

# Employment-Related Field Placement

The School of Social Work recognizes that many students work full-time while attending school. In an effort to be responsive to this situation, the School offers the opportunity for students to develop and submit a proposal to have their place of employment serve as an employment-related field placement. The following policies and procedures must be followed:

A student can have only ONE employment-related placement for BSW/MSW field education credit, i.e., 1st-year: MSW foundation OR 2nd-year: MSW Community Partnerships concentration. Advanced-standing students cannot have employment-related field placements for both the BSW and MSW field placements.

A student cannot use one's current position and tasks for the field placement. The field intern position and tasks must be different. In addition, the field supervisor cannot be the same person as the student's work supervisor.

- A student must submit a proposal to the Director of Field Education by the due date as determined by the field director. This proposal must include:
- Description of current position and job tasks
- Contact information for work supervisor
- Description of proposed position and related job tasks as a field intern in your place of employment (use the appropriate IPP to inform your response)
- Describe how you will complete the required weekly field placement hours over the two semesters. Some deviation may be approved using the December break, spring break, etc. to complete the required hours.
- Contact information for proposed field supervisor

Acknowledgement from the proposed field supervisor that he/she is able to supervise the student and agrees to all field supervision requirements and responsibilities (on School's website)

Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The Director of Field Education will make the final decision in each case.

The agency/organization must agree to the field placement site responsibilities and sign the School's affiliation agreement (memorandum of understanding).

All inquiries re: employment-related field placements should be directed to the School's Director of Field Education.

# Field Placement Hours

BSW and 1st-year MSW students are expected to complete a minimum of 400 hours over the course of the two academic semesters. With delayed entry into fall field placement, it is expected that students will complete at least 160 hours during the fall semester (approximately 16 hours over 10-11 weeks). Students will complete a minimum of 240 hours during the fifteen-week Spring semester.

2nd-year MSW students are expected to complete a minimum of 500 hours over the course of the two academic semesters. In the fall, these students complete approximately 234 hours (18 hours over 13 weeks) followed by a minimum of 270 hours during the Spring semester.

## Scheduling Hours:

BSW and 1st-year MSW students usually complete the required 16 hours/week field placement in two full days (lunch not included in the hour count). 2nd-year MSW students complete the required 18 hours/week field placement scheduled over three work days (not a two day/week schedule). The student and field supervisor must discuss and agree to the student's weekly schedule based on both the student's and the supervisor's needs/tasks. Classes and field seminar cannot be missed to attend field placement.

## December Hours:

All students should be off the week that GSU is closed for the December holidays – they are not expected to be in placement when the University is closed. Students should return to their respective field placement sites once the spring semester begins in January (check the academic calendar for start date). The School acknowledges there may be work that needs to be accomplished in the field agency requiring the student's presence once fall semester is completed. However, there are limits to a student continuing his/her placement in between the semesters. Upon completion of the fall semester field placement hours, the student can work for a maximum of 25 hours total in December (to be agreed upon by both student and field supervisor) and such hours can be counted towards spring semester hours. Students should not be working 16 hours per week – their December hours should reflect the time needed to provide continuity in assigned tasks or responsibilities (e.g., case management, group facilitation, holiday project, fundraising event). If the student or field supervisor is unclear about December field placement hours, the faculty liaison should be consulted.

## NASW Student Lobby Day:

The School supports the professional development of social work students and their identification with the profession. Georgia NASW sponsors Student Lobby Day (usually held in February). Students are encouraged to attend this event and, if it falls on the same day as the student's field placement day, field supervisors are encouraged to allow the student to attend. The field supervisor has the choice to require that the student make up the missed field day or give credit to the student to use lobby day as an approved field day. If the supervisor approves it as a field day, the student should provide a written or oral report, reflection, analysis, etc. of his/her lobbying experience, lessons learned, and application to the field site.

# Grades and Evaluation

## BSW Grades and Evaluations

The student's letter grade for field education incorporates a grade for field placement given by the field supervisor and a grade for the field integrative seminar given by the faculty liaison. 60% of the final grade is determined by the student's performance in the field and 40% of the final grade is determined by the student's performance in the seminar. Assigning the final grade is the responsibility of the faculty liaison. Although the final grade represents a 60/40 split between field and seminar, the faculty liaison has the discretion to lower a student's final grade for: (1) failure to turn in on time all time sheets, the learning contract (Individualized Partnership Plan), assignments, or any additional course requirements; (2) failure to complete any assignment or a course requirement; (3) failure to attend and/or participate in field seminar; (4) inconsistencies in student performance between field placement and field seminar; and (5) failure to complete the minimum of 400 field placement hours.

A grade of "C" or better in SW 4930 is required for continuation into SW 4940. If a student has taken a social work core course with SW 4930, the student must earn a "C" or better in this course for continuation in SW 4940- Field Education II as well. A grade of "F" represents a failed field education course. Students who fall below the minimum standards set forth by the School of Social Work will be subject to academic review. Academic review may result in re-enrollment in the field education course, academic probation, or dismissal from the social work program (see [Student Handbook](#)).

An "I" (incomplete) may be granted to a student with extenuating circumstances as approved by the field director. A student who is failing field education may not receive an "I" grade. According to the [GSU Undergraduate Catalog](#):

The notation of "I" may be given to a student who for nonacademic reasons beyond his or her control is unable to meet the full requirements of a course. In order to qualify for an "I," a student must:

- (a) have completed most of the major assignments of the course (generally all but one) and
- (b) be earning a passing grade in the course (aside from the assignments not completed) in the judgment of the instructor.

When a student has a nonacademic reason for not completing one or more of the assignments for a course, including examinations, and wishes to receive an incomplete for the course, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor in person or in writing of the reason. A grade of incomplete is awarded at the discretion of the instructor and is not the prerogative of the student. Conditions to be met for removing a grade of incomplete are established by the instructor.

If a student must withdraw from SW 4930 or SW 4940, the student must follow University procedures as outlined in the "Withdrawal from Classes (including Hardship Status)" section of the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). If a student withdraws from field education, the student may not be

assigned to the same agency upon re-entry. Re-entry may be limited to a space-available basis.

## **FIELD SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION OF STUDENT**

Evaluation of the student is an on-going process. A student continually receives feedback on his/her performance from the field supervisor, task supervisor (where appropriate), and assigned faculty liaison. Written evaluations completed by the field supervisor are required three times during the two-semester field placement. A mid-term evaluation of the student is required during the first semester in placement and a final evaluation is due at the end of each semester [link: BSW evaluations]. The field supervisor is responsible for completing each written evaluation in a timely manner, discussing the completed instrument with the student and obtaining the student's signature on the final page. It is the student's responsibility for handing the evaluations in to the faculty liaison by the due date. The due dates for the evaluations are found on the Academic Calendar.

The field supervisor is asked to grade the student on field performance as part of the end-of-semester final evaluation. The field supervisor's grade accounts for 60% of the overall grade each semester. The following criteria shall be used in the determination of a student's final field placement grade:

**A** 90-100

Represents excellent work. The student demonstrates superior abilities in field. The student is almost always consistent in his/her field performance and in meeting the educational objectives.

**B** 80-89

Represents good work. The student demonstrates solid, above average progress in field. The student is consistent in his/her field performance and in meeting the educational objectives.

**C** 70-79

Represents average work. The student demonstrates satisfactory work. The student is somewhat consistent in his/her field performance and in meeting educational objectives.

**F** less than 69

Represents failing work. The student has demonstrated incompetence in his/her field performance. The student has not met field expectations and educational objectives.

## **FACULTY LIAISON'S EVALUATION OF STUDENT**

As part of the faculty liaison role, the designated faculty member is responsible for assigning the student's field seminar grade each semester. This includes evaluating the student's course assignments and final paper, completion of the learning outcomes as set forth in the Individualized Partnership Plan, and the successful completion of any additional field integrative seminar requirements. The liaison's responsibility for the field seminar grade is in addition to his/her responsibility for assigning the final field education grade each semester.

40% of the overall field education grade is determined by the student's performance in field seminar. The following criteria shall be used in determining the student's seminar grade:

<b>SW 4930- Field Education I (Fall):</b>		<b>SW 4940- Field Education II (Spring):</b>	
Attendance/Participation	20%	Attendance/Participation	20%
Weekly Logs	20%	Weekly Logs	20%
Annotated Bibliography	20%	Case Presentation	20%
Process Recording	20%	Evaluation of Practice	20%
Organizational/Community Analysis Paper	20%	Final Paper	20%

## MSW Grades and Evaluation

The student's letter grade for field education incorporates a grade for field placement given by the field supervisor and a grade for the field integrative seminar given by the faculty liaison. 60% of the final grade is determined by the student's performance in the field and 40% of the final grade is determined by the student's performance in the seminar. Assigning the final grade is the responsibility of the faculty liaison. Although the final grade represents a 60/40 split between field and seminar, the faculty liaison has the discretion to lower a student's final grade for: (1) failure to turn in on time all time sheets, the learning contract (Individualized Partnership Plan), assignments, or any additional course requirements; (2) failure to complete any assignment or course requirement; (3) failure to attend and/or participate in field seminar; (4) inconsistencies in student performance between field placement and field seminar; and (5) failure to complete the minimum of 400 field placement hours for first-year students or a minimum of 500 field placement hours for second-year MSW students.

MSW students must earn a "B" or better in field education in order to continue into the next semester's field education course. A grade of "C" (while giving credit hours) will not apply toward the MSW degree. A grade of "F" represents a failed field education course. Students who fall below the minimum standards set forth by the School of Social Work will be subject to academic review. Academic review may result in re-enrollment in the field education course, academic probation, or dismissal from the social work program (see [Student Handbook](#)).

If a student earns less than a "B" in a six-semester hours field education course and is allowed to continue in the MSW program, that specific course must be retaken in the next semester in which it is offered. Before being allowed to retake the field education course, the student may be required to take an independent study course with a field component, supervised by the Director of Field Education or another faculty member. Please note that if a student is given the option to remediate a grade lower than a "B" or to remediate a grade point average that falls below a 3.0, this option is available only once during a student's matriculation in the MSW program. Remediation of a grade or grade point average does **not** automatically allow a student to continue in the program (see [Student Handbook](#)).

An "I" (incomplete) may be granted to a student with extenuating circumstances as approved by the field director. A student who is failing field education may not receive an "I" grade. According to the [GSU Graduate Catalog](#):

The notation of "I" may be given to a student who for nonacademic reasons beyond his or her control is unable to meet the full requirements of a course. In order to qualify for an "I," a student must:

- (a) have completed most of the major assignments of the course (generally all but one) and
- (b) be earning a passing grade in the course (aside from the assignments not completed) in the judgment of the instructor.

When a student has a nonacademic reason for not completing one or more of the assignments for a course, including examinations, and wishes to receive an incomplete for the course, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor in person or in writing of the reason. A grade

of incomplete is awarded at the discretion of the instructor and is not the prerogative of the student. Conditions to be met for removing a grade of incomplete are established by the instructor.

If a student must withdraw from any field education course, the student must follow University procedures as outlined in the “Withdrawal from Classes (including Hardship Status)” section of the Graduate Catalog. If a student withdraws from field education, the student may not be assigned to the same agency upon re-entry. Re-entry may be limited to a space-available basis.

### **FIELD SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION OF STUDENT**

Evaluation of the student is an on-going process. A student continually receives feedback on his/her performance from the field supervisor, task supervisor (where appropriate), and assigned faculty liaison. Written evaluations completed by the field supervisor are required three times during the two-semester field placement. A mid-term evaluation of the student is required during the first semester in placement and a final evaluation is due at the end of each semester [link: MSW evaluations]. The field supervisor is responsible for completing each written evaluation in a timely manner, discussing the completed instrument with the student and obtaining the student's signature on the final page. It is the student's responsibility for handing the evaluations in to the faculty liaison by the due date. The due dates for the evaluations are found on the Academic Calendar [link].

The field supervisor is asked to grade the student on field performance as part of the end-of-semester final evaluation. The field supervisor's grade accounts for 60% of the overall grade each semester. The following criteria shall be used in the determination of a student's final field placement grade:

**A** 90-100

Represents excellent work. The student demonstrates superior abilities in field. The student is almost always consistent in his/her field performance and in meeting the educational objectives.

**B** 80-89

Represents good work. The student demonstrates solid progress in field. The student is consistent in his/her field performance and in meeting the educational objectives.

**C** 70-79

Represents below average work. The student demonstrates limited professional competency. The student is somewhat inconsistent in his/her field performance and in meeting the educational objectives.

**F** less than 69

Represents failing work. The student has demonstrated incompetence in his/her field performance. The student has not met field expectations and educational objectives.

### **FACULTY LIAISON'S EVALUATION OF STUDENT**

As part of the faculty liaison role, the designated faculty member is responsible for assigning the student's field seminar grade each semester. This includes evaluating the student's course

assignments and final paper, completion of the learning outcomes as set forth in the Individualized Partnership Plan, and the successful completion of any additional field seminar requirements. The liaison's responsibility for the field seminar grade is in addition to his/her responsibility for assigning the final field education grade each semester.

40% of the overall field education grade is determined by the student's performance in field seminar. The following criteria shall be used in determining the student's seminar grade:

**1st Year:**

<b>SW 7500- Foundation Field Education I:</b>		<b>SW 7900- Foundation Field Education II:</b>	
Attendance / Participation	20%	Attendance / Participation	20%
Weekly Logs	20%	Weekly Logs	20%
Perspective Paper / Annotated Bibliography	20%	Process Recording	20%
Process Recording	20%	Case Presentation paper	20%
Organizational / Community Analysis Paper	20%	Final Paper	20%

**2nd Year:**

<b>SW 8500- Concentration Field Education I:</b>		<b>SW 8900- Concentration Field Education II:</b>	
Attendance/Participation	25%	Attendance/Participation	25%
Weekly Logs	50%	Weekly Logs	50%
Code of Ethics paper	25%	Final paper	25%



# Guidelines on Personal Safety

The social work profession has become increasingly concerned about the safety and security of social work practitioners in the workplace. Work-related violence against social workers may include physical and/or verbal assault, the threat of assault and harassment. Such concern about workplace violence also draws attention to the safety and security of social work students placed in field placement settings.

Field sites should have policies and procedures dealing with safety and security issues for all personnel. These safety and security policies and procedures need to be a part of the student's site orientation. However, if this information is not formally presented, the student must initiate discussion of such policies and procedures with the field supervisor. Every effort must be made to reduce potential risk in field settings. Safety and security issues to be addressed with the student include:

- office and facility security (e.g., interviewing rooms, emergency exits, disaster plan, parking areas, before and after hours work);
- in-house emergency procedures for summoning security, police, and backup assistance;
- policies and procedures for home and community visits (e.g., when, where, with another worker or escort, under what conditions a visit should or should not be made, emergency backup plans);
- transporting clients (e.g., personal car, agency vehicle, insurance and liability, when, where, with another worker, under what conditions would an intern be given this assignment);
- assessing and handling agitated and/or violent clients (e.g., de-escalation techniques, physical restraint of clients, treating clients with a history of violence); and
- potential risks and safety issues unique to a particular setting and/or client population.

The field supervisor should discuss with the student any activities that may require special planning with regard to safety. An understanding should be reached between the student and field supervisor, with input from the faculty liaison, about what constitutes "high risk" or "dangerous" assignments. If the student refuses to accept what may be described as a dangerous assignment, this should be discussed with the faculty liaison. The student has the right to refuse a dangerous assignment and his/her safety should not be compromised.

If a student is threatened or injured in placement, or is involved in an incident where one's safety may be compromised, the faculty liaison or field director should be notified immediately.

See information on developing a comprehensive safety plan written by the Committee for the Study and Prevention of Violence against Social Workers, National Association of Social Workers, Massachusetts Chapter.

# Professional Competence & Academic Review in Field Education

The field placement is a critical component of the student's development as a professional social worker, particularly as it reflects the student's ability to internalize academic course content and to combine professional knowledge and skill with a professional demeanor appropriate for practice. The student must maintain a professional demeanor that separates personal problems/issues from practice in order to engage successfully in one's professional responsibilities to clients, the agency, and the community. Should a student's personal problems, psychological well-being, lack of maturity or lack of learning readiness in the student intern role impair the student's field performance and responsibilities to clients, the agency, and/or the community, the field supervisor and the faculty liaison have the responsibility to intervene.

The following criteria will be used to determine the basis of professional competence in field education:

Field placement experience: The agency field supervisor, the faculty liaison, and/or the Director of Field Education's evaluation of the student will be reviewed. Concerns around the student's professional competence may arise due to the student's inability to:

1. establish and maintain positive and constructive interpersonal relationships with clients and field supervisors,
2. poor performance in the field (see mid-semester and final evaluation criteria), and/or
3. lack of professional demeanor. Any of these concerns will be assessed within the developmental framework of the student's progress through his or her social work education and experiences.

Lack of professional demeanor may be evidenced by the student's:

- Lack of commitment to professional growth and development
- Tardiness or absenteeism at the field placement
- Failure to adhere to agency policies, standards, and guidelines
- Lack of appropriate professional dress and appearance
- Failure to enact appropriate behaviors with clients
- Failure to meet project/task/assignment deadlines
- Inability to accept constructive feedback from the field supervisor
- Failure to exhibit maturity or learning readiness
- Failure to maintain professional boundaries
- Failure to exhibit ethical behavior

Lack of professional competence as exhibited in the student's performance in field education may result in a lower grade or possible dismissal from the program.

Additional criteria that may be used to assess a student's professional competence and lead to an academic review by the School's Professional Review Committee include:

Academic performance: Failure to meet the minimum academic standards set by the University, the College, and the School.

Unprofessional behavior or ethical misconduct: Failure to comply with the ethics, values, and principles of the social work profession as defined by the NASW Code of Ethics; exploitation of clients, engaging in sexual activities with clients; participation in dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation; and/or involvement in illegal activities (conviction of a felony, breaking the law, specific criminal behavior such as trafficking in and/or possession of drugs).

Inability to function within the role of a student: Inappropriate classroom behavior (disruptiveness, tardiness, inattentiveness, behaviors that undermine the work or morale of faculty and students). The student demonstrates an inability to accept feedback and effectively utilize the problem solving process.

Negative attitude: Demonstrates a negative attitude/lack of enthusiasm toward the social work program, the social work profession, and/or the field placement, to such a degree that it impairs the student's ability to actively participate in the learning experience.

Personal problems: This may include either physical, emotional, or life-related problems that interfere with a student's ability to meet both the academic and professional standards and requirements and/or raise questions about suitability for profession.

Failure to comply with the policies and procedures of Georgia State University and/or the College of Health and Human Sciences and/or the School of Social Work and/or the field placement agency.

For a student who does not maintain professional standards or whose personal problems/issues present obstacles in maintaining professional standards, that student may be removed from placement and receive a failing grade for field education. In such situations, the student may be denied another field placement and dismissed from the social work program. Depending on the circumstances for dismissal, a student suspended from field education may be allowed to re-enroll only at such time when he/she demonstrates to the satisfaction of the faculty an appropriate commitment to the demands of and expectations for the field education experience. If the recommendation is to remove a student from field education, this recommendation must be presented to the Director of Field Education, BSW Program Director, School of Social Work Director, and to the School's Professional Review Committee for a final decision.

# Professional Liability Insurance

The School of Social Work requires that all M.S.W. students have professional liability insurance while enrolled in social work field education. Students pay a fee to the School for the purchase of a group liability policy taken out by the College of Health and Human Sciences that covers all student interns and faculty liaisons for two semesters in field placement. Any student not paying the fee for professional liability insurance will not be allowed to start field placement.

It is strongly recommended that social work students have personal health care insurance. Through the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, the University offers an optional "Accidental Injury and Post Exposure" insurance plan for students in internships. This insurance is purchased by the student directly from the company. The Director of Field Education has copies of this policy along with enrollment forms. This insurance is purchased by interested students directly from the company. Students are urged to compare their health insurance coverage with the optional accidental injury and post exposure policy.

The University, and most agencies, do not have "personal property" insurance coverage for students. The student is responsible for personal items (e.g., cellular telephone, laptop computer) brought to the field agency. If using a personal car, the student should check his/her car insurance regarding coverage for damage.]

## Sharing of Sensitive Student Information

In meetings with the field director prior to field placement or during the field placement seminar with the faculty liaison, a student may choose to share personal information that is deemed "sensitive." This may include such personal matters as a felony or misdemeanor, mental health diagnosis or treatment, substance abuse history, chronic illness, disease, physical disability, or learning disability. "Sensitive" information may also include problems in classroom performance or in a previous field placement.

In response to the sharing of student information, one must address maintaining the privacy rights of a student, while at the same time protecting the welfare of clients served in a field site, supporting the field site's right to make an informed decision in accepting a student for placement, and allowing the school to make an educationally-sound placement selection. A student's permission to share sensitive information should always be solicited.

In the attempt to balance these competing demands, each student situation must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The following factors shall be considered in the decision to share sensitive student information between the school and the field site:\*

- student's permission to share information
- information is labeled confidential
- potential effect(s) on clients being served at the field site
- relevance of student's personal matter to field of practice

- timeframe (current or past) of the student's personal matter
- severity of the student's personal matter
- field supervisor's right to know
- field site's human resources policies/requirements

"reasonable accommodations" as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

disclosure of student information as defined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

It should be noted that field sites might require a prospective student to be processed like a new employee, which can include background checks, fingerprinting, and/or medical tests (e.g., TB test) as prerequisites for acceptance as a student intern.

[\*Adapted from: Reeser, L.C. & Wertkin, R.A. (1997). Sharing sensitive student information with field instructors: Responses of students, liaisons, and field instructors. *Journal of Social Work Education* (Spring/Summer), 347-362.]

## **Grievance Procedure**

Occasionally there are situations in the field setting that cannot be resolved satisfactorily between the student and the field supervisor. In these instances, the faculty liaison should be contacted immediately. The faculty liaison is available to assist when problems arise as identified by either the field supervisor or the student. If needed, a meeting is arranged with the faculty liaison, student, and field supervisor. If the situation continues to persist, the director of field education may become involved.

Sometimes miscommunications, misunderstandings, and nervousness can interfere with the student's ability to conform to professional practice. Therefore, early recognition and ongoing, open communication between the field supervisor, the faculty liaison, and the student is critical.

# **Student Guidelines: Preparing for Supervision**

Students are expected to prepare appropriately for weekly supervision. This means following the guidelines and standards set forth by the field supervisor as well as those set by the School. As the student progresses through the field placement, it is expected that he/she will take on increasing responsibility for the content of the supervisory sessions by creating a written agenda for each session. Created by the School's Field Advisory Board, the following guidelines for writing an agenda offer a holistic approach to assist the student with integration of classroom knowledge and practice application and to focus on processing the field experience. The student and field supervisor should discuss ways to operationalize these guidelines. The student's supervisory agenda should include these five sections:

- Items related to past social work, or related, coursework and work experiences
- Items related to current coursework and classroom learning (e.g., at the beginning of each semester, bring copies of course syllabi to the field supervisor)
- Items related to mid-semester or final evaluation instruments
- Items related to field placement (both task- and process-focused)
- Additional Items

## **Transporting Clients**

The University and the School of Social Work do not allow any social work intern to transport any client, family member, significant other, etc. Some field agencies request the social work student to transport clients because it is suggested that this task provides an opportunity to have one-on-one time with the client(s). While this may be true, even when the agency is willing to add the student as an approved driver to its insurance policy and provide an agency vehicle, transporting clients is still prohibited. Both the student and the field supervisor (as representative of the agency) must abide by this policy.