issues in Field.

The Seminar in Field Instruction is a required course for all new field instructors. The course is designed to help field instructors learn how to provide quality field supervision to students and learn best practices for navigating issues in field. The SIFI is offered every year and is comprised of eight sessions that meet monthly.

Beginning in the fall of 2014, all MSW students starting their first field assignment will participate in a field seminar, in conjunction with their field placements. The seminar focuses on the professional and practice issues that students encounter in field and provides a forum for seeking guidance and addressing concerns. The seminar is taken concurrently with RSSW 620 and 621 (Micro Practice in Social Work I and II).

Career development workshops are offered each year to help students learn about the professional specialties that exist for different practice. Additionally, there is an annual Field and Career Fair that connects students to agencies around the region for field placements or employment opportunities. Additional resources can be obtained by contacting the Field Education Office at (518) 442-5321 or at sswfieldoffice@albany.edu.
TYPES OF PLACEMENTS

1st Field Generalist
The generalist placement usually occurs on Mondays and Tuesdays and coursework is taken Wednesdays through Fridays. The generalist field placement exposes students to a cross section of social work experiences, serving to ground them in core skills necessary for advanced clinical or macro practice. The assignment of first field placements is done by the Field Education Office. MSW part-time students take their generalist field practicum during their second year of study and must commit to two full days of field per week.

2nd Field Advanced-Concentration (Clinical or Macro)
Students have the option of choosing their second field (advanced-concentration clinical or macro) placements. Field days are typically on Thursdays and Fridays. MSW part-time students take advanced-concentration field during their fourth year of study and must commit to two full days of field per week. Students may also consider block or work study options for field. More information about block options and work study can be found below.

Advanced Standing
Students graduating with an undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited college or university may apply to the Advanced Standing (AS) program. AS students have taken some practice coursework and field instruction, as part of their undergraduate studies. The AS status enables students to complete the MSW degree in less time than the traditional two-year degree program. AS Field Instruction is a three (3) semester assignment (summer, fall, spring) that is held at one agency.

Block Placements
Students seeking their second field placements (advanced-concentration) have the option of requesting a summer block or summer/fall block placement. To be eligible for a block placement, students must have successfully completed Field I and II and earned at least 37 credits. Students must be in good academic standing at the School of Social Welfare. Students must also have three out the last five years of paid full-time employment in human services. Field sites must agree to have students do a block placement. An official request for a block placement is made by submitting an application.

Work Study
Students employed full-time may request to have one of their two field placements at their place of employment. For consideration of a current employment site, students must be currently employed at a human services agency for a minimum of 3 out of the last 5 years. The designated human services agency must perform services to clients, have social workers performing clinical duties in service to those clients and uphold a mission of service congruent with the curricular objectives of the University at Albany School of Social Welfare. Students considering Work Study must demonstrate that their work site provides a different learning experience from their primary work duties. Additionally, the field instructor of record must be different from the student’s direct supervisor. There is an application form that must be submitted for consideration of Work Study.
THE ROLE OF LIAISONS IN FIELD INSTRUCTION

The field liaison serves as an important communication link between the School, agency and student. The field liaison provides support to the field instructor at the agency and serves as a mentor to the student. Liaisons are assigned to agencies at the beginning of their field placements and continue working with the students and field instructors until the end of the school year.

Field liaisons serve as the first contacts when challenges emerge in field. Liaisons consist of social workers with years of supervisory experience in social work practice and faculty of the School of Social Welfare. They are resources for students and field instructors throughout the duration of the field placement. They can be consulted on the development and review of performance evaluations, provide guidance on ethical dilemmas or assist in the development of learning agreements. Liaisons contact the field instructor and student a minimum of once per semester, but can be contacted at any time during the field assignment.

For each first field (generalist) student assigned, field liaisons are expected to schedule on-site field agency visits a minimum of once per semester. On-site field agency visits are not required for second field (advanced-concentration) students. The objectives for going on the first on-site field agency visit include:

- Formally introducing the field liaison to the students and field instructors
- Discussing elements of the MSW program curriculum and its congruity with the objectives of field education
- Gaining familiarity with the agency environment
- Helping field instructors and students to understand and utilize the supportive resources provided by the field liaison.

The initial meeting during the fall semester serves to proactively build a cohesive working relationship between the student and field instructor. This is also a good time for the field instructor and student to get to know their field liaison as reliable resource and contact person before any issues arise.

The purpose of the on-site field agency visit during the spring semester is to formally check-in with the student and field instructor about the student’s progress in field. This is also a time to determine if there is a need for a more focused learning agreement, mediate any identified challenges in the working relationship and/or to help plan for the student’s smooth transition from the program by the end of the semester.

Students interning at their second field (advanced-concentration) placements are expected to have achieved the core skills necessary for practice at the advanced student level of practice. As a result, on-site field agency visits are not required for this cohort of students. Field liaisons communicate with second field students and their field instructors by telephone or email. It is recommended that introductory outreach take place early in the semester, followed by a minimum of two additional correspondences during the academic year.

Effective fall 2014, in addition to their regular duties, liaisons will teach the Field Seminar course to all 1st field (generalist) students.
DEFINING THE LIAISON ROLE

Field Liaison Job Description
The Field Liaison is a part-time adjunct position. The Field Liaison represents the School and coordinates relationships between students and community agencies in which students complete their required field practica. This social work professional provides supportive services designed to create cohesive working relationships between MSW students and their field instructors. MSW field liaisons must have an MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited college or university and have a minimum of two years of post-graduate experience in social work practice.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES
1. Attends a required 5-session paid training, as required for all newly hired field liaisons.
2. After training, prepares for and teaches the monthly Field Seminar for first year MSW students in Field. Uses Field Seminar to assist students with integrating course work and Field work for developing social work skills. Evaluates Seminar coursework.
3. Interprets SSW policies, procedures and agency expectations to the field instructor; continually monitors the fit of agency placement and student abilities in accordance with the MSW program curriculum.
4. Reviews and approves students’ assignments and learning objectives as outlined in the learning agreement.
5. Reviews Field Evaluations by the instructor, Student Evaluations of Field, process recordings and macro projects to assess the students’ skill development.
6. Arranges office hours to accommodate individual student meetings as needed or requested.
7. Conducts site visits and other outreach activities with the field instructor and student (as outlined by the Field Office) to evaluate the students’ performance in Field.
8. Provides the first intervention(s) if a problem arises at the Field placement; the goal would be to resolve the conflict and monitor.
9. Communicates with the Director and Assistant Directors of Field Education if a problematic placement cannot be resolved through early interventions.
10. Makes recommendations for continued use of agencies and field instructors. Assists with identifying new sites for field placements and facilitates partnership with the School of Social Welfare.
11. Provides input on a final grade for students to the Director of Field Education based upon seminar assignments, performance in the agency, Field Evaluations, discussions with students and Field Instructor and the overall manner in which a student has met responsibilities.
12. Attends group or individual meetings for field liaisons as scheduled by the Field Education office.
13. Maintains written records of field liaison duties as required.
Summary of Duties

Support to Field Instructors and Students

Students starting field, especially for the first time, have a number of questions and concerns. The Field Education Office relies upon the field instructors and field liaisons to help students adjust to their field assignments. Students may be balancing a number of issues with their academic program and the stress may impact their performance in field.

- Some students may have difficult conceptualizing the concept of being learners in field, instead of employees. As a result, some students may struggle with the pace of learning, expecting to be exposed to client contact too soon or (conversely) feel unprepared to have client contact when field instructors are ready to assign them. As a result, these students may be reluctant to take risks or make mistakes.
- Field liaisons can help students understand the relationship between the academic curriculum and field learning. As social work professionals in the field, liaisons can also provide information about the many types of social work practice.
- As learners, students can apply core practice skills across a range of client populations. Field liaisons can help students who are reluctant to work with certain populations understand the integration of generalist skills to practice.
- Field liaisons may also serve as mentors, providing support and guidance to students as they contemplate their professional goals after graduation.

Additionally, field liaisons can help field instructors prepare for students by learning and adapting to individual styles of learning. The “one size fits all” approach to supervision often creates a fractured working relationship that can delay the achievement of competency of skill for the student.

Liaisons offer mentorship to both students and field instructors, empowering both to fully participate in the learning process. Field instructors and students receive guidance from liaisons on mediating conflict, assessing skills and managing ethical dilemmas.

Field Seminar

Field liaisons will be instructors of the field seminar for MSW students in their first field placements. The seminar will be used to reinforce the role field plays in the MSW curriculum, facilitate dialogue among students for support and guidance on field issues and assess competency of skills through group discussion and assignments.

Evaluation and Grading

Through review of field evaluations, process recordings and discussions with students and field instructors, field liaisons will be instrumental in assessing the competency of skill for students completing their field placements. Liaisons provide input about the recommended grade for Field Instruction.

Assistance with Site Development

In the course of conducting site visits and networking with field agency partners, field liaisons may learn of new internship opportunities for future students. Liaisons are encouraged to notify the Director of Field Education when there is the potential for new field placement opportunities.
FIELD LIAISON TASK INSTRUCTIONS

Trainings for Field Liaisons
Newly hired field liaisons will attend five training sessions over the fall/spring semesters. The trainings serve to orient new staff to the responsibilities of field liaisons, while also reviewing the training curriculum and syllabus content for the seminar. Attendance to these trainings is mandatory, and field liaisons will not be able to teach the seminar course if all five sessions are not attended.

Outreach Calls
Your approach to calls will vary depending upon whether it is a first or subsequent call. An introductory phone call should include an explanation of your role that includes the following elements.

- Monitoring of student performance.
- Education and consultation
- Mediation and problem solving
- Documentation

In addition, field instructors should be informed of the best way to contact you.

Tips for Calling Field Instructors
The following sample of questions may help jumpstart and focus your contacts with field instructors. They are intended to supplement rather than supersede what may already work for you. The Learning Agreement is also an excellent source of information on what has already been established between the supervisor and student. If the Learning Agreement is overdue for submission this could indicate a problem and serve as a useful point of inquiry.

- Generally speaking, how does the internship seem to be working out for the two of you so far?
- Has your student been submitting Process Recordings regularly for your review?
- How is the student getting along with others?
- How much client contact has the student had thus far? (Content/Frequency)
- How comfortable does the student seem to be interacting with clients at this point?
- Did this student start from the ability level you expected? Is the student learning at a pace appropriate for their role?
- How is your supervisory relationship going with this student?
- Do any particular strengths or weaknesses stand out to you?
- What level of satisfaction with the placement has the student expressed to you? (If any)
- Do you have any questions concerning assignments or due dates at this time?
Site Visits
On-site visits to each field agency assigned to students in their first field placements should be conducted a minimum of once each semester (fall/spring). Site visits are not required for students in 2nd field (advanced-concentration) placements. The purpose for conducting an on-site visit early in the fall semester is to become acquainted with the students and field instructors and informing of your supportive role to the learning process. Goals for the first meeting include:

- Gaining familiarity with the agency, field instructor and learning opportunities available for students
- Assessment of the working relationship
- Review of the learning agreement
- Identification and resolution of any initial barriers to learning
- Review of the evaluation process
- Reinforcement of the use of process recordings
- Reinforcement of the importance of documentation in supervision and the writing of critical summaries about competency of skills

Review of Learning Agreements
The learning agreement is an individualized learning plan for the student that is developed with the input of the student, field instructor and placement agency. The learning agreement should be developed within the first two weeks of the field placement. The purpose of the learning agreement is to outline the learning objectives for the year, along with the specific tasks that will formulate learning for the student. The learning agreement also clearly explains the responsibilities of both the student and field instructor to the learning process.

The field liaison will review the learning agreement to ensure that objectives outlined in the agreement coincide with the Field Instruction course objectives. Key things to pay attention to include:

- Supervision provided at a designated time and place
- Appropriate learning opportunities (number and type of cases, macro project, etc)
- Signed by both student and field instructor

Learning agreements that are minimally complete or delayed may indicate problematic issues emerging such as access to supervision, length and content of supervision or lack of follow up documentation submitted by the student. If these issues are encountered, the field liaison should follow up with the field instructor as early as possible.

Focused Learning Agreements
A Focused Learning Agreement (FLA) may be needed if the student fails to progress at the expected pace in one or more critical areas. This contract intervention allows the student and field instructor to temporarily protract the scope of overall learning and provide an intensified emphasis on 1-3 essential skills. To the extent possible, learning methods, measurable performance targets and a set time frame for review of progress should be specified.
The purpose of the FLA is to provide a short term assessment period to determine if the student is capable of learning the fundamental skills necessary for continuance in the placement. If the field liaison and field instructor determine the need for a focused learning agreement, the field liaison should offer to be a participant in its development. Copies of the FLA should be signed and dated by the student, field instructor and field liaison. One copy should be sent to the Field Education office. Samples of focused learning agreements can be obtained in the Field Education Office (also see a sample in the Appendix).

**Process Recordings**

Process recordings are important tools for assessing competency of social work skills. Process recordings are designed to help students visually interpret their use of social work skills, while gaining insight into their professional growth and development. Process recordings should be done weekly by students in generalist (1st) field and advanced-concentration clinical field. Field instructors should review their students’ process recordings and provide written and verbal feedback through comments on the documents and as discussion topics in supervision. Field liaisons should reinforce the importance of students and field instructors using process recordings as learning tools. One completed process recording should be submitted with each field evaluation for review. Each evaluation should have a different process recording.

**Field Seminar**

Field liaisons will teach the field seminar to students in their first field (generalist) placements. There will be five sessions of field seminar each semester (fall/spring). Field liaisons will receive instruction on assignments and guidance on facilitating the seminar course in the training sessions. Attendance, participation and completion of assignments are factored into the final grade for Field Instruction.

**Documentation of Field Liaison Services**

Field liaisons will be asked to document all contacts with students and field instructors. Forms will be provided the Field Education office. There are two tracking forms that field liaisons will complete. Information for the “Field Liaison Placement Checklist” should document:

- Agency, field instructor and student contacts
- Completed site visits for first field student placements
- Completion of learning agreements, evaluations, process recordings and macro projects.

There is also a liaison contact sheet for each student and field instructor served. The contact sheet enables field liaisons to record any problems identified during the course of their contact with the placement agencies, along with comments for recommended next steps or interventions. The completed forms are handed in to the Field Office at the end of the school year (May). Copies of these forms can be found in the Appendix.

**Review of Field Evaluations**

Evaluations, process recordings and macro assignments are sent to the Field Education Office and then to the field liaisons for review. Field instructors and/or students may request a meeting with the field liaison to discuss the evaluations. Field liaisons are requested to review and return all documents to the Field Education Office. At the end of the spring semester, a time when grading for students in 2nd field must be submitted right away, field liaisons should review and provide input about concerns right away. Final evaluations and input from the field liaison are key determinants in the assignment of the final grade for Field Instruction.
Gatekeepers of the Profession
The School of Social Welfare has developed a document “Standards for Social Work Education”. This document, found in the appendix, outlines the ethical, performance and academic standards for students. As gatekeepers of the profession, faculty, field instructors and field liaisons are all expected to hold students to these standards. Field liaisons can utilize the procedures outlined in the document if they feel a student does not meet the standards.

Field liaisons monitor the overall field placement assignment. This includes assessing the students’ level of competency, evaluating the field instructor’s supervision and determining appropriateness of the learning within the agencies hosting students. In the event that the liaison becomes aware of any unethical practices of the student, field instructor or organizational culture, such knowledge should be immediately brought to the attention of the Director of Field Education.

Liaisons and FERPA
Field evaluations, process recordings, attendance sheets and critical summaries about student progress are considered student educational records and are subject to FERPA protection rules. For more information, please refer to the section, “Students’ Rights Under FERPA”.
STUDENTS’ RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of educational records for students ages 18 and over. Generally, schools must have written permission from the student before releasing any information in the education record.

Field education is part of the educational curriculum for undergraduate and graduate education. Field instructors and field liaisons are classified as adjunct instructors and serves as teachers in field. As a result, field liaisons may share elements of a student’s educational record with field instructors within the context of overall educational competency. The agreement between the School of Social Welfare and the agency partner implies agreement on instruction of the educational curriculum. Communication between the School of Social Welfare and any entity unrelated to student instruction would require the written consent of the student and/or parent.

Additional information about confidentiality of students’ education records can be found on the website of the University at Albany:
TIMELINES AND DUE DATES

Below is a summary of important dates for field liaisons to remember. A complete calendar for graduate field education can be found in the Appendix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FALL SEMESTER 2013</th>
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<tr>
<td>First Day of Field for 2nd Field students</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Day of Field for 1st Field Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Field Students: completed Learning Agreement Due in Field Ed. Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generalist 1st Field Students: completed Learning Agreement Due in Field Ed. Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Evaluation for 2nd Field Students due in Field Ed. Office by</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Evaluation for Generalist 1st Field Students due in Field Ed. Office by</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Day of Field for Generalist 1st Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Day of Field for 2nd Field Students</td>
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<td>Student Attendance forms due in Field Office by</td>
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<tr>
<th>SPRING SEMESTER 2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Field resumes for Generalist 1st Field students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field resumes for 2nd Field Advanced Concentration students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Evaluation for 1st Field Generalist students due</td>
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<td>Second Evaluation for 2nd Field Advanced Concentration students due</td>
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<td>Last Day of Field for Generalist 1st Field students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Day of Field for 2nd Field Advanced Concentration students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third (Final) Evaluation for 2nd Field Advanced Concentration students, and attendance sheets due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third (Final) Evaluation shared with Generalist 1st Field Students and attendance due</td>
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<tr>
<th>IMPORTANT DATES FOR FIELD LIAISONS 2013-2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Initial training session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial phone call or email to students and field instructors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second training session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial site visit to first field placements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third training session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field liaison Check – in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field liaison Check – in</td>
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<td>Field seminar training</td>
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<td>Field seminar training</td>
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COMMON ISSUES IN FIELD**

**Supervision**
Students are entitled to adequate training and supervision by an MSW. The minimum requirement is one full hour of individual supervision per week. Group supervision can be provided as an additional learning forum, but is not a substitute for individual supervision. In addition to the supervision provided by an MSW, students may receive supervisory support from a task supervisor.

There are common problems that arise around supervision of students, the most common being that the student does not receive regular supervision. Students are often reluctant to report this to their liaisons for various reasons; therefore it is important to ask students directly if they are receiving the appropriate amount and length of supervision. The response “we are together all the time” does not meet the requirements. Students need a time devoted to them where they can have theoretical discussions, review process recordings and receive specific guidance and feedback. Students should be encouraged to go to supervision with an agenda of topics they wish to discuss. Another issue that students often face is that supervision is frequently cancelled or cut short. Students should be encouraged to assertively and politely ask that supervision be rescheduled when missed. Other problems related to supervision include:

- Not receiving specific feedback or receiving either positive or negative feedback only
- A supervisor who has poor boundaries – looking for a “friend” or other dual relationship
- Supervisor behaving unethically
- Not receiving enough learning opportunities/cases

**Agency Changes During Placement**
As we all know, the only constant in social work is change. Students often have difficulty adjusting to agency changes (loss of staff or entire programs, change in regulatory requirements, new computer/reporting systems, etc.). They should be encouraged to find ways of coping and view it as a learning opportunity and a form of skill development. However, if their field instructor leaves the agency or changes, the School needs to be apprised of it. Either a qualified field instructor needs to be identified by the agency or the student will need to be placed elsewhere.

**Conflicts between Students and Field Instructors**
There will be times when you are called to mediate a conflict between a field instructor and a student. Frequently this is the result of resentment that has built up over issues that have not been addressed (on the part of field instructor, student or both).

Situations that may create conflict are:
- Student does not meet field instructor’s expectation of student’s preparation for field
- Student has difficulty adapting to the organizational culture
- Student’s need for management does not match field instructor’s approach (micromanagement vs. too much autonomy/independence)
- Differences in values related to cultural, age, gender etc. differences.
Some of the issues that generate conflict include:

- Difficulty in communication
- A difference in personal style (self-disclosing or not, authoritative vs. affiliative, directive or non-directive are some examples)
- A difference in orientation – i.e., task oriented vs. process oriented
- Student feels like he/she is being treated as a worker instead of a student learner

**Dual Contracting**
While most students and field instructors are not prone to “Dual Contracting” it occurs often enough to constitute a pitfall worth resisting and preventing. Once in place, this dynamic has a detrimental impact on the learning process even if the placement ends “smoothly.”

Students entering field may find themselves invited to engage in more than one contract. First, there is the way things are supposed to work according to the school. Then there is the way it really works once you get there. A certain level of dissonance between the two is to be expected given that the agency, as a discrete organism, will always represent an interpretation or approximation of what the school intends. However, if the gap is wide enough, a second contract emerges, usually unspoken, whereby the student agrees to go along with irregularities in return for a favorable evaluation. The arrangement works as long as both parties agree not to bring up one another’s shortcomings. This second contract is highly combustible and once violated can turn explosive. For instance, if the student feels overloaded, criticized or blamed for something they consider the fault of the field instructor or agency they may break the contract, blow the whistle, and betray “the secret”.

Violations can occur in reverse as well. A poorly performing intern who complains about an agency can expect to have their shortcomings, previously overlooked, now become front page. Whoever violates the contract first will trigger a backlash.

**Field “Lite”**
Field Lite refers to an informal survival strategy that may be adopted by stressed out students who need relief from the demands of an overwhelming schedule. While most students do not subscribe to field lite, it occurs often enough to warrant identification, intervention and prevention. Once in place, it can have a detrimental impact on the learning process. While “mature” students and part-timers may be more susceptible to this phenomenon, it is not limited to them.

Many students feel pressured by the demands of a full life outside of school. They may be trying to balance being a student, homemaker, parent and full time employee. They know they have overscheduled themselves, but feel they have come too far to give up now. Overloaded and overwhelmed, they seek the path of least resistance. What they truly need is a place to exhale and rest - a respite from challenge and hassle. Often the compromise is field; they try to do *Field Lite* - a nonexistent track that is informally and privately established.
Field “Lite” Cont.
Unrealistic expectations aside, they find themselves locked into a school program whose endless demands must now be accommodated. Demands that often seem excessive, redundant, inflexible…those that have become a nuisance. If the student has considerable work experience (past or present) they may believe they already qualify for an MSW. This undercurrent of entitlement can contribute to difficulties accepting a learner role. Add to the equation an inexperienced field instructor and their tolerance can be pushed further. Enabling can occur if field instructors are inclined to “back off” a perceived mature student with experience. This strategy may be instituted in order to a) Defuse authority issues or b) Cash in on their presumed low maintenance intern/staff member (See Dual Contracting). Behavioral evidence may include frequent personal calls (sometimes of a crisis nature), a fragmented and heavily customized field schedule, unpredictable absenteeism and unreliable arrival and departure times.

Field Lite is not restricted only to “mature” students and may apply to any student consistently overwhelmed. Health problems, financial stress or preoccupation with family members at a distance may substitute for the stressors of full time employment or parenting.

Employment Offers During Field
Hiring students before they’ve finished field is typically discouraged. Even though an internship can function like an extended interview, past experience with this shows that when students are put into a dual role within the same agency, especially in the same department with the same supervisor, the learner role becomes subordinate to the employer role, thus compromising field education. If a student is offered a job at the same agency that he/she is interning, a new employment form must be completed and sent to the Director of Field Education within 30 days of the offer. A decision about continuation of the field placement assignment will be made after an investigation is completed.

Requests to Switch Placements
The field office is often reluctant to switch a student placement. Reasons for hesitation to change a student’s placement include:

- There is significant interruption to the learning for the student
- It is part of the educational process to help the student understand how to work out problems in relationships, improved communication skills and cope with style/learning differences between themselves and field instructors

However, the following criteria may result in a change of placement:

- Inadequate supervision (not receiving at least 1 hr. per week)
- Inadequate educational opportunities
- Relationship appears to be unworkable

If a student is at risk of failing, unless the above criteria are met, the student is not replaced.
**Student Performance Issues**
When performance issues arise during a placement, there are several safeguards to help address them before they reach crisis stage. It is crucial that field instructors know their liaisons and their role in helping to address performance issues. In addition, site visits, check-in phone calls and evaluations should be used to make an assessment of the student’s performance. The future seminar will also be used to assess when a performance issue needs intervention by the liaison.

Some common performance issues include:
- Professional behavior related to time, attendance, attire, technology and cell phone usage.
- Inability to establish relationships at the basic level due to lack of interpersonal skills and/or empathy.
- Limited ability to conceptualize.
- Lack of initiative/not involving self adequately in the learning process.
- Inability to receive and/or incorporate constructive feedback.

**Placement Planning for 2nd field**
Second year field students are given the option of finding their own placement. The vast majority choose this option. The field office offers various forms of assistance to students regarding their 2nd field placement. First, there is a meeting in January to walk them through the necessary steps and paperwork involved in finding a placement. In February, there is a Field and Career Fair where they can meet with agency representatives who are seeking students. Throughout the year there are workshops on related topics such as choosing a concentration (Macro or Clinical) and resume writing.

It is also common for first field students to approach both field instructors and field liaisons with questions about how to choose their second field placement and/or concentration. As liaison, it is important to be aware of the various models for specialized placements – work-study, Block placements - and specialized programs such as the Internships in Aging Project, Internships in Mental Health and The Center for Women in Government fellowship.

**Monitoring Work Study:**
Approval of work study plans is predicated on a commitment by the student, supervisor and host agency to establish and maintain proper boundaries to ensure that the quality and integrity of the learning experience is not compromised. Therefore the following points of examination and review may warrant special attention in addition to the matters of attention for a traditional placement.
- Different times and, to the extent possible, locations for the execution of learning vs. employment duties.
- The assignment of tasks and duties while in the role of intern reflect new learning opportunities related to educational goals.
- Supervision occurs with the regularity and duration as specified in the SSW program requirements.
- Schedule changes receive the approval of the field liaison and do not result in the tendency toward schedule fragmentation beyond one full field day remaining intact and the remaining day sub divided into two portions.
Making up Field Hours

Several circumstances may result in a need to make up field hours. The primary reasons are:

1. Delayed start (Should be shared between Field Office staff and the field liaison if occurring subsequent to the formal assignment of a placement)
2. Substantial interruption (Should be brought to the liaison’s attention by the student or field instructor)
3. Sporadic absences leading to a cumulative deficit

The common methods for making up time include:

1. Adding in hours each week on a predetermined consistent basis.
2. Adding in hours sporadically whenever possible.
3. Extending time in field past the established deadline.

Key requirements to keep in mind:

1. Plans to make up hours require the field instructor’s input and approval.
2. Any plan for making up hours should include the same legitimate learning opportunities and meaningful client contact included in the original plan.

Macro Projects for 1st Field Generalist Students

A macro project is required for all first field (generalist) students. The purpose of a macro project is to expose students to skills development around organizational, community and systems-level changes. Field instructors and students collaborate to develop a macro project suitable to the agency and learning needs of the student. Reminders about the development and completion of the macro project should occur when field liaisons make their site visits. Samples of macro projects done by former students can be found in the Appendix.

Career Planning

On occasion, students begin to reevaluate social work as their career choice and turn to their field instructors and field liaisons for advice. This topic is thoroughly explored in the document Field Office Q & A which can be found in the appendix. In addition, liaisons may be called upon by 2nd year students, particularly when they are nearing graduation and approaching the job market. Students can be directed to various workshops offered by the School of Social Welfare to assist students in their job search on such topics as Interviewing, Salary Negotiation, etc. However, students may also turn to you for more personal advice, suggestions and mentoring. This is often a role that liaisons enjoy as it calls upon reflection and sharing of your own accumulated wisdom during your career as a social worker. Students find it valuable to hear about the career paths that their liaisons have traversed and the various career decisions that they made along the way.

** Additional issues expressed by students can be found in the Field Q&A (see Links to Helpful Tools section).
MEDIATION

When issues arise in field, students and/or field instructors may need support in negotiating, mediating or resolving conflicts. Field liaisons are the first points of access when conflicts occur. Unrealistic expectations, infrequent or fractured communication and limited resources are examples of key variables that generate conflict. Below are some strategies to help provide support.

**Time for Listening**

When a student requests to meet with the field liaison, a meeting should be scheduled to listen to the student’s concerns. During the meeting, an assessment of the perceived problem should be captured before determining when and how to intervene. Students may have expectations to be removed from their placements when conflicts arise, and field liaisons can provide supportive counsel and reinforcement of the curricular objectives of the field learning experiences. Students should be informed of the field instructor’s role in mediating conflicts in field before decisions are made to remove them from their field placements.

**Helping Field Instructors Manage Student Issues**

When students are underperforming, field instructors may require guidance on how to address these deficits. Supervision should occur consistently, and constructive feedback should be provided and documented by the field instructor after meetings with the student. Field instructors should provide written feedback to students to ensure understanding of the performance concerns and include a plan for improvement. When it is evident that the student is not demonstrating competency of social work skills in a timely manner, there is a need to implement a focused learning agreement. A meeting with the field liaison, field instructor and student(s) should occur at this point.

Field Instructors may also need guidance in managing conflict with students that interfere with the learning experiences. Difference in the supervisory styles of field instructors and the learning styles of students can present unique challenges for the working relationship. Field instructors should understand these barriers and seek to resolve the issues that impact learning. Field liaisons should listen to field instructors’ concerns and validate their feelings.

**Extra Monitoring**

Field liaisons may schedule extra on-site visits with the field instructor and student. If discussions by phone/email correspondence do not resolve matters, field liaisons can meet with all parties at the placement agency. These meetings can be used to discuss the development of a focused learning agreement, or provide on-site mediation of contentious issues that impact the learning experiences of students.

**When to Contact the Field Education Office**

When initial interventions are unsuccessful, field liaisons should contact the Director of Field Education to discuss the problems. This should occur before a decision is made about suspending field or requesting a change in placement. Field instructors and students should be informed of the plan to contact the Field Education Office and that a following meeting with the Director of Field Education may occur with all parties before deciding on the continuation of the field placement assignment.
SUSPENSION FROM FIELD INSTRUCTION

In accordance with the School of Social Welfare’s Professional Standards for Social Work Practice, and with the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, students must demonstrate understanding of and adherence to the professional and ethical standards for social work practice. A student may be suspended from a field placement for behavior that is deemed detrimental to self, the client, agency or community. The determination of detrimental behavior is made by the Director of Field Education, with input from the field liaison and/or the field instructor/agency.

The Director of Field Education will make this determination following an investigation of the behavior or practices in question. Lack of knowledge or skill may warrant further instruction and training for skill development.

The decision to suspend a student from field is determined after a comprehensive review of the practices or behaviors being investigated. To ensure safety and further undue risk, students may be suspended from field pending the outcome of an investigation.

During an investigation of behavior in field, the field liaison and Director of Field Education will carefully examine the student's professional behavior as reflected in written records or reports and statements made by the student, field instructor and other agency personnel. Client information is protected during the investigation process. At the conclusion of the investigation, the field liaison will submit a written report to the Director of Field Education. The report will include a recommendation for the student to: (1) continue in the same placement, (2) be assigned to a different placement or (3) be terminated from field and assigned a “U” Unsatisfactory grade.
EVALUATION AND GRADING PROCEDURES

Evaluation of Skills
The process of evaluation is an important component of any educational endeavor because it helps give definition to learning. While evaluation of professional practice should be ongoing, there are some important issues for field instructors and students to consider when completing field evaluations:

1. There are three written evaluations of student performance to complete over two semesters. The three evaluations are generally due in November, February and May.
2. The Field Education Office provides the specific due dates every year. Students who have modified schedules with alternative start and end dates for field may have different timelines for completing the evaluations. Timelines for submitting completed evaluations for students on modified schedules will be provided by the Field Education Office.
3. Considered part of the final grade for Field Instruction I and II, a macro project must be completed in order to receive a final grade of Satisfactory.
4. Standards for evaluation are based upon a continuum of skill development over the two years of field practice. Evaluation measures for generalist and advanced-concentration clinical and macro are derived from the MSW program curriculum and from the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education.
5. The six areas of evaluation to determine competency of generalist and clinical social work practice are: student as learner; professional values and ethics; knowledge and skill of agency-based work; communication skills; assessment skills; intervention skills. An overall rating of the student’s progress is calculated based on the Field Instructor’s assessment of competence.
6. The six areas of evaluation to determine competency of macro social work practice are: student as learner; professional values and ethics; communication skills, knowledge and skills in organizational work; applying knowledge and skills in community work; planning, coordination and management skills. An overall rating of the student’s proficiency is calculated, similar to the clinical evaluation.
7. Students in generalist or clinical advanced-concentration field must submit one completed and reviewed process recording with each evaluation. There should be a different process recording with each evaluation.
8. Field instructors should review evaluations with students as a way of communicating progress and areas needing improvement.
9. After the field instructor completes the evaluation, supervision time is scheduled with the student to review the evaluation.
10. Both the student and field instructor must sign the evaluation in ink. The student's signature does not necessarily confirm agreement with the content of the evaluation; it indicates the student has read the evaluation and discussed it with the field instructor. A student who disagrees with all or part of an evaluation may write a rebuttal, which should be submitted to the Field Education Office for review by the field liaison and Director of Field Education. The evaluation and rebuttal will be discussed with the student and will become a part of the official record, with a copy made available to the field instructor.
11. Completed and signed evaluations are submitted to the Field Education Office.
12. If a student is not performing in field satisfactorily at the time of the first or second evaluations, a focused learning agreement should be created and used to assess progress by the second and/or third evaluations. The field liaison should be notified by the field instructor of performance concerns and consulted about the terms of the focused learning agreement. A copy of the focused learning agreement, signed by both the student and field instructor, should be submitted to the field liaison and Field Education Office.

**Writing Critical Summaries**

Field liaisons receive input about a student’s progress in field through multiple sources. Meetings with the field instructor and/or student and review of field evaluations provide substantive evidence of a student’s proficiency of social work practice skills. It is important for field instructors to monitor and track the progress of the students they supervise. It is prudent to track each student’s progress through documented summaries and this form of documented tracking can be described as “critical summaries”. Without having an organized process for tracking students’ progress, it will be difficult to summarize performance challenges, particularly if there is a need to terminate a field placement assignment. Field liaisons can assist field instructors in documenting solid critical summaries. An example can be found in the Appendix.

**Grading**

1. Field Instruction is delivered in a two semester sequence for each year of field. Students receive an “I” Incomplete after completing the first semester of any field sequence. This designation is changed to a “S” Satisfactory or “U” Unsatisfactory after the final evaluation is submitted for the second semester of the field sequence.
2. A Satisfactory grade means the student has demonstrated competency of skills in social work practice. An "Unsatisfactory" grade means the student has not achieved the minimal objectives of the course.
3. An Unsatisfactory grade in Field Instruction may result in dismissal from the MSW program.
4. Advanced Standing students that receive ratings lower than satisfactory for RSSW 651 may be allowed to continue in RSSW 752 in the fall. The Director of Field Education will investigate each student’s performance by reviewing supervision documentation and by consulting with the field liaison, student and field instructor. If the student is permitted to remain at the placement for the advanced concentration sequence, a focused learning agreement should be developed, with timelines for improvement. The focused learning agreement shall include date(s) when the student, field instructor and field liaison will meet again to evaluate the student's progress.
LINKS TO HELPFUL TOOLS

Field Education Website - http://www.albany.edu/ssw/About/field-education.shtml

MSW Curriculum and Model Programs - http://www.albany.edu/ssw/MSWmodel.shtml

Field Q&A - http://www.albany.edu/ssw/field-education/Field%20Office%20Q&A.pdf

APPENDIX

SSW Standards for Social Work Education

Example of a Critical Summary

Criteria for Field Evaluation

Learning Agreement Instructions

Sample of a Focused Learning Agreement

Sample Macro Assignments

Sample Process Recording

Field Liaison Tracking Forms
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Introduction

All students are expected to meet and maintain the academic standards established by the School of Social Welfare. The academic standards established by the School of Social Welfare are comprised of expectations regarding both scholastic performance and professional behavior. Students are expected to meet and maintain these standards in the classroom, in field, and in other contexts where they are acting as a social worker or social work student. Adherence to these standards will be the basis upon which students will be evaluated by faculty, including field instructors, responsible for evaluating student performance in the classroom and field. Meeting the criteria for scholastic performance is necessary but is not the sole measure to ensure continued enrollment in a program. Students must also demonstrate professional competency and an understanding of and a commitment to the values and ethics of the social work profession. Advancement through the program is a privilege, not a right. Upon enrollment into the MSW program, students sign a form that verifies acknowledgement, understanding and acceptance of these standards.

The School of Social Welfare evaluates the academic performance of its students in four core areas: Basic Skills Necessary to Acquire Professional Competence; Coping Skills; Professional Performance Skills; and Scholastic Performance.

Criteria for Evaluating Academic Performance

1. Basic Skills Necessary to Attain Professional Competence

Communication Skills
The social work student must demonstrate sufficient written and oral skills to:
- Communicate ideas and feelings clearly, effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals
- Understand and articulate the content presented in the program and to complete adequately all written and oral assignments
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to others.

Interpersonal Skills
The social work student must demonstrate interpersonal skills to relate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals. These include flexibility, empathy, nonjudgmental attitude, respect, and the abilities to listen, communicate and negotiate.

Cognitive Skills
The social work student must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and apply it to situations in the classroom and field and other professional situations. The student must demonstrate the ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and apply that knowledge to social work practice.
Appreciation of Diversity
Social work practice requires understanding, affirmation and respect of another individual’s way of life and values. The social work student must demonstrate respect and sensitivity toward other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals and others who are different from him/herself regardless of the person’s age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, race, religion, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, or value system.

2. Coping Skills Necessary for Performance in the Program and Professional Practice

The social work student must demonstrate the capacity to interact positively and effectively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals at all times and to execute sound judgment and performance in the program. The student must demonstrate appropriate coping skills in the face of personal or other circumstances, including seeking counseling or other sources of support and assistance, to ensure that such circumstances do not: 
- compromise academic performance
- interfere with professional judgment and behavior
- jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility.

3. Professional Performance Skills Necessary for Work with Clients and Professional Practice

Professional Commitment
The social work student must demonstrate a strong commitment to further social and economic justice and to serve persons who are vulnerable, marginalized or oppressed.

Professional Conduct
The social work student must act professionally and responsibly in matters of punctuality, attendance, appearance and presentation of self.

The social work student must be able to advocate for her/himself in an appropriate and responsible manner. The student must be able to receive and accept feedback and supervision and apply such feedback to enhance professional development and self-awareness. The student must demonstrate the capacity to recognize and maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries and appropriately use self-disclosure.

Self-awareness
Self-awareness is a key component of social work practice. The social work student must be aware of how his or her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect his or her thinking, behavior and relationships with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals, including those in authority. The student must be able to accurately assess his or her own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. The student must be able to examine and appropriately modify his or her behavior when it interferes with his or her professional work.
**Ethical Obligations**
The behavior of the social work student must adhere to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice as delineated in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.

**4. Student Performance**

**Undergraduate Students**
Undergraduate social welfare majors must meet the academic standards defined in the Undergraduate Social Welfare Program Student Handbook and the Field Education Handbook, Undergraduate Program of the School of Social Welfare.

**Graduate Students**
MSW students must meet the academic standards defined in the Graduate Faculty and Student Handbook and the MSW Field Education Handbook of the School of Social Welfare.
CRITICAL SUMMARY SAMPLE

Summary of Issues Leading to the Termination of Field Placement for [Student]
Submitted by [Field Instructor], Field Placement Supervisor

[Student] is a second-year macro student who interned at the [Agency] for the Fall 2013 semester and the first few weeks of the Spring 2014 semester. After careful deliberation, extensive discussions with field liaison [Name] and a face-to-face meeting with [Name], we agreed it would be best for [student] to continue her education at another agency (preferably one offering clinical/direct practice opportunities). [Student] is bright and articulate, and the ending of her placement at the [Agency] was not caused by any inappropriate or damaging behaviors on the part of [student]. Rather, the placement was terminated because it was not a good fit between [student’s] existing skill set; her future career plans; her expectations for the macro field experience; and the learning opportunities available at the [agency]. That said, there were several performance and behavioral issues that impeded [student’s] ability to succeed in the [agency] placement. They are identified here not to criticize, but to help [student] continue her personal and professional development so she can enjoy success at future placements and places of employment.

Performance Issue: Computer Skills
[Student] is open about her shortcomings in this area, and she deserves credit for tackling her fear of the computer. Nevertheless, her skills in this area are abysmal, especially for someone that has had to submit papers throughout her college years. [Student’s] lack of ability with this basic function limited what I could give her for work, and the work I did give her required multiple edits to produce an acceptable finished product. I am not talking about complicated tasks - simply form letters. [Student] is unable to touch type, is unfamiliar with how to format basic business correspondence, and lacks knowledge and experience in Word and Excel. She required so much tutoring that much of the time spent on projects was spent on edits and re-writes rather than the projects themselves. I do not have the time, nor is it my responsibility, to teach basic computer skills to second year Master’s level student. A keyboarding class and intensive practice are recommended, followed by classes in Word and Excel. Although [student] has made improvement in this area, the deficits hinder her from advancing projects in a timely manner and functioning in a more independent manner.

Behavioral Issues
[Student] displayed several behavioral issues that interfered with her ability to interact successfully with others at the [agency]. These behaviors were compounded by discomfort and anxiety about how to function in the unfamiliar macro setting. [Student] experience and strengths lie in the direct practice arena.
Behavioral Issue #1: Not Listening
[Student] has a habit of interrupting when someone is speaking, especially when she is unsure of herself. For example, when trying to explain something to her on the computer, she will move the cursor up and down frantically on the screen trying to find what you are talking about rather than listening and absorbing what is being said.

Behavioral Issue #2: Lack of Focus and Unpredictable Quality of Work
[Student] is easily distracted and lets personal issues interfere with her ability to focus at work. For example, if her school schedule was busy or her children’s activities required a lot of driving one week, the quality of [student] work would suffer. One week her letters might need to be edited only once; the next they might need to be returned three times. When asked the cause for these variances, [student] would indicate they were due to either a ‘good week’ or a ‘bad week’. The unpredictability in the quality of [student] work limited what I was willing to give her. “If she can’t handle a form letter, how will she ever manage to write her own letter or design an invitation?” I adjusted my expectations down and had to give [student] simpler work than expected for a second year student.

Behavioral Issue #3: Argumentativeness
[Student] has strong opinions and vocalizes them well. This can be a strength, but it can also be a weakness. In [student’s] case, her argumentativeness prevented people from wanting to work with her. When faced with negative feedback, [student] tended to get defensive and reiterate her point several times. She was unable to internalize the feedback. (One exception is in the typing edits. [Student] was always open to receiving that feedback and making the necessary corrections.)

Misconceptions about the Purpose of Field Practice
[Student’s] background in direct practice led her to feel relatively competent in that area, so she opted for macro work when pursuing her second year placement. The student in her felt it would be better to gain experience in something new rather than enhance skills she already possessed. Several times during the placement, [student] remarked that she would end up in direct practice when she graduated. This indicated to me the placement was not a good match for [student] skills and future plans.
I applaud the learner in [student] who opted to take the harder, less familiar path, but the purpose of a second year placement is not to ‘get your feet wet,’ but to hone the skills you hope to use in your employment. [Student’s] mistaken belief is unfortunate in that it put her in a placement that did not suit her many strengths.

Future Plans
I appreciate the contributions [student] did make while at the [agency], and I commend her desire to make the most of her education by gaining exposure to both ends of the social work continuum. A direct practice setting, combined with intensive computer training, will give [student] the chance to succeed, which she very much deserves. I wish her all the best.
FIELD EVALUATION CRITERIA

EVALUATION INSTRUCTIONS

The generalist and second-year clinical practice field evaluation instruments are comprised of six sections: student as learner; development of professional attitudes, values and ethics; knowledge and skills for agency-based work; communication skills; assessment skills; and intervention skills. The skills are applicable to individuals, families, groups, and community assignments.

The second-year macro practice field evaluation instrument is comprised of five sections: student as learner; development of professional attitudes, values and ethics; knowledge and skills for organizational and community work; communication skills; and planning, coordination and management skills. Students are evaluated on a continuum of skills at three intervals throughout the year-long placement.

For each evaluation period, please rate a student on every item by entering the number that corresponds to your assessment of the student’s demonstrated performance in the box or boxes to the right of each item. Reevaluate a student’s performance from a previous evaluation when the student’s performance has changed.

Ratings
0  No significant opportunity yet
1  Unacceptable (never or rarely meets criteria)
2  Needs improvement (meets criteria inconsistently)
3  Satisfactory (meets criteria most of the time)
4  Very good (consistently meets criteria)
5  Outstanding (consistently exceeds criteria)
9  Not applicable in setting

Summarize the student’s overall performance for each section by placing an X at the point on the bar graph that represents his or her overall performance for that section. Space for comments is included after each section.

The last page includes an overall student rating, space for comments, goals for the next evaluation period, and the signature page. The student and field instructor are required to sign each evaluation. When a student disagrees with the contents of the evaluation, he or she can submit an addendum stating the reasons for disagreement which is attached to the evaluation in the student’s file. Each faculty field liaison reads all evaluations for assigned agencies and will be available for discussion at the student’s or field instructor’s request.

Any time a student receives a summary rating, in any section, of “needs improvement” or “unacceptable,” please provide supporting documentation in the Comments section.

Your careful attention to completing the evaluation form is greatly appreciated. Evaluation is a crucial part of a student’s professional training and provides an opportunity for feedback and educational planning.
LEARNING AGREEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR LEARNING AGREEMENT

This learning agreement is an individualized working agreement between the student, the field instructor, the placement agency, and the School of Social Welfare. This agreement is to be developed jointly by the student and the field instructor, taking into account: agency parameters, priorities and resources; the particular learning needs and interests of the student; and the resources available to the field instructor. This learning agreement, in conjunction with the field evaluation instrument, will specify:

- What the student needs to learn
- Assignments and other opportunities for learning
- Responsibilities of both field instructor and student

The field instructor will facilitate the process. At each evaluation the learning agreement will be renegotiated and future goals and objectives spelled out in the final section of the field evaluation instrument.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN DEVELOPING AGREEMENT READ THE FOLLOWING:

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

- What do you hope to learn in your field placement this year? What kinds of experience, knowledge and skills do you want to gain?
- What personal strengths do you bring to this field placement?
- What areas are you uncertain about? What things worry you most about field? What areas would you like help with?
- How do you most enjoy learning? What helps you to learn?
- What makes it hard for you to learn? What kinds of things help you then?
- How does this field placement connect to your social work experience so far, and to your view of your future?
- When you imagine your "dream" field instructor, what qualities seem most important in helping you to learn and succeed?

STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING THE LEARNING AGREEMENT

- At a meeting between the field instructor and student talk about both of your ideas and expectations for the placement and of each other. Select the areas most important to you from FOOD FOR THOUGHT to discuss with your field instructor.
- Together identify specifics for: learning opportunities that will take place in the first evaluation period; the supervision plan; assignments; student/field instructor responsibilities; and goals for the first evaluation period.
- Include macro practice assignment for 1st year M.S.W. students.
- The field instructor will then fill out field instructor responsibilities and the assignments. The student will fill out student responsibilities and supervision plan.
FOCUSED LEARNING AGREEMENT - SAMPLE

Student:  
Field Instructor:  
Field Liaison:  
Date:  

The student, field instructor and field liaison have agreed that the following performance targets will be established and attained in order to meet the requirements for proceeding with field 752, 753. Progress toward these performance targets will be reviewed after completion of the first 6 weeks of the internship. Continuance at this field site is predicated on sufficient progress in the areas targeted below as determined by the field instructor and field office staff. Initiative and communication skills will be the focus for these goals.

1. Establish and Maintain Relationships with Multidisciplinary Team Members:
   a. In order to develop competence in this area, [student] will assist in the initiation, cultivation and active maintenance of key working relationships with professional staff as designated by her field instructor. In addition [student] will contribute during case review meetings by presenting a well-organized synopsis/update of the social work perspective related to individual clients.
   b. Student will demonstrate active participation in the discussion by offering suggestions, asking for clarification, providing feedback.
   c. For the term of this agreement [student] will also provide her field instructor a process recording of a transaction involving [student] and another hospital staff member. These written process recordings should be submitted once weekly and in advance of scheduled supervision in order to allow review time.

   Evaluation Method:  
   Direct observation by supervisor.

2. Supervision Initiative:  
   a. In order to demonstrate the ability to initiate and sustain a shared dialogue [student] will begin supervision by coming prepared to discuss the following as an agenda: synopsizing current cases, provide a description of [student’s] own assessment, present options formulated for consideration, have specific questions for supervisor that pertain to discrete aspects of the case, use of self and personal reactions to the work.

   Evaluation Method:  
   Direct observation by supervisor.

Signatures:

Student ___________________________________ Date _________
Field Instructor _____________________________ Date _________
Field Office Staff ___________________________ Date _________
SAMPLE MACRO ASSIGNMENTS

1. Resource Development
   a) Compiling a list of area home health care AIDS for a HIV program
   b) Developing a resource manual for new students
   c) Identifying the funding source of the agency

2. Data Collection/Research
   a) Developing client satisfaction surveys
   b) Developing a socio-cultural assessment of the organization
   c) Developing a client needs assessment instrument

3. Program/Group Development
   a) Developing the procedure to form a new therapeutic group
   b) Developing a parents advisory committee in a day care center
   c) Developing a peer support group in a school setting

4. Alliances and Coalitions
   a) Outreach and coalition development with other agencies
   b) Collaboration and attending meetings at other organizations
   c) Developing a monthly luncheon of area providers

5. Community Based Initiatives
   a) Developing outreach relationships with community organizations
   b) Identifying already existing neighborhood initiatives
   c) Identifying potential collaboration parties in the community

6. Social Action/ Lobbying/Advocacy
   a) Contacting county and state legislators to secure the legislative process
   b) Develop a voter registration drive
   c) Organize demonstrations to protest budget cuts
   d) Compile a list of federal, state and local public officials serving on key committees

7. Administration and Supervision
   a) Supervision of agency volunteers
   b) Chair meetings
   c) Attend board meetings

8. Fund Raising
   a) Participating in agency annual fund raising events
   b) Develop new strategies for capital campaigns
   c) Organizing potential sources for volunteer involvement
**PROCESS RECORDING TEMPLATE**

Process Recording #

Date

Scenario: Summarize the discussion – identify the speakers; summarize the purpose of the discussion; location, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Dialogue</th>
<th>Social Work Students’ Gut-Level Feelings</th>
<th>Logical Interpretations</th>
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<td>2. Of client interaction</td>
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<td>3. Of skills used/alternative approaches that could be used</td>
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Supervisor Comments

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Process Recording Exercise

(Adapted from Fine Tuning an Old Instrument® Neuman, K. And Friedman, B)
### FIELD LIAISON PLACEMENT CHECKLIST

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<tr>
<th>PLACEMENT DETAIL</th>
<th>Contact #1 Student &amp; FI</th>
<th>Site Visit #1*</th>
<th>Learning Agree.</th>
<th>1st Eval.</th>
<th>Contact #2 Student &amp; FI</th>
<th>Site Visit #2*</th>
<th>2nd Eval.</th>
<th>Final Eval.</th>
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* Not applicable for 2nd field (advanced-concentration) placements

Field Liaison Name (Print): ____________________________________________  Academic Year: ____________________________
FIELD INSTRUCTOR CONTACT TRACKING FORM

Liaison Name: ____________  LIAISON CONTACTS: Field Instructors   Semester: _____ Year: _____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIELD INSTRUCTOR NAME</th>
<th>Contact #1 DATE</th>
<th>Contact #2 DATE</th>
<th>Prevention and Problem solving</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Student Name:

Student Name:

Student Name:

Guidance for the review of all incoming documentation is specified in the FIELD LIAISON MANUAL.
# STUDENT CONTACT TRACKING FORM

**Liaison Name:** ______________  **LIAISON CONTACTS:** Students  **Semester:** ____  **Year:** ____

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