



*State University of New York
University at Albany
School of Social Welfare*

**MSW
FIELD EDUCATION
HANDBOOK
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YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO FIELD EDUCATION PURPOSE, POLICY AND PROCESS

The MSW Field Education Handbook is an important resource that should be utilized throughout students' graduate education in the MSW program. Understanding how Field Instruction connects with the overall MSW curriculum will play a pivotal role in the selection of advanced coursework, degree concentration and social work career choice. The Handbook also serves as a guide for preparation and implementation of comprehensive social work learning by field instructors.

The Field Education Office has established policies to preserve the integrity of students' educational experiences in field, while striving to protect students from harm or injury while they are in field. Policies for field also serve to clearly describe expectations, learning objectives, evaluation of competency and how to assess the quality of student learning.

The process for selecting field placements is done in collaboration with staff in the Field Education Office. Instructions for obtaining the first field placement and students' selection of the second field placement can be found on the Field Education website. Additionally, information packets are sent out and orientation meetings are held to further instruct students about the field placement process.

The MSW Field Education Handbook was developed by the former Faculty Committee on Field Education and is revised annually in order to stay abreast of emerging issues related to field. The Field Education Office is especially grateful for the leadership provided by the Dean and Associate Deans, who consistently help to ensure the quality of learning in the educational curriculum and in field. We thank the many field instructors that partner with the School of Social Welfare. It is through the tireless efforts of our agency partners that we are able to provide the breadth of learning opportunities for students entering field.

Field Education Website: <http://www.albany.edu/ssw/field-education-social-welfare.php>

FIELD EDUCATION HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIELD EDUCATION STAFF	4
THE ROLE OF FIELD INSTRUCTION IN GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION	5
FIELD PROTOCOLS	6
Facts for Students	6
Field Coursework	10
Field for Part-Time Students	11
Field Seminar	11
Practice Skills Lab	11
Criteria for Qualified Field Placements	11
Agency Preparedness for Student Placements	12
MACRO Concentration	14
Clinical Concentration	14
FIELD PLACEMENT OPTIONS	16
1 ST Field (Generalist)	16
2 nd Field (Advanced-Concentration)	16
Advanced Standing	16
Summer Block	16
Summer/Fall Modified Field Schedule	16
Work Study	17
International Field Placements	17
Paid Internships	17
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGENCIES AND THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE	18
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO FIELD	19
Responsibility to Students	19
Responsibility to Field Instructors	19
Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI)	20
Professional Development for Field Instructors	20
Professional Development for Students	21
FIELD AGENCIES' RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE	22
Qualifications of Field Instructors	22
Service to Students	22
Administrative Responsibilities of Field Agencies	23
GUIDELINES AND TOOLS TO FACILITATE LEARNING IN FIELD	25
The Learning Agreement	25
Focused Learning Agreement	25
Process Recordings	25
Supervision	26
Field Liaisons	26
EVALUATION AND GRADING	27
Directions for Completing Field Evaluations	29
Grading	30
PROTOCOLS FOR RETENTION IN FIELD AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES	31
Retention in Field	31
Suspension of Field for Medical or Personal Reasons	33
Grievance Process for Field Grades	34
APPENDICES	35
ADDENDUM FOR THE INTERNSHIPS IN AGING PROJECT	36
FOCUSED LEARNING AGREEMENT - SAMPLE	38
PROCESS RECORDING TEMPLATE	39
PROCESS RECORDING SAMPLE	40
APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR 2 nd YEAR BLOCK FIELD PLACEMENTS	41
GUIDE TO WORK STUDY APPLICATION	42
FIELD EVALUATION CRITERIA	43
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	45
HIV/AIDS AND FIELD EDUCATION: POLICY STATEMENT	46
DISABILITY SERVICES	47

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THE ROLE OF FIELD INSTRUCTION IN GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The importance of the Field Instruction component in the School of Social Welfare's curriculum cannot be overstated. As the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education indicates:

Field Education is the signature pedagogy of social work education. Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies (CSWE, 2015).

Reiterating the importance of Field Education, Bogo writes:

Field education provides many learning opportunities. Students learn to apply theories to real-world situations and to examine these situations through the lens of a variety of conceptual frameworks. They learn to apply empirically supported models and to modify those models based on the contingencies of unique stations. They learn procedural knowledge and skills specific to working with a population or carrying out the mandate of a particular setting, and the practice wisdom and ‘know-how’ accumulated by experienced workers (Bogo, 2010, p. 11)

Pursuant to Article I, Section 4.62 of the University at Albany School of Social Welfare By-laws, the Director of Field Education serves as a member of the MSW Program Committee. The MSW Program Committee shall have responsibility for:

- Developing, reviewing and monitoring the curriculum, educational policies and requirements of the MSW program including Field Instruction;
- Setting the criteria for admissions to the MSW program;
- Providing intellectual leadership on diversity issues and generating and reviewing human diversity activities within the program;
- Developing and monitoring strategies to recruit a diverse student body;
- Developing, reviewing and monitoring the graduate admissions process.

Works Cited

Bogo, M. (2010). *Achieving Competence in Social Work Through Field Education*. Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press.
Council on Social Work Education (2008). *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*. Alexandria, VA: author.

FIELD PROTOCOLS

Facts for Students

Field Instruction Course Guidelines

- Field Instruction is a series of required courses for the MSW degree. Field Instruction I and II are the courses to register for when taking generalist (1st) field. Field III and IV are the courses to register for when taking Advanced Concentration (2nd) field. Field Instruction I is a three-credit course and Field Instruction II, III and IV are each four-credit courses.
- Field I and II must be taken concurrently with Micro Practice in Social Work I and II. A withdrawal from or failing grade in the Micro Practice in Social Work courses will result in the suspension of field.
- Students must receive a grade of "S" Satisfactory in Field Instruction to remain in good standing in the MSW program and to receive the MSW degree.
- Students are in field two full days (16 hours) per week. Advanced Standing students are in field 3 full days (24 hours) a week during the summer. After completing the summer placement (Generalist), Advanced Standing students convert to two days per week, consistent with required field days for the Advanced Concentration schedule.

Registering for Field Instruction Courses

- A permission number is required to register for Field Instruction I (RSSW 650) and Field Instruction III (RSSW 752). Permission numbers are issued by the Field Education Office when field assignment requirements are met. **A permission number is not needed to register for the second sequence of a field assignment (RSSW 651 and 753).**
- To receive a permission number for RSSW 650, students have to schedule their pre-placement interviews at their assigned placements and complete (with their prospective field instructors) the MSW Field Verification form. Once the completed MSW Field Verification form is returned to the Field Office, a permission number is issued, enabling the student to register for field. As a result, registration for field may not take place until sometime during the summer, after students have already registered for other courses.
- Students planning for their Advanced Concentration field placements have until the end of the last semester of a field sequence to submit all required paperwork for a final grade in field (N/A for Advanced Standing). If a final grade for Field Instruction I and II (RSSW 650 and 651) is not earned, students will not be issued permission numbers to register for Field Instruction III (RSSW 753). In order to receive a permission number to register for RSSW 753, students must submit a completed MSW Field Verification form for their Advanced Concentration placements AND have received final grades for Field Instruction I and II.

Field Instructors

- Field instructors must meet certain educational and professional qualifications in order to supervise students. These criteria include: having earned an MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited social work program; and having a minimum of two years of post-graduate experience in social work practice. Field instructors may be agency employees that meet

the criteria for serving or are social workers with related experience contracted to provide supervision.

- New field instructors are required to take a Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) course through the School of Social Welfare or prove that they completed a SIFI or comparable supervisory course at another institution. Field instructors offering advanced concentration block placements must complete the SIFI requirement prior to accepting a student.
- Each student should have at least one hour of supervision time per week with the field instructor of record. Multiple students at a field placement may participate in group supervision as a supplemental learning experience, but group supervision cannot replace the one hour of individual supervision time. Supervision with the field instructor should be provided in addition to students participating in staff meetings, case conferences or treatment team reviews.
- Students are assigned a field liaison through the Field Education Office. The field liaison is a supportive resource for information and challenges experienced in field (see section on field liaisons for more information).
- Students are required to develop a learning agreement with their field instructors. The learning agreement should outline the learning objectives at the field placement. The learning agreement is usually developed about two weeks into the placement and is reviewed by the field liaison.
- Field instructors assist with the grading process by completing three performance evaluations during the academic year. The Director of Field Education uses the evaluations to help determine the final grade for the Field Instruction course.

Preparation for Field

- Students complete up to 500 hours of field per year. The required number of field hours each year is outlined in the Field Instruction Calendar. The Field Education Office distributes a calendar of field days every year. Students are responsible for notifying field instructors prior to taking time off from field. Arrangements should be made with the field instructor to make up any missed days in field.
- Students are responsible for expenses incurred in field (mileage, meals, lodging, etc.).
- One exception to the personal expense responsibility is the cost of having to obtain a criminal background check prior to starting field at an agency that requires this for work with clients. The cost of criminal background checks and/or fingerprinting is underwritten by the Field Fee and is reimbursable. Students who incur these costs can bring original receipts of service to the Field Education Office to process the reimbursement paperwork.
- Students may be required to complete a physical exam or provide medical information from their primary care provider in order to achieve medical clearance for their internship assignment. If the agency is unable to provide a free or low cost physical, students may go to the University Health Center or their personal primary care provider.
- Students assigned to field placements in public schools may be asked to remain in field an additional 3-4 weeks beyond the published end date of field on the field calendar. Students can negotiate adjusting field days during the school year to accommodate requests to work through June. Students should discuss any schedule changes with their field instructors and indicate such changes on the learning agreement.

- Students should report to the Field Education Office any legal issues that could impact field work with certain populations. Examples of legal issues include, but are not exclusive to: CPS findings, arrests and/or convictions, pending criminal charges. In the event that there is any question about what constitutes a legal issue, students are urged to contact the Director of Field Education for guidance, instead of deciding not to report. This information may be disclosed directly to the Director of Field Education or indicated on the field application. It is best to notify the Field Education Office as early as possible to avoid consequences that may result in not being assigned to a field placement.
- Standards for meeting field requirements include completing the required number of field hours per year and having demonstrated competency of social work practice skills.
- Students are expected to be in field throughout the two-semester sequence. Advanced Standing students have to be in field for three consecutive semesters.
- Requests to end field early are discouraged, and students should not consider “banking” hours for the purpose of ending field early. If students have met all requirements for field, the earliest that field can be completed is two weeks prior to the official end date of the field course (as indicated on the field calendar). An official request to end field early has to be submitted to the Director of Field Education by the field instructor. The Director of Field Education has the discretion to approve or decline such requests.
- Students are expected to practice the values and ethical standards outlined in the School of Social Welfare’s Graduate Faculty and Student Handbook and in the NASW Code of Ethics. The link to NASW Code of Ethics is: <http://www.naswnys.org/code.htm>.
- Students are to conduct themselves as social work professionals. Expectations include, but are not limited to: reporting to work in professional dress according to the agency’s dress code policy; notifying the field instructor directly when unable to report to field; upholding professional standards for attendance and punctuality; avoiding dual relationships with agency staff and clients; following protocols for reporting issues in field; adhering to agency policies and procedures.
- The University values and celebrates the multiculturalism of the campus community. The Field Office respects students’ celebration of religious holidays or holy days aligned with their faiths. If students choose to take off field days for the observance of religious or holy days, they should discuss this with their field instructors prior to taking time off. Part of the discussion should include a plan to make up any days missed from field.
- Students requesting an accommodation for field due to a disability must register with the Disability Resource Center and complete an assessment. Additional information about disability services can be found in the Appendices.
- If a student does not make an appropriate match after two attempts be assigned to a field placement, the Director of Field Education has the discretion to review the student’s readiness to begin field.

Transportation in Field Guidelines

Students are advised against transporting clients or clients’ families in their personal vehicles. The University does not cover liability insurance for use of students’ vehicles in the course of conducting field work. If the use of a personal vehicle for client transport is deemed a necessary part of the field work by an agency, the student has the right to request that the agency insure the vehicle for this purpose. Otherwise, the student will accept total liability for the use of a personal vehicle for client transport.

In this circumstance, a student's request to decline a field assignment based on this stipulation will not be considered a refusal of a field assignment. The student will have the opportunity to discuss options with the Director of Field Education. The Field Education Office reserves the right to assign an alternative field placement.

The University does not reimburse students for mileage accrued during the course of their field responsibilities.

Protected Client Information

Students in practice are bound by the rules of confidentiality. The handling of client information must be protected while in practice and even after field has ended.

Field Placement Process

- Generalist and Advanced Standing field placements are assigned by the Field Education Office. Students starting their Generalist field placements have to submit paperwork that is used to guide the field assignment process by the designated due date. Students starting their advanced concentration field placements are allowed to search independently for placements or to have the Field Education Office select their placements. The Field Education Office will announce the timing for advanced-concentration students to begin independent searches for field placements. Independent searches should not begin prior to the Field Education Office providing official notice to begin searches. When a student requests to have the Field Office find his/her advanced concentration placement, the student must accept the assigned placement.
- Students learn about the selection processes for 1st and 2nd field placements through information provided by the Field Education Office. The Field Education website also displays clear instructions on the field placement process.
- If a student finds a placement at an agency seeking a new partnership with the School of Social Welfare, a "New Agency Identification" form should be completed and returned to the Field Education Office (see attached link: <http://www.albany.edu/ssw/About/field-students.shtml>)
- All field placement assignments are subject to approval by the Field Education Office. The Director of Field Education reserves the right to reject a field placement requested by a student.
- The re-assignment of a field placement is at the discretion of the Director of Field Education.

Field Coursework

Field Instruction is comprised of a series of courses taken throughout the program. Whether enrolled full-time or part-time in the MSW program, students are required to take four sections of Field Instruction. Field Instruction generally occurs over two years, two semesters each year. Students have to complete up to 500 hours of field per year. The catalog numbers for Field Instruction are as follows:

- Field Instruction I – RSSW 650
- Field Instruction II – RSSW 651
- Field Instruction III – RSSW 752
- Field Instruction IV – RSSW 753
- Field Instruction V – RSSW 754

Full-time students in the 2-year MSW program generally take Field Instruction I and II in the first year of the program, along with courses taken during the Fall/Spring sequences. Field I and II must be taken concurrently with Micro Practice in Social Work I and II. Students are required to have completed Human Behavior and Social Environment I and II and Macro Practice in Social Work I and II courses or to take them concurrently with Field I and II.

Field Instruction III and IV are usually taken in the second year of the program on either the Fall/Spring semester sequence or Summer/Fall semester sequence (for approved Modified field schedules). Students taking Field III and IV have the option of applying for Block placements if all requirements are met. This option is permitted as long as Field Instruction I and II are taken without a break in semesters.

Students in the Advanced Standing program take Field Instruction II (RSSW 651) during the Summer semester. Students are in field three full days (24 hours) per week during the Summer semester. A final grade is issued at the end of the summer. At the start of the Fall semester, Advanced Standing students then join the Advanced Concentration cohort when they take Field Instruction III and IV during the Fall/Spring semester sequence.

Students are in field two full days (16 hours) per week. Field days are typically Mondays and Tuesdays for the Generalist field placement and Thursdays and Fridays for the Advanced Concentration field placement. This continuity in scheduling is important for student learning, agency operations and consistency of client care. The field schedule also coincides with the sequence of courses needed for degree requirements.

Field Instruction V is a 3-credit course that provides a supplemental field experience for students in their Advanced Concentration coursework. Field may be taken in the same agency as the advanced concentration placement or at another agency. Taking the course requires two full days per week. The prerequisite course is Field III (RSSW 752). Field V may be taken concurrently with Field IV (RSSW 753). A permission number from the Director of Field Education is necessary to register for RSSW 754.

Field for Part-Time Students

Field for part-time students occurs in the second and fourth years of study. The Field Education Office is responsible for assigning all first field placements. Students working full time are strongly encouraged to consider the program requirements for field before applying to the MSW program. It is important to note that the vast majority of field sites do not offer quality and consistent educational opportunities during evenings and weekends. Appropriate social work supervision is required during field days. Because most social work professionals do not work alternative hours, requests for evening and weekend hours are usually not approved by the Field Office.

Field Seminar

Students starting their first field placements will participate in an integrated field seminar. The field seminar serves to enhance learning for students through comparative practice experiences and integrative coursework/field instruction. First field (Generalist) students will attend sessions each semester during the fall and spring semesters. The course requires attendance to seminar sessions, participation and completion of assignments. Assignments are graded and students' adherence to course objectives will be considered in the administration of the final grade for Field I and II.

Absence from field seminar (attendance is required) will result in an extension of a student's field assignment, the length of time to be determined by the Director of Field Education. A student may also be required to complete an additional assignment to fulfill requirements for field seminar.

Practice Skills Lab

Students beginning their Generalist (1st field) placements will participate in a practice skills lab. The practice skills lab provides an interactive learning environment that utilizes practice simulations and team-based learning to help prepare students for social work practice in the field. Students will also develop professional skills for individual and group work with clients. The practice skills lab is taken prior to the start of field and attendance is required.

Criteria for Qualified Field Placements

The agency's philosophy of social work service aligns with the School's educational curriculum and the NASW Code of Ethics.

The Board or governing body of the agency, where applicable, is committed to a field instruction program and to its agency undertaking the responsibility of training social work students.

Agency administrators and staff must show a commitment to field instruction. They must demonstrate an understanding of and have respect for the ethical practices and values inherent in the social work professional standards.

The agency is in good standing in the community and satisfactorily meets its accreditation standards, when applicable.

The agency has a clearly defined role in the community or in the region that addresses, in some capacity, the elimination of disparities experienced by vulnerable populations. This involves participation in state and regional conferences as well as cooperation with local planning boards.

The agency and its programmatic objectives are sustainable without reliance on students.

Social service units that operate in host settings, such as hospitals, courts, schools or other institutions, are integrated in the total program of the host organization. This means that the host agency or institution has objectives which are consistent with the values of social work and that the department or unit has a clearly defined and appropriate role in the host setting.

The agency must provide a qualified field instructor. Qualified field instructors must have earned an MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited social work program and have a minimum of two years of post-graduate experience in social work practice. Field instructors should have available the equivalent of approximately two days per week over the course of the academic year to devote to the instruction of students. This includes time necessary for supervision, conferences, selection of assignments, participation in field instruction meetings, preparation of required evaluation reports, etc.

All new field instructors must attend a Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) course to qualify as a field instructor.

The size, scope and flow of agency activities should be sufficient to enable students to be exposed to a wide range of experiences that expose students to the all areas of social work practice. Agencies that provide only clinical therapeutic services do not meet this requirement.

The selection of learning experiences for students should be based on their educational value, with the basis for determination being primarily the educational needs of the student rather than the needs of the agency.

The educational needs of the student are the primary consideration in matching students and field instructors.

Students should not be asked to provide references for field placements. Acceptance into the MSW program indicates qualification for practice under the supervision of field instructors.

The agency should make available suitable space and operating equipment for students. These accommodations are consistent with those necessary for conducting social work practice. Accommodations include desk space, telephones, office supplies and access to computer equipment and IT networking (when applicable).

Agency Preparedness for Student Placements

All students should have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with their particular agency's roles and functions. They should be able to obtain information about the agency's role in the community, its history, philosophy, mission, and organizational structure. Students should have a clear understanding of services provided by the agency and its procedures.

Students should have an opportunity to learn about the community being served. Provisions should be made to involve students in activities that expand their contacts beyond the confines of the office. Students are encouraged to participate, under staff supervision, in outreach, home visits and inter-agency collaborative meetings.

Students should have the opportunity to learn about social policy drivers of service provision and regulatory standards for practice. Examples of learning opportunities include review of agency policies and procedures, understanding funding sources and regulatory standards for practice.

Students in Field I and II should receive educational experiences at both micro and macro practice levels. Micro practice should include work with at least three client systems. Students in the generalist or advanced-concentration clinical field sequences should be assigned a minimum of three to five cases during their placements. Acceptable cases can include individual, families and/or groups.

Students in the Advanced Concentration MACRO field sequence shall be assigned tasks and projects that align with the School's educational objectives for macro practice. Examples of macro practice include quality improvement activities, monitoring and evaluation of programs and community-based needs assessment (or organizational needs assessment). These guidelines will serve as a point of reference for assessing competency of skill in each area of study.

MSW ADVANCED CONCENTRATIONS

MACRO Concentration

The MACRO (M-Management Efficiency & Leadership Development, A-Advocacy & Empowerment, C-Community Building & Collaboration, R-Resource Development, and O-Outcomes Evaluation & Improvement Systems) concentration provides students with courses and related experiences which disseminate and develop the knowledge, values, sensitivities, and skills for macro practice. It is needed because today's human service environment presents demands which require integrative competencies. For example, in today's information age environment, human services management is increasingly multi-dimensional and data-driven. Additionally, with rapid, dramatic policy change, effective management must include collaborative skills for visionary leadership.

The MACRO concentration prepares students for planning, implementation and evaluation of services at the organizational, systems and policy levels of change. Graduates will assume positions such as program planner, clinical manager/program director, researcher/program evaluator, staff development and training, resource developer (fundraising, grant writing, and marketing), community organizer/community developer and social policy advocate.

The MACRO Concentration requires students to complete four core courses and one of several courses designed as advanced MACRO. Students must also complete an advanced policy course of their choice and an elective course. Electives may be chosen from any courses classified as an advanced MACRO, advanced clinical practice, advanced policy or a graduate course in another department.

Clinical Concentration

In the Clinical concentration, students acquire advanced and specialized knowledge of human behavior, social systems, and intervention processes that will aid them in assisting clients at the individual, group, family or community levels. Students may focus their study in a number of diverse fields, such as child and family services, mental health, healthcare and aging. All Clinical concentration students must take three advanced practice courses, an advanced policy course, one course in evaluation of clinical practice, and an advanced field practicum in the Clinical concentration.

Graduates who specialize in clinical social work are employed in many types of settings. The majority have jobs in mental health, health care, family service, and child welfare agencies. A substantial number of graduates work in school systems, aging and alcohol/substance abuse programs. Clinical social workers help people identify and resolve psychosocial problems, treat mental and behavioral health disorders, and work to address disparities in care and minimize/eliminate social injustice to vulnerable populations. Clinical social workers use a wide variety of helping methods, including almost the entire range of approaches to individual, family, and group counseling and various methods of bringing about change in clients' environments. However their special focus is on helping people to effect change in both themselves and in their situations.

Clinical social workers frequently take on supervisory responsibilities within a few years of graduation, often in combination with continued clinical practice. Many eventually assume managerial positions in service programs and agencies.

FIELD PLACEMENT OPTIONS

1ST Field (Generalist)

The generalist field placement exposes students to a cross section of social work experiences, serving to ground them in foundational practice 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.

2nd Field (Advanced-Concentration)

The advanced-concentration field sequence follows the generalist field. Here, students engage in more advanced social work practice in their desired concentration of clinical or MACRO. At this stage, students identify their preferred concentration, clinical or MACRO, which can only be one, not a combination of the two. Students have the option of choosing their second field placements. MSW part-time students take advanced-concentration field during their fourth year of study.

Advanced Standing

Students graduating with an undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited social work program 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 MSW degree program. At the School of Social Welfare, AS Field Instruction is a three (3) semester assignment (summer, fall, spring) that is held at one agency. The summer portion of field completes the generalist sequence. In the fall, AS students begin advanced-concentration field, along with corresponding advanced concentration coursework (clinical or MACRO).

Summer Block

Students seeking their advanced-concentration field placements have the option of requesting a Summer 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 and 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 to the Field Education. A complete application (instructions can be found on the Field Education website) should include: (1) an up-to-date resume, (2) a letter of reference from the student's field instructor of the first field practicum, and (3) a list of the student's masters-level courses. A copy of an advisement worksheet to indicate completed and in progress course work would be acceptable. Acceptance or refusal of Block placement application requests are determined by the Field Education Office.

Summer/Fall Modified Field Schedule

This option is available to advanced concentration students requesting to start their second field placement in the Summer and continue through the Fall. Students must have successfully completed Field Instruction I and II and be eligible for graduation by the end of the Fall semester. Students must have taken advanced practice coursework prior to starting the advanced concentration field practicum, or be taking advanced practice coursework concurrently with field. Designated field days are Thursdays and Fridays. Guidelines for completing the

application for the summer/fall modified field placement can be found on the Field Education website. Acceptance or refusal of Modified field application requests are determined by the Field Education Office.

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 verify they had paid employment in human services three out of the last five years. Nursing, teaching or educational assistantships or camp counseling are some examples that do not qualify as relevant human service experiences. The designated human services agency should provide clinical or macro services that 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 application and guidelines for completion can be found on the website (also see guidelines in the Appendices). Acceptance or refusal of work study application requests are determined by the Field Education Office.

International Field Placements

Students starting their advanced concentration field are eligible to consider an international field placement. International field placements provide students the knowledge and skills for practice within the frameworks of global social and political contexts. As the U.S. grows in its diversity, social workers must possess skills that address the complex needs of a diverse nation. Skills learned from an international field experience will be transferable, enabling students to integrate practice with vulnerable populations from underdeveloped countries with diverse populations in the U.S. This opportunity differs from both Study Abroad and international service learning. In field, students are providing direct practice to constituencies reliant upon their specific skill sets as developing social work practitioners. The School of Social Welfare currently has international field placements through partnerships with schools of social work or non-government organizations (NGOs) in **Ghana, Scotland, the Dominican Republic and South Africa.**

Paid Internships

Due to the need to build a skilled workforce in the social work profession, some agencies offer paid internships to incentivize work with certain populations. The School of Social Welfare offers some paid internship opportunities for work with vulnerable populations. There is a competitive application process. More information about these opportunities can be found on the Field Education website. Students cannot accept more than one compensatory allotment through the School of Social Welfare (i.e. paid internship with graduate assistantship) during the course of their enrollment in the MSW program.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGENCIES AND THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

The Director of Field Education serves as the point of contact regarding all matters relating to policy and the educational standards for field education. The Field Education Office is responsible for providing agency sites with the necessary resources in order to adhere to the protocols and educational standards for field. Agency sites are responsible for securing appropriate staff members or designated consultants that meet the qualifications to serve as field instructors.

The impetus for designating an agency as a field instruction site may originate directly from the agency's inquiry or through outreach from the School of Social Welfare. Agencies interested in having MSW students can contact the Field Education Office at (518) 442-5321 or submit a request for students on the link, <http://www.albany.edu/ssw/About/field-survey-form-agency-field-survey-of-learning-opportunities.shtml>.

A contractual affiliation agreement must be signed by both the University at Albany and the field site. Students are not permitted to intern at field placements that have not signed an affiliation agreement with the University. The affiliation agreement, developed by the University at Albany's legal counsel, is initiated by the Field Education Office. Once the Field Education Office and the field site agree with the contract terms, two original contracts are administered to the designated authorizing official at the field site. The authorizing official reviews and signs both original documents and returns to the Field Education Office. Questions about the affiliation agreement are directed to the Director of Field Education, who serves as the liaison between field sites and the University at Albany's legal counsel. The Field Education Office ensures that all signatories are obtained before sending signed copies to the field site. Affiliation agreements remain in effect until the agency requests to formally terminate the field agreement or requests a new agreement. A certificate of insurance will be issued each year to all agencies hosting a student. The University at Albany provides a combined \$1,000,000 in professional liability and personal injury coverage for all students in field.

Students may have to obtain criminal background checks and/or fingerprinting services in order to work at certain field agencies. This requirement is determined by the field agency, not the School of Social Welfare. Any costs (to the student) to obtain these services is covered by the Field Fee. The Field Education Office will process requests for reimbursement of fees associated with these services.

Agency sites agreeing to serve as field placements will allow time and resources to the field instructor(s) to provide adequate supervision to students in field. They will also allow time for field instructors to attend programs or events sponsored by the Field Education Office that are related to work with students.

The Field Education Office is responsible for communicating annually with agencies concerning ongoing requests for agency involvement in the field education program. The Director of Field Education, or designated field liaison, will work with field instructors on matters related to student learning and progress in field.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO FIELD

Responsibility to Students

The Field Education Office recognizes the immense value of the field learning experience. The field placement, where students spend two full days (16 hours) per week, provides an irreplaceable arena in which students acquire and begin to use the knowledge, skill, and value base of the profession. The Field Education Office seeks enrichment of the field education experience through three important pathways:

1. Reinforcing the importance of offering learning opportunities that enable students to demonstrate competency of social work practice and leadership skills.
2. Protecting the integrity of the student's learning by evaluating quality, duration and complexity of practice skills for emerging social work leaders.
3. Increasing collaborative partnerships with agencies that expose students to the breadth of services provided by social work professionals.

The Field Education Office provides the following services to students in field:

- Orientation meetings and mailings to familiarize students with the field placement process and how to register for field.
- Access to forms and instructions on the Field Education website.
- Guidance and supportive counsel in preparation for field.
- Field liaisons to monitor student learning and offer support.
- Career development workshops to help students explore career options.

Responsibility to Field Instructors

The Field Education Office is responsible for assisting field instructors in carrying out their duties. This responsibility shall be exercised in the following ways:

1. Every effort will be made to prepare students entering field for the professional standards needed to be successful for and productive to the agencies accepting them.
2. The School will support the agencies' enforcement of required paperwork and/or minimum requirements for students starting field.
3. The School will notify field instructors in a timely manner of their assigned students. There should be enough time for field instructors to interview students, make a final recommendation for placement and prepare students for meeting any necessary requirements prior to starting field.
4. The School will provide a Seminar on Field Instruction course each year for new field instructors. The purpose of the seminar is to provide support, but to also prepare field instructors for supervision of students in field.
5. The School will provide resources that promote professional development. Examples of resources include, but are not limited to: supervisory training workshops; eligibility for a tuition-waived 3-credit course each semester; one-on-one consultation.
4. The School will provide, upon request, social work course syllabi, access to scholarly readings in social work practice and bibliographies.
5. Field instructors may request access to listservs from the School of Social Welfare. UAlbany listservs provide voluminous resources on jobs, workshops, presentations and emerging issues in the social work profession.

6. The School will assign a liaison to field sites. Liaisons provide guidance on issues in field, support through conflict issues and linkage to resources. Field instructors and students are sent the name of their designated liaison with that person's contact information.
7. If students experience serious medical or psychological problems while in field, the Director of Field Education, at the approval of the student, may assist with linking the student to supportive services.
8. The Director of Field Education serves as the main resource for any questions about policy and field guidelines.

Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI)

The Seminar in Field Instruction is a required course offered to new field instructors. To ensure the quality of field supervision and the appropriateness of agency staff to supervise students, the Council on Social Work Education requires that field instructors, new to the role, be provided training in field supervision.

The SIFI is offered every year. To accommodate field instructors' schedules, the Field Office offers three SIFI sections. Field instructors enrolled in a particular SIFI course remain with that section throughout the course cycle. Issues regarding attendance to SIFI should be brought to the attention of the Field Education Office as early as possible.

Upon completion, field instructors receive a certificate of attendance that permits ongoing supervision of students until they request to terminate the arrangement with the School. Completion of the SIFI course also provides 18 continuing education credit hours for social licensing requirements. Field instructors who have attended a SIFI course (either at the School or another institution) or other comprehensive supervisory training in the past may request to be excused from the SIFI requirement. Decisions about waiving the SIFI requirement based on past supervisory training experiences are made on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Field Education.

Inconvenience with work schedule is not an acceptable reason for requesting to be excused from the SIFI. A field instructor's agreement to accept students infers an endorsement of the teaching standards for Field Instruction designated by the School of Social Welfare and the Council on Social Work Education. Field instructors offering advanced concentration block placements must complete the SIFI requirement prior to accepting a student.

Professional Development for Field Instructors

A field instructor receives a part-time, non-salaried faculty appointment at the rank of Volunteer Field Instructor. This appointment entitles the field instructor to the use of certain University facilities, cultural and recreational activities, and library privileges.

The field instructor also earns a three-credit, nontransferable tuition waiver for each semester of field instruction. The tuition waiver is specifically designated for the field instructor and may be used for any course within the SUNY system (not including community colleges), during a period of up to 25 months after it is issued. Tuition waivers only cover the cost of tuition and do not apply to additional fees charged when registering for a course. Field instructors are sent the

tuition waiver request form during the semester in which it is earned and must return the voucher form on the designated due date. Once issued, tuition waivers are considered taxable income, regardless of whether or not the waiver is actually used. Employees of the University who serve as field instructors are not eligible to receive these tuition waivers.

Current field instructors can enroll in continuing education programs offered by the School of Social Welfare at half price. Eligible field instructors will receive a confidential promotion code to register for programs at the reduced rate. Programs are posted at <http://www.albany.edu/ssw/current-programs-and-registration-ceu.php>.

The Field Office also offers an annual Field Institute, which celebrates the valuable contribution by field instructors to help prepare students for practice in the field. Each year, the Field Institute addresses emerging topics in field education, and attendance also provides continuing education credit hours.

Questions related to the School of Social Welfare's Continuing Education Program can be forwarded to sswceu@albany.edu.

Professional Development for Students

The School of Social Welfare offers a variety of lectures, workshops and trainings in social work practice. The School offers an annual preparation course for the social work licensure exam. Every year, the Field Office offers workshops on different practice specialties and trainings on resume-building and professional interviewing. Students are encouraged to regularly check the student listservs for announcements.

FIELD AGENCIES' RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Qualifications of Field Instructors

Field instructors file a resume with the School of Social Welfare that outlines MSW degree attainment, relevant experiences in social work practice and supervisory experience. Qualified field instructors must have earned an MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited social work program and have two years of post-graduate social work practice experience. Social workers should obtain approval by their agency's authorizing official to serve as field instructors.

New field instructors are required to take a Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) course through the School of Social Welfare or prove that they took a comparable supervisory course at another institution. Field instructors offering advanced concentration block placements must complete the SIFI requirement prior to accepting a student.

Service to Students

It is imperative that students enter an agency environment that is prepared for their instruction. As field instructors, social work practitioners should view their roles as first, and foremost, teachers in field. Pre-planning is necessary to ensure that students have adequate opportunities for learning, space to practice and adequate supervision.

Some issues to consider when preparing for students include:

Plan for the selection of cases, projects and other learning experiences based on students' levels of professional development and area of concentration (clinical or macro) studied.

Students will normally provide services to clients or handle assigned projects on designated field days. Students should not be asked to work alternative hours when supervision is not available. The agency will plan accordingly for issues that arise with clients when students are not in field.

Create learning agreements that delineate expectations, case assignments, supervision requirements and any other learning experiences that students will be exposed to for their professional development.

In the creation of the learning agreement, field instructors are expected to possess a general knowledge of the MSW curriculum. It is advised that field instructors review and use course syllabi as guides for integrating coursework material in field learning.

Provide sufficient time for orientation of the agency operations, departmental functions, populations served and regulatory standards. Create an orientation package for students and dedicate time in the beginning to the orientation process and training.

Reserve a minimum of one hour per week for individual supervision for each student. Where there are two or more students at a placement site, group supervision is permitted, as part of the peer learning process. However, peer learning should be offered as a supplement, not replacement for weekly individual supervision.

When conducting individual supervision, field instructors are asked to track the dates of weekly supervision and document the status of learning. It is particularly important to properly document performance concerns and advisement/strategies implemented to help students improve performance issues. These notes will prove useful when writing up student evaluations.

Students are encouraged to participate in staff meetings, case conferences or treatment team reviews. Field instructors should prepare students for these conferences by presenting and reviewing documentation and reports relevant to the meetings.

Process recordings are important tools for evaluating students' development of clinical skills. Generalist and advanced-concentration clinical students are required to do one weekly process recording. Process recordings are not required for advanced-concentration macro students, but can be used as a learning tool (i.e. processing dynamics of a community advisory group). One completed process recording, with field instructor comments, must be submitted with each field evaluation. There should be a different process recording with every field evaluation.

The field instructor is responsible for alerting the field liaison as soon as possible of problems that may arise in connection with a student's placement.

Field instructors are responsible for completing the three student performance evaluations when they are due. A completed process recording must be attached with each performance evaluation (not applicable for advanced-concentration macro students). These evaluations provide students with timely feedback about their level of performance in the course. The first and second interim evaluation(s) should identify students whose performance is marginal or unsatisfactory, and indicate those areas in which there must be improvement if the course is to be completed in a satisfactory manner (See Evaluation and Grading). The final evaluation is the basis for the grade in the Field Instruction course. All evaluations must be read, discussed, and signed by the field instructor and the student. The student's signature on the evaluation acknowledges receipt and understanding of the information, but not necessarily agreement. When students disagree with all or part of the evaluation, they may state in writing the areas of disagreement and the reasons for disagreement. The evaluation, process recording and any student comments are given to the field liaison for review before becoming part of the student's record in the Field Education Office. A copy of any student comments will also be sent to the field instructor.

Administrative Responsibilities of Field Agencies

Agency Designations and Agreement with the School of Social Welfare

Field agencies have to be in good standing with their accrediting body and strive to provide services based on their mission. Agencies will ensure that students are supervised by qualified field instructors who perform their primary duties satisfactorily.

Medical Clearance

Policies and procedures for achieving medical clearance and passing criminal background checks will be clearly outlined by the agency. Agencies will notify the Field Education Office in a timely manner of the need for such requirements prior to a student's start date of field.

Medical Liability

Students in field are not eligible for workers compensation. In the event that students are injured while in field, the cost of medical care is the responsibility of the student. Students should notify the Field Education Office of any injuries sustained while in field.

Safety Standards

Agencies will make every effort to ensure the safety of students in field. For example, students will not be asked to place themselves at personal or professional risk in the following ways:

- Perform duties outside the scope of social work practice.
- Work unsupervised nights or weekends.
- Perform client restraints without formal training.
- Conduct unsupervised community-based activities without formal training and support (i.e. home visits, host community events unsupervised).
- Transport clients without formal training.

Students will be advised of all agency safety standards. Agencies may permit students to drive an agency vehicle if they meet the agency requirements for operating vehicles.

Client Information

Students will be instructed on the regulatory standards for protecting client confidentiality and other rules regarding the handling of client information. Students in practice are bound by the rules of confidentiality. The handling of client information must be protected while in practice and even after field has ended.

Employment Status

Students do not share the same status as employees. As a result, students are not eligible for fringe benefits given to employees. To avoid compromising the field placement assignment, the Field Education Office discourages agencies' offers of employment to students at the same time that they are in field. However, 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. The form can be provided, upon request, by the Field Office. A recommendation about continuation of the field placement assignment will be made after an investigation is completed.

Supervisory Role

As part of the binding agreement between the field agency and the School of Social Welfare, the agency will ensure that proper supervision is in place during a student's placement. In the event that a designated field instructor terminates employment with an agency, the agency will notify the Field Education Office while it tries to secure another field instructor. If an agency is unable to maintain supervisory oversight of students in field, the Field Education Office will be immediately notified in order to find an alternative placement for the students.

GUIDELINES AND TOOLS TO FACILITATE LEARNING IN FIELD

The Learning Agreement

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.

Learning agreements should be reviewed regularly to ensure adherence to the learning objectives of field. When applicable, a macro project should be jointly formulated by the student and field instructor early in the placement. The field liaison will review the learning agreement to ensure that objectives outlined in the agreement coincide with the Field Instruction course objectives.

The field instructor is responsible for selecting cases, projects and other learning experiences appropriate for the student's professional development. Student learning styles and field instructor teaching styles should be considered and discussed as part of the early phase of supervisory relationship-building. Understanding one another's style of teaching and learning will contribute to greater cohesion and an acceleration of the learning process.

Focused Learning Agreement

In the event that a student is underperforming in a way that impacts the timing for achieving practice skill development, field instructors may create a *focused learning agreement*. A focused learning agreement serves as a plan of correction and formally puts the student on notice that there are concerns regarding progress in field. It details the specific areas of concern and provides more specificity about the skills that need to be achieved, the timeline for reaching competency and the tasks that should be completed. Field instructors should have contact with their designated field liaisons prior to the development of the focused learning agreement. The field liaison can assist with developing a comprehensive focused learning agreement. A sample can be found in the Appendices.

Process Recordings

As described in the "*Field Agency Responsibility*" section, process recordings are important tools for assessing clinical competence of social work practice skills. Process recordings should be done weekly by students in generalist (1st) field and advanced-concentration clinical field. Field instructors should reinforce the importance of students completing this task, and they should take the time to review and offer constructive feedback.

A sample template of a process recording can be found on the Field Education website. The table shows columns for dialogue between clients and students, students' gut level reactions, an analysis of the skills utilized and comments from the field instructor. Process recordings should be descriptive enough to explain the purpose of the client interaction, but should not provide client identifying information.

Process recordings are designed to help students visually interpret their use of clinical skills, while gaining insight into their professional growth and development. Field instructors can use process recordings to monitor the degree of competency of skills, which should guide the pace and depth of supervision.

Supervision

Field instructors and students should be prepared to have weekly supervision. Students are advised to come to supervision with an agenda listing questions, learned skills and requests for resources. Students are expected to contribute to supervision meetings by articulating learned skills and knowledge of agency operations.

Field instructors can contribute to developing the weekly agenda. Documentation of student learning, performance concerns and the status of achieving learning objectives in the learning agreement should be assessed in weekly supervision. Progress should be tracked and documented. Documented supervisory notes should include dates and describe constructive feedback provided, along with suggestions for performance improvement. Field instructors should also document whether or when the student has incorporated constructive feedback into performance improvement, indicate if the skill deficits have been resolved and/or if additional action is needed. Documentation of problem areas is especially important in the event that performance does not improve and students are asked to leave their placements.

Task Supervision

Students may be assigned to a task supervisor who oversees an area of service that the student will be learning about. The task supervisor may manage specified training, assign tasks related to services and/or evaluate proficiency in service provision. A task supervisor may be a supervisor without the requisite years of experience or be a professional in a related field. The task supervisor would be responsible for reporting students' progress to the designated field instructor of record, who must be a social worker meeting the qualifications for Field Instruction.

Field instructors serve as the supervisors of record by the Field Education Office. Field instructors are responsible for the development of learning agreements, contact with the School and determination of competency of social work practice. Field instructors are responsible for the completion of performance evaluations, which may incorporate input received by task supervisors.

Field Liaisons

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. 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.

In addition to their regular duties, liaisons teach the Field Seminar course to all students starting their first field (Generalist) placements.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

The process of evaluation is an important component of any educational endeavor because it helps give definition to learning. Standards for evaluating competency can be found in the Appendices. The Director of Field Education serves as the instructor of record for all MSW field education courses. 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 for each field sequence.
2. 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.
3. Also considered part of the final grade for Field Instruction I and II is attendance to and participation in the Field Seminar course.
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. Students in field should be exposed to enough practice experiences to provide for a rigorous learning experience in field. In consideration of appropriate practice opportunities, field instructors should assign a range of clients/cases that challenge students' learning over the course of the year. At a *minimum*, students should have 3-5 clients/cases assigned in the Generalist field year and 5 or more clients/cases assigned in the Advanced Concentration (Clinical) field year.
6. In accordance with the CSWE EPAS (2015), social work competence represents "the ability to integrate and apply social knowledge, values and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. There are nine social work competencies for which students are evaluated at, both the generalist and advanced concentration levels. The nine social work competencies are:
 - a) Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
 - b) Engage diversity and difference in practice
 - c) Advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice
 - d) Engage in practice-informed research and Research-informed practice
 - e) Engage in policy practice
 - f) Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
 - g) Assess individuals, families groups, organizations and communities
 - h) Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
 - i) Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
7. Students entering field for the advanced concentration year are evaluated on the above competencies, but the engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation measures differ based on the *concentration* (Clinical or MACRO). Students in the Clinical concentration are evaluated based on practice with individuals, families and/or groups. MACRO students are evaluated based on practice with groups, organizations and/or communities.
8. Students in Generalist or Advanced Concentration Clinical field must submit one completed and reviewed process recording with each evaluation. There should be a different process recording with each evaluation.

9. Field instructors should review evaluations with students as a way of communicating progress and areas needing improvement.
10. Evaluations and process recordings are sent to the Field Education Office and then to the field liaison for review.
11. Final evaluations and input from the field liaison are key determinants in the assignment of the final grade for Field Instruction.

Directions for Completing Field Evaluations

1. Evaluations are typically required at three periods over the course of the field instruction sequence. Students in specialized placements may have alternative time periods for field evaluations.
2. The Field Education Office provides the specific due dates that evaluations are due 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. The Field Education Office provides reminders of due dates of field evaluations throughout the school year.
4. After the field instructor completes the evaluation, supervision time should be scheduled with the student to review the evaluation.
5. Both the student and field instructor must sign the evaluation in ink. Electronic signatures are not acceptable. 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.
6. Completed and originally-signed evaluations are submitted to the Field Education Office.
7. The evaluations are reviewed by the assigned field liaison before being placed in the student's official record. Field instructors and/or students may request a meeting with the field liaison to discuss the evaluation.
8. 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.

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 for both semesters 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. A student may appeal a “U” Unsatisfactory grade in Field Instruction. Requests to appeal are sent to the Committee on Standards for Social Work Education. To learn more about the appeals process, students may contact the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs at (518) 442-5322.
5. Field Instruction I and II (RSSW 650 and 651) must be successfully completed before continuing on to Field III and IV (RSSW 752 and 753). A “U” Unsatisfactory grade in Field Instruction will mean automatic removal from field and a recommendation for dismissal from the MSW program.
6. 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 the performance of those students 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, 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.

PROTOCOLS FOR RETENTION IN FIELD AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Retention in Field

1. In the event that a student is asked to leave a field placement or requests another field placement, the Field Education Office staff should be notified immediately. Students experiencing significant challenges at their field placements should first be in contact with the field instructor and field liaison. If early intervention efforts between the field liaison, student and field instructor are unsuccessful, the Director of Field Education will conduct a thorough investigation of the placement challenges. Following the investigation, the Director of Field Education will make a final decision regarding the student's placement. The final determination may include, but is not exclusive to, one of the following:
 - a. Assignment to a new field placement mid-year.
 - b. Requirement to do field in its entirety at a new field placement.
 - c. Administration of a grade of Unsatisfactory for Field Instruction.Assignment of a new field placement may be delayed while the Field Education Office tries to secure a new field placement. Students will be required to make up any missed field hours at their new field assignment in order to earn full credit for Field Instruction.
2. A student may be suspended from a field placement for behavior that is deemed detrimental to self, the client, agency or community (See Suspension from Field Instruction section).
3. A student may voluntarily withdraw from a Field Instruction course by the withdrawal dates set by the University on a one-time basis only. Additional withdrawals from Field Instruction may result in dismissal from the MSW program. Dismissal from the MSW program will require having to reapply to the MSW program.
4. Students may not end their field placements independently. They must follow the intervention procedures for retention in field and adhere to the final decision from the Director of Field Education about the status of the field placement.
5. All 1st field (Generalist) and Advanced Standing placements are assigned by the Field Office. If a student refuses to accept an assigned field placement, this may be considered a voluntary withdrawal from field. A voluntary withdrawal from field is determined by the Director of Field Education and may subsequently result in withdrawal from the MSW program.
6. In the event that a field placement assignment is suspended and the student is allowed to be reassigned, only one new assignment is permitted for that field sequence. If two field assignments are suspended within a field sequence, this will trigger a formal review by the Director of Field Education of the student's overall performance in field. Following the review, a final determination about retention in field will be (a) Assignment to a new field placement or (b) Administration of a grade of Unsatisfactory and withdrawal from field.
7. Special consideration is given for medical withdrawals. Students requesting medical withdrawal from school (and consequently Field Instruction) have up to two semesters after the semester withdrawn to re-enroll in field. In this case, students may have to repeat the field course (see "Suspension from Field for Medical or Personal Reasons" section).

8. Title IX is a federal law that protects people from discrimination based on sex, and this includes pregnancy and parental status. This law is upheld by the SUNY Office of General Counsel and is enforced university-wide at the University at Albany. The law protects pregnant students by granting a leave for a period that is deemed medically necessary by a medical provider, and then reinstating the student “to the status held when the leave began”. With regards to matters of field, the Field Office will work with the student to develop a plan for completion of field when having to take a leave of absence due to pregnancy.
9. Students must complete Field Instruction I and II and the co-requisite courses in order to advance to Field Instruction III and IV. Failure in any co-requisite course (RSSW 610, 611, 620, 621, 630, and 631) will prevent the student from beginning Field Instruction III and IV. In the event that a student fails any of the co-requisite courses required for Field Instruction I and II, the student will have to retake the course(s) before or concurrently with Field Instruction III and IV. Permission to retake a course concurrently with Field Instruction III and IV is at the discretion of the Director of Field Education.
10. If a student is required to retake Field Instruction I and II, Micro in Social Work Practice I and II (RSSW 620 and 621) must also be retaken. If a student has already passed RSSW 620 and 621, the classes will have to be audited while the student is in field. Auditing a class means that the student has to obtain permission from the instructor to attend the classes, but does not have to register again for the class. To fulfill field instruction coursework, auditing RSSW 620 and/or RSSW 621 will require attendance to all class sessions and completion of all course assignments.

Suspension from Field Instruction

When using the phrase, “suspension from field”, it shall be defined as the ending or interruption of a field assignment before the completion of a field sequence. In accordance with the School of Social Welfare’s Standards for Social Work Education, 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. It should be noted that there is a difference between detrimental behavior and performance below an acceptable level. Lack of knowledge and skill may be contributory to performance below an acceptable standard. 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 a formal review.

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 throughout the review process. During the review process, the student’s input will be given consideration via interviews and/or the submission of a personal reflection statement regarding the suspension of the placement. At the conclusion of the formal review, 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 dismissed from field and assigned a “U” Unsatisfactory grade.

Students may appeal a decision by the Director of Field Education to issue a grade of Unsatisfactory. A formal request to appeal an unsatisfactory grade may be given to the Committee on Standards for Social Work Education. The Committee will review the suspension paperwork and the student’s appeal to overturn the decision.

Suspension of Field for Medical or Personal Reasons

A student may request to withdraw from the MSW program due to medical reasons for self or family members. Requests for medical withdrawal from the MSW program should be submitted to the University at Albany’s Office of Graduate Studies. There are specific criteria and steps regarding medical withdrawal and readmission processes. Information about withdrawal for medical/psychological reasons can be found at http://www.albany.edu/gradstudies/forms_publications.php.

If a student’s request for a medical withdrawal from the University is approved, the student’s transcript will include a “W” for the semester in which the medical withdrawal is effective. Students in Field Instruction intending to return to the MSW Program should schedule a meeting with the Director of Field Education to discuss the withdrawal and the plan for returning to Field

Instruction. When possible, this discussion and plan should occur prior to the medical withdrawal. The Director of Field Education has the discretion to allow or disallow field hours completed prior to the medical withdrawal as applicable toward the Field Instruction course after return from the medical leave.

Generally, all field assignments have to be completed in order to satisfactorily meet requirements for the Field Instruction course. Students requesting to withdraw from field for personal reasons should notify the Field Education Office as soon as possible. Exceptions to completing field are investigated on a case by case basis and determined by the Director of Field Education.

Grievance Process for Field Grades

If the student is assigned a "U" grade and is subsequently dismissed from the MSW Program, a formal written appeal can be made to the Committee on Standards for Social Work Education. The grievance process can be found in the SSW Graduate Faculty and Student Handbook.

If the Committee on Standards for Social Work Education recommends a reversal of a "U" grade, the Director of Field Education has the discretion of whether to accept the Committee's recommendation. If a "U" grade is reversed, notification of grade change, along with instructions regarding the field course is documented and sent to the student. The student must contact the Field Education office and complete all necessary paperwork for new field assignments within 30 days of the notification of a reversal of a "U" grade. Failure to contact the Field Office within 30 days of notice will be considered a voluntary withdrawal from the Field Instruction course.

APPENDICES

Addendum for Students in the Internships in Aging Project

Focused Learning Agreement - Sample

Process Recording Template

Process Recording - Sample

Block Placements and Work Study Application Instructions

Field Evaluation Criteria

Sexual Harassment

Motion on HIV/AIDS and Field Education

Services for Students with Disabilities

ADDENDUM FOR THE INTERNSHIPS IN AGING PROJECT

A student, field agency or Internships in Aging Project (IAP) staff may initiate a change in status for a student in IAP. These may include a withdrawal from the project or a change in field placement. Any changes in a student's placement should follow the process outlined in the MSW Field Education Handbook.

If issues cannot be resolved and a placement within IAP becomes in question, there are several options outlined below.

1. **Withdrawal initiated by the student** – In addition to the policies outlined in the MSW Field Education Handbook, IAP students may decide to withdraw from IAP but not to withdraw from Field Instruction. After withdrawal from IAP, the student may wish to either 1) remain at their current field site (with permission of current field agency) but reduce to two days per week for Field III and IV or 2) switch to a new field site assigned through the Field Education Office. The student, field liaison and the Field Office will work together toward assigning a new field placement. IAP reserves the right to require the student to leave the agency and to repay any tuition or stipend already received. All efforts would be made for this transition to be timely. However, the student is responsible for completing any missed time in field due to the transition. Accrued field time will be negotiated with the Field Education Office and the receiving agency.
2. **Denial of Field Placement through the Internships in Aging Project** – It may be determined, by a field site or IAP staff, that a student should not continue in IAP. Possible reasons for dismissal from IAP include:
 - Those conditions outlined in the *Protocols for Retention in Field and Grievance Procedures* section of the MSW Field Education Handbook
 - Failure to meet the SSW Standards for Social Work Education (see SSW Graduate Faculty and Student Handbook)
 - Difficulty learning in a rotational model
 - Difficulty working with older adults
 - a. Any of the above issues would trigger an investigation. Determination of possible denial of placement would be made by the IAP Project Director, the Director of Field Education (or designee) and the academic advisor.
 - b. If a student is removed from an IAP placement, s/he will no longer be eligible for an IAP stipend or further tuition waivers, and will no longer be eligible to participate in the IAP seminar. IAP reserves the right to require the student to leave the agency and to repay any tuition or stipend already received.

3. Change of field placement within IAP

- a. The IAP Project Director, student and field instructor will work together to try to resolve issues within the current field site. If a sound educational reason exists to change field sites and to remain in IAP, then the IAP project staff will work to develop a new field site. The student may lose their stipend (depending on funding source) but would be eligible to continue in the IAP program. All efforts would be made for this transition to be timely. However, the student is responsible for completing any missed time in field due to the transition. The receiving agency may determine that additional time in field is needed for a meaningful educational opportunity.

All other sections of the MSW Field Education Handbook apply.

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 within designated timeframes after the establishment of the Focused Learning agreement. 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: synthesizing 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 _____

PROCESS RECORDING TEMPLATE

Process Recording #

Date

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

Content Dialogue	Social Work Student=s Gut-Level Feelings	Logical Interpretations 1. Of student feelings 2. Of client interaction 3. Of skills used/alternative approaches that could be used	Supervisor Comments

PROCESS RECORDING SAMPLE

Process Recording

April 18, 2010

Scenario: Meeting with 65 year old female client living in a skilled nursing facility. The client has been dealing with depression and regularly reports feeling along.

Content Dialogue	Thoughts/Feelings	Interpretations	Supervisor Comments
I have been talking with the client for a while. Apparently, both her kids recently came to visit for Easter and brought their families.	This should have been a celebration.	I know this made her day.	
Client: I had a tough childhood. I didn't have a mom.	How did we get on this subject? Does she want to talk about her childhood?	Recognizing that family events can trigger unresolved feelings in a person's life, especially in relation to their family history. I should see where this goes.	It's excellent to see how you initially assumed the client's response to her children's visit as being positive. However, you later recognized some of the distortions in her thinking that impact her mood. Good observation!
Me: Did your mom pass away when you were a child?	Warmth, caring, eliciting information to better understand client's feelings about family.		
Client: Yeah, when I was 4. Then my father married that witch!	She still has a lot of anger.	Better understand client's tendency to think negatively.	

APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR 2nd YEAR BLOCK FIELD PLACEMENTS

To be eligible for the SUMMER BLOCK field option, a student must have:

1. A minimum of 37 credits
2. Satisfactorily completed Field Instruction I and II
3. Minimum of 3 out of the last 5 years of paid full-time employment in social work prior to admission in the MSW program
4. Letter of recommendation from the previous field instructor
5. A completed application

To be eligible for the SUMMER/FALL MODIFIED field option, a student must have:

1. Satisfactorily completed Field Instruction I and II
2. Completed advanced practice coursework prior to taking or currently taking advanced practice coursework concurrently with field

Criteria for completing the Block Application

- Describe prior employment in social work practice settings.
 - Be specific about roles, populations served, length of time, etc. Attach a *current up to date resume* to this application, showing month/year and full or part-time employment.
 - State short-term career goals (e.g. plans for the next five years).
 - Provide a brief explanation of the reasons for applying for the Block Field option.
 - Describe the desired advanced concentration field experience and why it is being selected.
- Address the following:
- How the placement relates to your career goals.
 - Types of activities or roles you envision.
 - Type of agency and client population you want to practice with.
 - Any additional, relevant and helpful information to be considered in the review of the application.
- Address any special conditions or needs to be considered for a successful experience, (e.g. location, accessibility, accommodations, etc.)

GUIDE TO WORK STUDY APPLICATION

Submission Deadlines

If this will be your first field placement, the deadline is -- July 1st

If this will be your advanced concentration field placement, the deadline is -- April 1st

This option is available to any full or part-time student who wishes to fulfill **one year** of their field work experience in the agency at which they are currently employed. Advanced Standing students are not eligible for this option. To be eligible to apply, a student and the agency must meet the following minimum educational criteria:

1. Student must have been employed in a human service agency, providing human services work, for at least three (3) out of the last five (5) years. Nursing, teaching, camp counseling, and educational assistantships are examples of some of the many types of work that do not qualify as human service employment for the purpose of this application. For the proposed work study agency site, the student must also have been employed with this agency for a minimum of one (1) year at the time of the application submission. Employment is defined as a full-time, paid position. Please take note that **no exceptions** will be granted regarding this requirement.
2. Agency must be willing to reassign student to a field setting that is substantially different from the work that the student is currently employed to do, for two (2) days per week.
3. The prospective field instructor must meet the minimum criteria for instruction: MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited social work program and two years post-master's professional social work practice experience. The designated field instructor must be different from the applicant's employment supervisor.
4. Applicants for the Work Study option must meet all of the admissions requirements of the School of Social Welfare, and be in good academic standing at the time of application.

Letters will be sent by the Field Office notifying students of the outcome following the completed review.

FIELD EVALUATION CRITERIA

EVALUATION INSTRUCTIONS

The generalist and second-year clinical practice field evaluation instruments are comprised of nine competencies for which students have to demonstrate proficiency of social work practice skills: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior; Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice; Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice; Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice; Engage in Policy Practice; Engage with Individuals, Families and/or Groups; Assess Individuals, Families and/or Groups; Intervene with Individuals, Families and/or Groups; and Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families and/or Groups. Students are evaluated on a continuum of skills at one interval throughout the field instruction sequence. The skills are applicable to individuals, families, groups, and community assignments.

The MACRO evaluation instrument is comprised of nine competencies for which students have to demonstrate proficiency of social work practice skills: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior; Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice; Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice; Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice; Engage in Policy Practice; Engage with Groups, Organizations and/or Communities; Assess Groups, Organizations and/or Communities; Intervene with Groups, Organizations and/or Communities; Evaluate Practice with Groups, Organizations and/or Communities. Students are evaluated on a continuum of skills at one interval throughout the field instruction sequence. The skills are applicable to groups, organizations and community assignments.

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 Unacceptable (never or rarely meets criteria)
- 1 Needs improvement (meets criteria inconsistently)
- 2 Satisfactory (meets criteria most of the time)
- 3 Very good (consistently meets criteria)
- 4 Outstanding (consistently exceeds criteria)
- 9 Not applicable in practice 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, with space for comments and goals for the next evaluation period. The student and field instructor are required to sign each evaluation. When a student disagrees with the contents of the evaluation, he or she may submit an addendum stating the reasons for disagreement. The addendum is attached to the evaluation in the student's file. The field liaison reads all evaluations and is available to meet 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," it is important to 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.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

As indicated in the School of Social Welfare Graduate Faculty and Student Handbook, sexual harassment in the educational setting or workplace is a serious civil rights violation upheld by the University at Albany. Sexual harassment is any unwanted verbal or physical sexual advance or sexually explicit derogatory statements made by someone in the classroom or work place, which are offensive or which cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation or which interfere with the recipient's education or job performance. It can include: leering at a person's body; verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature; unnecessary touching, patting, pinching, or constant brushing against a person's body; subtle pressure for sexual favors; demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning one's grades, recommendations, job, performance evaluation, promotion, etc.; physical assault. NOTE: Although the majority of incidents involve a male supervisor, coworker, or instructor harassing a woman, the law also covers women harassing men, women harassing women, and men harassing men.

A Violation of the Law and University Policy

Sexual harassment is a violation of the law (Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964). Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment (or education);
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

(from: Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Sex: EEOC Sec. 1604.11, November 1980)

What to Do if You Feel You Have Been Subjected to Sexual Harassment

1. As a student in field, contact your Field Liaison, Director or Assistant Directors of Field Education immediately.
2. You may contact the Assistant Vice President for Equity and Compliance at (518) 956-8168. This contact is strictly confidential.
3. Contact Public Safety Emergency Number (911) if you were assaulted or raped on or off campus.
4. Contact University Police at their non-emergency number (518) 442-3131 to provide or obtain information.

HIV/AIDS AND FIELD EDUCATION: POLICY STATEMENT

Motion: It was moved that the Committee in Field Education (© 1990) adopt the following guidelines regarding HIV/AIDS and procedures relating to the operation of the Field Education program of the School of Social Welfare. These standards have been consistently upheld by the Field Education Department and remain current.

1. The School of Social Welfare will not exclude agencies that serve clients with HIV/AIDS in its selection process for field placements.
2. Social work graduate and undergraduate students are expected to be willing to serve clients living with HIV/AIDS or who are at high risk for transmission of HIV/AIDS.
3. Students will be expected to maintain the confidentiality of any patient health information pertaining to clients receiving HIV/AIDS services.
4. Students with special interest in working with persons with HIV/AIDS may request such placements. The Field Education Office will actively seek partnerships with agencies that serve clients living with HIV/AIDS or who are at high risk for HIV/AIDS transmission.
5. The School of Social Welfare's knowledge about the HIV status of students will be kept in the strictest confidence and will not be disclosed for any reason without the students' written consent.
6. In those situations where agency personnel become aware of a student's HIV status, this knowledge will have no impact on acceptance or continuation in their field placement.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with a disability may obtain services through the University at Albany's Disability Resource Center. Students requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center and complete an assessment. Upon request and authorization for release by the student, the Disability Resource Center will notify the Field Education Office of any needed accommodations regarding field. The Field Education Office will work with the Disability Resource Center to try to meet the necessary accommodations.

The website for the Disability Resource Center is <http://www.albany.edu/disability/>.