

TEXAS  STATE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

School of Social Work

Social Work with Integrity: Promoting Global Well-Being



FIELD EDUCATION HANDBOOK
for
Students and Field Instructors
SWField@Txstate.edu

<https://www.socialwork.txstate.edu/fieldpracticum.html>

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WELCOME TO FIELD EDUCATION

The School of Social Work at Texas State University endorses the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) principle that field education is the "signature pedagogy" of social work education. Field education requires all social work students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through training experiences in professionally supervised and educationally based field internship placements. Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner.

The purpose of field education is to provide the student with the opportunity to develop competence in social work skills and professional values in actual social service settings. The comprehensive curriculum of the School of Social Work encourages the student to integrate theory, knowledge, values, and skills learned in the classroom and demonstrate mastery of social work behaviors and development of professional competencies in field education. Through coursework and field internships, students are prepared to become professional social workers with the knowledge, values, and skills needed to serve individuals and families, transform communities, influence social policy, and promote social and economic justice.

The Office of Field Education, which includes the Director, Coordinators, Advisors, and Field Liaisons, are responsible for all matters related to field education. Field team members may serve as field advisors and field liaisons (see Glossary of Terms).

This handbook guides students in field education and agency field instructors on policies and procedures relevant to the School of Social Work Field Education. Field education is an exciting time for students as they transition into the social work profession.

The School of Social Work Office of Field Education Frequently Asked Questions may be found at <https://www.socialwork.txstate.edu/fieldpracticum.html> for additional information to this handbook.

CONDITIONS FOR STUDENTS ENROLLING IN FIELD EDUCATION

1. Representatives of the School and the agency to which the student is assigned have agreed that the purpose of field instruction in the agency is to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the learning objectives as outlined in the respective Field Practicum Handbook.
2. The School has agreed to assign students that meet the criteria of the participating agency.

3. The agency field instructor will assign those cases and client contacts that it deems reasonable for a student to handle during field practice.
4. The agency field instructor will from time to time submit informal and/or formal reports to assist the field liaison in evaluating the student's activities in field practice.
5. The Field Director and Texas State University School of Social Work assume the responsibility for the selection of students to be placed with the agency and share with the agency, prior to placement, information about the student's academic achievement, personal characteristics, and educational needs.
6. The student is expected to follow the agency's normal office hours, stipulations against disclosing confidential information, and other rules and regulations mutually agreed upon by the School of Social Work and the agency.

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The first social work course was offered in the School of Sociology in 1975. Initially, social work was offered as a sequence in the sociology major. Later it developed as an academic minor, and eventually expanded into an academic major. The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program was first accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 1978, with reaffirmation of accreditation offered in 1985 and 1992. The Master of Social Work (MSW) program was authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in the Fall of 1994 with instruction to begin in the Fall of 1995. The MSW program received accreditation by CSWE in 2000. Both the BSW and MSW programs have successfully maintained accreditation standards through reaffirmation.

The School of Social Work has robust BSW and MSW programs with over 500 actively enrolled students each semester. The BSW program has a campus-based program and an online program for full time students. The School offers MSW programs for two types of students: 1.) Foundation track for students who have a bachelor's degree in a field of study other than social work and wish to obtain an MSW or 2). Advanced Standing track for students who have a Bachelor of Social Work degree from an accredited program. Students may complete their MSW education online as a full time or part time student.

The School of Social Work is part of the College of Applied Arts at Texas State University. The School is guided by a Director, MSW Program Director, BSW Program Director, and Field Director who act as the administrative decision-making body for academic issues relating to social work education. The School Director reports directly to the Dean of the College of Applied Arts.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The School of Social Work at Texas State University offers both the BSW and MSW degree options. The curriculum is differentiated by the type of program and method of delivery.

BSW

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree program at Texas State University School of Social Work prepares students intending to pursue entry-level professional social work practice or further graduate study. The Texas State University School of Social Work offers the BSW program both on-campus and online. BSW graduates will be prepared for employment in varied fields including child welfare, corrections, long-term care, rehabilitation, and public assistance. The Texas State BSW program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and graduates are eligible for state licensure.

MSW

The Master of Social Work degree program at Texas State University School of Social Work is an exciting opportunity for college-degreed people who are interested in pursuing a career based around improving society. Our MSW degree program is built on a liberal arts perspective. Our graduates perform extremely well on state licensing exams and have found employment across a wide variety of service delivery fields.

The Texas State University School of Social Work offers the MSW program both on-campus and online. These degree offerings, regardless of delivery method, utilize the same textbooks and curricula and are taught by core faculty. The School of Social Work also offers interesting electives in specific topics, such as health care, diversity, international social work, gerontology, spirituality, adventure therapy, work with veterans, and others. Texas State University's Master of Social Work program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and our graduates are eligible for state licensure.

FIELD EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

Field is a part of the social work curriculum across all CSWE accredited social work programs. Field education is highly dependent on social work practice settings for students to meet their educational requirements. As such, social work programs work closely with social service agencies, organizations, and industries to secure field practicum sites offering students exposure to a range of roles and skills, client populations, service delivery models, and community resources. Within each setting, social work field instructors assist students in understanding the breadth of social work practice and support the development of core social work competencies.

To be eligible for field education, students must be in good academic standing according to their program standards. BSW students must have successfully completed Phase I and Phase II of the BSW program AND any minor coursework and electives BEFORE entering Phase III – Field Education. MSW foundation year students must have successfully completed foundation year coursework before entering foundation field. MSW advanced year students must have successfully completed all MSW coursework before entering Final Advanced Field. Prior to applying for field education, students must check their GPA with academic advisors to ensure University eligibility for graduation has been met. The University established GPA standards for undergraduate and graduate students which differs from the School of Social Work.

All students complete the field education process which includes completion of introductory materials, the field practicum application and professional resume. Students eligible for field education are notified the semester before they are scheduled to begin a field internship of the steps and process. Every student is provided a degree plan to follow throughout the social work program and should be aware of the semester and year in which they are eligible for field education.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF FIELD EXPERIENCE

Field Education is an integral part of students' social work education and preparation for professional practice. The Office of Field Education seeks input from all stakeholders in the field process and will solicit both student and field instructor feedback. At the end of the semester, an online *Perceptions of Field* survey is accessible through an online link. If at any time during the field education process, a student or field instructor would like to offer feedback, emails may be sent to SWField@txstate.edu.

Generalist Practice Placements – BSW and MSW foundation year placements

Generalist field placements encourage students to develop and demonstrate core generalist social work skills and competency. Students are expected to have direct contact with service users (individual, family, and/or group) and to have learning opportunities at the organization and community levels. We aim to place students in fields of practice that provide new learning opportunities and exposure to the multiple contexts in which effective practice takes place. **We are not able to guarantee that all student preferences can be accommodated.**

Advanced Practice Placements – MSW advanced year placements

Advanced practice placements allow for the development of advanced practice skills in a more concentrated area. Advanced practice field placements encourage students to develop expertise with a specific population, field of practice, or service delivery mode while applying social work theory and an equity based social justice lens. **We are not able to guarantee all student preferences can be accommodated.**

ROLES IN FIELD EDUCATION

Field Student Intern Responsibilities

With the student's entrance into the profession of social work during internship, the student will be held to professional standards, NASW Code of Ethics, University policies, and agency policies. The student must also comply with the following standards:

- Must meet the academic prerequisites prior to entry into field education
- Engage with field advisor in placement process to secure internship
- Maintains records of the School of Social Work's designated professional insurance provider information
- Completes field orientation
- Completes an Educational Learning Plan with the field instructor
- Submits a weekly timesheet approved and signed by the field instructor to the field liaison
- Adheres to the required hours per week at assigned agency
 - BSW: 28 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
 - MSW foundation full-time: 24 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
 - MSW foundation part-time: 12-14 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
 - MSW advanced full-time: 38 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
 - MSW advanced part-time: 18-24 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
- Completes field practicum over the course of at least 15 weeks in the long semesters and 10 weeks in the summer semester, if a MSW part-time student
- Attends all field integrative seminars
- Completes all specified School and agency assignments with passing grades (B or better)
- Functions in the capacity of a professional

- Fulfills the condition of program Acknowledgment and Agreement (BSW or MSW)
- Agrees to abide by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers
- Is prompt and on time for work at the agency and adheres to the schedule mutually agreed to by student and field instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the field instructor if unable to report for field practice. Unavoidable absences can be made up to a reasonable limit, as determined by the field instructor and field liaison.
- Shares experiences and relative information in field seminar discussions and participates in problem solving when appropriate
- Does outside readings assigned by the field instructor pertinent to placement and experiences
- Arranges necessary meetings and conferences with the field instructor and/or field liaison related to field practice
- Discusses concerns or questions regarding potential ethical dilemmas with field instructor and field liaison
- Evaluates the field experience and makes recommendations for future improvements through an end of semester evaluation
- Failure to fulfill any of the student field responsibilities will be grounds for dismissal or termination from field courses with a letter grade of “F” for field seminar courses and “No credit” for practicum courses

Field Student Professional Standards

Academic Performance

Standards

- Plans and organizes work effectively
- Turns in assignments completed and on time
- Keeps scheduled appointments (advisor, faculty, field interviews, etc.)
- Plans for personal needs to avoid interference with required education (childcare, transportation, housing, etc.)
- Develops increasing levels of knowledge and skills with awareness of integration as demonstrated through class participation, assignment, and field performance

Indicators of Concern

Appears to demonstrate patterns of:

- Poor organizational skills
- Does not manage time well
- Fails to follow directions
- Demonstrates inability to take initiative toward increasing knowledge and skills relevant to performance demands
- Requests extension for assignments
- Turning in field and/or class assignments late or incomplete

- Unexcused absences from class per class syllabus requirements
- Non-response to program communications
- Multiple absences from field placement

Conduct/Behavior

Standards

- Demonstrates ability to work cooperatively with others
- Actively participates in class discussion groups/role plays
- Shows respect for others' opinions
- Is open to feedback from peers/faculty
- Accept constructive feedback and takes corrective action
- Actively participates in field supervision sessions
- Demonstrates a willingness to understand diversity of people regarding race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political orientation, sexual orientation, and populations at risk
- Conducts self according to the NASW Code of Ethics student expectations

Indicators of Concern

- Appears to create conflict in class which impedes learning and/or building effective relationships
- Uncooperative/unwilling to participate in class activities
- Consistently late for class or leaves class early
- Consistently late for field placement
- Sleeps during class periods
- Disrupts class process by talking to others
- Uses derogatory language or demeaning remarks
- Difficulty in listening (e.g., overly sensitive, feels wounded/victimized, externalized blame, distorts communications)
- Appears unwilling/unable to accept feedback
- Responds in a defensive manner
- Consistently argumentative
- Monopolizes class discussions
- Consistently complains about class workload to the point of impeding class process
- Unwilling/unable to develop an understanding of people different from oneself
- Inability to separate personal values from professional values and responsibilities
- Inability to recognize the impact of personal values and behaviors of others
- Inadequate maturity, readiness, ability for generalist practice (e.g., evidence of excessive anxiety, grandiosity, passivity, etc.)

- Discriminatory behavior or harassment towards other on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, etc.
- Physical action directed at clients, faculty, staff, or fellow students
- Unethical professional behavior (e.g., sexual contact with a client)
- Academic misconduct (see University Policy on Student Conduct)

Emotional Self-Control (Self-Understanding)

Standards

- Uses self-disclosure appropriately (e.g., student seems to have insight, self-awareness, and has resolved the issue they are sharing)
- Appears to be able to handle discussion of uncomfortable topics
- Deals appropriately in class with issues which arouse emotions and demonstrates healthy emotional regulation
- Demonstrates an awareness of one's own personal limits/bias/blind spots
- Understands the effect of one's behavior on others

Indicators of Concern

- When engaged in self-disclosure, the student appears to be working through unresolved issues and/or avoiding client issues
- The student appears to overact to or resent feedback (e.g., takes it personally)
- Appears unable/unwilling to control emotional reactions or exhibits dysregulation
- Faculty concern regarding possible alcohol/drug abuse, mental health issues, or other impairments
- Verbal threats directed at clients, faculty, staff, or students
- Demonstrates impaired judgment, decision-making, or problem-solving skills
- Consistent failure to demonstrate ability to form effective client/social worker relationship
- Appears judgmental, abrupt in manner or overly businesslike or unapproachable
- Expects perfection of self and others, critical and unprofessional in communication
- Pushes "own agenda" rather than listening to client
- Consistently "glosses over" or ignores discussion of uncomfortable topics

Communication Skills

Standards (Written)

- Shows consistency in written communication. Written assignments demonstrate good spelling, appropriate use of punctuation, clear structure, paragraph formation, good organization, and follows logical sequence. Demonstrates ability to use APA style writing and citations.

- Demonstrates ability to write effectively in agency records
- Abides by University Academic Standards
- Demonstrates use of critical thinking skills

Indicators of Concern

- Written work is frequently vague, shows difficulty in expressing ideas clearly and concisely
- Work appears to have been hastily prepared and not proofread
- Student has many errors in the areas of spelling, punctuation, structure, etc., and does not make effort to show improvement
- Appears to have plagiarized the work of others
- Written work is excessive and/or inadequate regarding the purpose of the work (e.g., case notes vs. term paper)

Standard (Verbal)

- Can clearly articulate ideas, thoughts, concepts, etc.
- Has working proficiency of the English language when English is not the student's primary language

Indicators of Concern

- Appears to have difficulty expressing self when speaking
- Difficulty communicating so that others can hear or understand

Field Instructor Responsibilities

The field instructor represents the heart of the field practicum as they, in their dual role as practitioners and teachers, enable students to integrate theoretical concepts and practice realities. In close relationship with the student, it is the field instructor who leads the student to a personal understanding of the responsibilities and rewards of professional social work practice. Toward this end, field instructors assume primary responsibility for:

- Agree to supervise students in the agency placements. Each field instructor is selected by the agency and Office of Field Education based on detailed criteria
- Orient the student to the agency structure, functions, policies, services, and personnel at the beginning of the field practice and prepares a field educational learning plan with the student
- Are responsible for and in charge of the student in the agency and select and assign appropriate activities and cases for each student
- Maintain close contact with the student and retain overall responsibility for guidance and supervision. Meet with the student one on one, at least one hour per week for supervision
- Plan for the student's work

- Arrange for another person to oversee the students' activities for any days that they will not be available
- Utilize professional judgment when approving learning opportunities for the intern to participate in and with an assigned designee, ensuring they align with the CSWE competencies and the ELP
- Require the intern to report back to field instructor regarding the application of their learning during any events and activities when the field instructor or task supervisor is not present
- Discuss the objectives and expectations related to assignments with the student
- Evaluate the student's progress on a continuous basis with both the student and the field liaison
- Review contact hours and approve student's weekly timesheet prior to submission to the field liaison
- May assign appropriate outside readings
- Submit mid-term and final written student evaluations on forms provided by the Office of Field Education
- Cooperate with representatives of the Office of Field Education to provide an appropriate learning experience for the student
- Review the student's progress, accomplishments, and areas in need of professional development with the student and field liaison and recommend an agency performance grade
- Evaluate the field experience and make recommendations for future improvements through an end of semester evaluation

Field Liaison Responsibilities

The role of the field liaison is to ensure a cohesive and progressive learning experience for the student in the practicum. The field liaison's responsibilities include:

- Counsel with the student to determine an appropriate, educational field placement for the student
- Make initial arrangements with agencies for field work placements for students
- Hold necessary pre-placement meetings with students for the purpose of assignment the students to an agency and determining the student's academic and performance readiness for entry into the field
- Work with the field instructor and other relevant agency personnel to structure a meaningful social work field placement for each student
- Review any student questions and concerns regarding change from initial field placement and arrange reassignment when appropriate
- Confer with the student and field instructor regarding
 - General progress of the student
 - Performance of the student
 - Problem areas identified

- Progress towards the completion of the educational learning plan and goals
- Possible modification of the student's program of activities
- Remain available for unscheduled conferences on matters of concern to the student or the field instructor
- Obtaining evaluations from the field instructor and for determining the student's final field grade
- Recommend to the Director of Field Education a change or termination of field practicum before the end of the semester, if it is determined a student is not ready for the experience
- In unusual cases where a field setting is unable to meet the field practice agreement and educational objectives, recommend to the Director of Field Education a reassignment of the student to an agency capable of meeting these expectations and willing to invest the resources
- Provide consultation to the agency regarding educational concepts, professional issues, and practicum requirements and expectations
- Recommend and certify the final grade for the course
- Participate in the placement process of students
- Facilitate the integrative seminar and support student research
- Make every effort to visit with students face to face while in their agency during the semester to confer with the field instructor and student regarding the student's professional development in relation to the education and performance objectives. If face to face is not possible, the coordination of online conferences via Zoom or a phone conference is planned
- Address the problems that are related to the educational and professional development of field instructors in their educational role
- Participate in the field orientation for students and field instructor workshops

1. Required Contact Hours

1.01: BSW Internship Hours

BSW students complete one block internship of 400 contact hours in one semester.

1.02: MSW Internship Hours (regular curriculum)

MSW students enrolled in the regular MSW curriculum complete two internships consisting of foundation field which is 400 contact hours in a field practicum and advanced field which is 500 contact hours in a different field practicum.

1.03: MSW Internship Hours (advanced standing curriculum)

MSW students enrolled in the advanced standing MSW curriculum complete one internship, advanced field, consisting of 540 contact hours in a different field practicum than their BSW internship.

1.04: Difference in Placement Sites

Students are required to complete internships at different agencies, organizations, and/or placement sites and cannot intern at the same organization as their BSW or MSW foundation year internships.

1.05: Returning to Placement Sites

Part-time MSW students who complete internships over two semesters are required to return to their same field placement by the first day of both semesters (per the University Academic Calendar).

1.05.01: Part-time MSW Hours

Part-time MSW advanced year students who complete their internship across the spring and summer semesters are expected to complete a maximum of 24 hours per week in the spring semester and a maximum of 18 hours per week in the summer semester.

1.05.02: Required Break Between Academic Semesters

Part-time MSW students must take a break between semesters while they are not attending seminar courses.

1.06: Allowable Contact Hours and Educational Learning Plan

Allowable contact hours include those activities that correspond to work with service users, clients, couples, families, community members, etc., and directly tie to students' Educational Learning Plan learning activities and tasks. All contact hours must be documented on weekly time sheets with the specific social work competency and detailed information included in the "Fieldwork Duties Performed" section.

1.06.01: Allowable Contact Hours

Allowable contact hours also include weekly supervision time; agency related orientations, trainings, workshops, and community meetings assigned by the agency; Educational Learning Plan development meetings; research activities for the macro and capstone research projects; supplemental learning activities assigned by agency and included within Educational Learning Plan

1.06.02: Required Break

Students interning more than six hours in one day must take and document a 30-minute break during their hours. Students may include this time on their time sheets if they engage in a self-care activity and document this activity on their weekly time sheet.

1.06.03: Prohibited Contact Hours

Prohibited contact hours include field seminar class time; travel to and from seminar; travel time to and from internship; supplemental activities not assigned by agency nor included within Educational Learning Plan; field seminar homework; meetings on campus with Office of Field Education representatives; self-care activities (aside from 1.06.02); any activities not documented within the Educational Learning Plan

1.07: Minimum Day Requirement

All students must attend their internship a minimum of three days per week for the entire academic semester.

1.07.01: Semester Start and End Dates

The earliest students may conclude their internship hours is the last day of classes and the latest students may conclude their internship hours is the last day of the term, per the Texas State University academic calendar. Students must have the support of their field instructor, must demonstrate successful completion of all required hours, and completion of all field assignments, projects, and documents to complete field education.

1.08: Internship Schedules

Students' internship schedules are individually negotiated with their field instructor and must not conflict with their classroom/seminar schedule.

1.09: Supplemental Evening and Weekend Hours

Field placement sites may offer students evening or weekend hours; however, the School of Social Work does not allow evening and weekend only internships and will not approve evening and weekend hours if there is not an agency professional on site and available.

1.09.01: Evening and Weekend Only Hours

Students may not exclusively complete their field hours during evening or weekend hours.

1.10: Student Availability

Students must be available for practicum placements during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 7:30 am – 6:00 pm) and during times when professional staff are working and available to supervise the student.

1.10.01: Training Experience

Part of the training experience involves participating in the life of the agency, attending regularly scheduled meetings, and other activities involving or sponsored by the agency.

1.11: Approval of Learning Opportunities

Field instructors must utilize professional judgment when allowing and approving learning opportunities for the student to participate in with an assigned designee (task supervisor/agency professional), ensuring the learning opportunity is aligned with the CSWE competencies and ELP.

1.11.01: Appropriate Supervision

Students cannot attend learning opportunities/events alone or without their field instructor/agency representative as this time will not be counted toward the total number of hours required. The student must utilize time during weekly supervision to report back to the field instructor regarding the application of their learning during any events and activities when the field instructor or task supervisor is not present.

1.12: Credit for Work Experience

The policies and standards of the national accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), state: “Academic credit for life experience or previous work experience is not given...” Therefore, students will not receive academic credit for life experience and previous work.

1.13: Full-time Employment and Internship Requirements

Students are highly discouraged from working full-time and competing a full-time field internship concurrently. The School of Social Work does not make accommodations to work around students’ work schedule and personal commitments. Students are expected to make themselves available for an internship during normal agency business hours when clients receive standard services.

1.13.01: Student Full-time Employment

It is highly recommended that students who are employed more than 20 hours per week complete field education a part-time placement over two continuous semesters. Part-time field is only available for MSW students.

1.14: Sick Leave/Leave of Absence

In the case of illness or medical circumstances necessitating absence from the agency, students must notify the field instructor and take responsibility for canceling or rescheduling appointments and/or meetings. Hours missed must be made up at a time agreed upon by the student and field instructor. Excessive absences from the agency or seminar attendance, may result in a grade of 'F'. Medical issues are not an automatic excused absence.

1.15: Transportation to Field Setting

Students are responsible for securing their own transportation to and from the field setting. All students are required to complete the Acknowledgment Form from the Texas State University Office of General Counsel which acknowledges this responsibility.

1.15.01: Prohibited Client Transport

Students cannot transport agency clients.

1.15.02: Travel

Students are responsible for their own automobile liability insurance coverage for agency-related travel, if such coverage is not provided by the agency. The School of Social Work has no funds with which to reimburse students for civil lawsuits or damage of their automobiles or for other expenses incurred in the conduct of agency business.

Reimbursement for agency-related expenses, including travel should be the responsibility of the agency, and should be congruent with the agency reimbursement policies and rates for regular staff. The student assumes all liability for out of area travel that is completed as a requirement of a field placement.

1.16: Professional Liability Insurance

All students are required to have professional liability insurance through the University prior to engaging in client-facing activities at the agency. The annual policy covers the School of Social Work during academic periods, September 1 through August 31. Students enrolled in field courses are covered throughout their enrollment period and not before nor after. This policy is provided by the School of Social Work. Each student must retain a copy of the insurance policy which is provided by the Office of Field Education.

1.17: Agency Required Clearances

Some agencies may require students to complete criminal background checks, drug testing, and/or health or immunization records to be considered for a placement with them.

1.17.01: Background Checks

A student who wishes to be placed in an agency that requires a background check will need to complete a background check as a condition of being placed. Some agencies prefer that students use the agency's background check procedure (students may be expected to pay for the check) while other agencies expect students to use the School's procedure. Students will be informed if they must have a background check and will receive instructions.

1.17.02: Student Responsibility of Background Checks

It is the responsibility of the student to complete background check information according to agency policy, procedures, and timelines. Texas State School of Social Work will not be responsible for covering the costs of additional agency requirements.

1.17.03: DISA Healthcare Technology

The School of Social Work contracts with DISA Healthcare Technology for all screenings and clinical requirements. The student's field advisor will provide information on how to complete any clinical requirements, including background checks, immunization records, etc. prior to beginning internship hours. Students are responsible for covering the cost of any agency-issued clinical requirements.

1.18: Student Safety in the Field

Students, field instructors, and agencies are expected to collaborate to enhance safety and minimize risk in the placement on a continual and ongoing basis throughout the duration of the internship. Each agency and field instructor are responsible for orienting student interns to the safety and risk management policies and procedures of that setting during the agency orientation and supervision. Conversations regarding safety guidelines for home visits, angry and/or violent service users, unprofessional staff, threats of violence, etc. should be discussed regularly. Students should not be forced to engage in assignments in which they feel their physical safety might be compromised. Students should discuss their safety concerns with their field instructor and field liaison.

1.18.01: Personal Items

All students are expected to have a secure place to keep their belongings while at their placement. It is preferable that the space can be locked. It is best not to leave personal items visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle.

1.18.02: Agency-specific Safety Policies and Procedures

When working with service users, it is important to remember that the change process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. With some people, this can contribute to problems with impulse control and can raise safety concerns for the service user, the social worker, and others. There may be times when students work with individuals who have difficulty with reality testing, dealing with overwhelming emotions, and controlling their anger. Some of them may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Other service users may be intoxicated, in withdrawal, or may have medical and/or neurological disorders. Students should consult with agency and/or field instructors regarding preparation for and handling specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons.

1.18.03: Student Safety When Meeting with Service Users

If a student will be meeting with a service user with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important to discuss the situation fully with the field instructor. When considering location of the meeting, it might be helpful to think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person might sit. Students must schedule appointments with service users at times when the field instructor or other appropriate professional staff is in the building and readily available if needed. It is also important to discuss the backup plan for assistance in the event the service user becomes agitated or there is another urgent need for support.

1.18.04: Home Visits

The School of Social Work requires students to conduct home visits with another agency employee. Interns will not conduct home visits alone at any point during their internship due to inter safety and University liability coverage. Prior to conducting a home visit with an agency employee, there should be a discussion overviewing the importance in having information about the client before the home visit. In addition, if there is a question of safety, a potential plan should be discussed with the field instructor. Prior to the visit it is recommended to discuss the address and neighborhood of the client visit, the use of a cell phone, and communication with the agency when the home visit is completed.

2. The Field Agency Partnership

2.01: The School's Responsibilities

- Evaluates the assignments of student interns in the organization to ensure appropriate educational learning opportunities for students and a fit within the organization's service functions
- Provides the field instructor with information about the student, the curriculum, and School policies
- Assists the field instructor through orientation, School's educational requirements, consultation, and continuing education
- Designates a member of the School's faculty to serve as liaison to the field instructor and organization
- Elicits periodic feedback and input from community partners and faculty regarding field education and the academic curriculum

2.02: The Field Agency's Responsibilities and Qualifications

- The agency is recognized as responding to the needs of the community and consistently accepts the purposes, values, ethics, and methods of social work
- The agency personnel have a commitment to social work education and professional training
- The agency operates within Texas State University's Harassment and Discrimination policy, UPPS No. 04.04.46, that states: Texas State University is committed to an inclusive educational and work environment that provides equal opportunity and access to all qualified persons. Texas State, to the extent not in conflict with federal or state law, prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, veterans' status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. Texas State forbids discrimination in any university activity or program. Faculty members, staff employees, and students who discriminate against others in connection with a university activity or program will be considered to have violated this policy and are subject to disciplinary sanctions
- The agency will provide a field instructor who meets the qualifications of the School of Social Work requirements
- The agency assures the field instructor's overall assignment provides sufficient time and resources within the work schedule to develop learning opportunities and tasks, to prepare for and provide individual supervision, to attend school-sponsored orientation and training, and to complete student field evaluations
- The agency accepts the student as a developing professional social worker and will not use students to meet staffing needs nor withhold appropriate assignments because of student status
- The agency provides adequate facilities, orientation, including the safety and risk management policies and procedures of the setting, equipment and learning opportunities appropriate to the students' responsibilities during the period of placement

2.03: Qualifications of Field Instructors

- Field instructors for BSW students must have a BSW or an MSW from an accredited social work program plus 2 years post degree experience
- Field instructors for MSW students must have an MSW from an accredited social work program plus two years of post-master's work experience (preferably supervised by a social worker) performing agency-based practice
- Field instructors must have a commitment to the NASW Code of Ethics
- Field instructors must be a competent social work practitioner in one or more areas of service
- Field instructors must be an employed staff member of the agency or a School of Social Work approved external field instructor
- Field instructors must have a thorough knowledge of the agency in which they are employed
- Field instructors must have an interest in students and willingly accept the role of field instructor
- Field instructors must be willing to work within the Texas State University School of Social Work's philosophy of social work education and the competencies identified in the evaluation documents for field education
- Field instructors are required to work closely with the Office of Field Education in the coordination of assignments and is responsible for providing timely feedback on the progress of the individual student through the field liaison
- Field instructors must commit to provide a minimum of one-hour, face-to-face individual supervision per week for each student assigned
- The Director of Field Education may consider a proposal for a field placement where a field instructor does not hold the required credentials (MSW or BSW) to be a field instructor. In such circumstances, the school assumes responsibility for ensuring that the social work perspective is reinforced through the provision of an external field instructor who will meet with the student for weekly supervision. This request is not a guarantee of approval and is not an Office of Field Education standard practice.

2.03.01: Educational Process of Supervision

Field education moves beyond employment-focused supervision towards an educational process during which supervision occurs and focuses on the individual learner, the learner's relational and intellectual capacity, and the learner's knowledge and skills gleaned from prior practice and life experience. The primary focus of educational social work supervision is on the individual learner's development of competency and is measured by demonstration of social work knowledge, values, skills, and/or cognitive/affective processes in the field setting.

2.03.02: Required Supervision

A field education experience should offer a weekly, protected individual supervision time of at least one hour provided by the approved BSW or MSW field instructor. Protected time is defined as an uninterrupted, focused interaction where the student's work and progress towards developing social work competencies are reviewed with the field instructor.

2.03.03: Recommended Model of Supervision

One-to-one supervision (student and field instructor only) is the recommended model. Group supervision (field instructor and two or more students) is an acceptable model that may only be utilized on a bi-weekly basis and must alternate with individual weekly supervision time.

2.03.04: Supervisory Relationship

The supervisory relationship contains the three elements of trust: mutuality in relationship, facilitation of the student's sense of personal professional competence, and support of the student's role as learner – social worker. Field instructors take responsibility for providing students with direct feedback about their performance and teach social work practice skills by guiding students towards increasingly challenging learning opportunities, modeling appropriate roles and skills, and advocating for the student within the placement setting.

2.03.05: Role of Supervision

Supervision is a process in social work education by which the student is oriented to the social work profession. Supervision must assure the student applies relevant social work theories; makes sound professional judgments or decisions; follows the NASW Code of Ethics or other relevant Code of Ethics; conducts self with an understanding of the policies of the placement setting; and discusses the community standards of care regarding various diagnostic, clinical, and administrative issues.

3. Selecting Field Instructors and Field Placement Sites

3.01: Process to Become a Field Placement Site

Initiating a partnership with the School of Social Work to become an approved practicum site may originate either with the Office of Field Education or on the School of Social Work website (<https://www.socialwork.txstate.edu/fieldpracticum/agency-partners.html>). The process involves the field agency (field instructor or agency representative) to review the Field Education Information Sheet, complete the Agency Partner Confirmation Form, and submit the Texas State University Agency Affiliation Agreement to the School for review. The

Director of Field, or a designee, will contact the agency to discuss next steps. The selection process includes, but is not limited to:

- A review of the proposed request for an intern by the Director of Field
- A meeting with the agency administrator and/or field instructor concerning agency expectations of the School of Social Work
- Appropriateness of agency as an internship site to support the nine CSWE learning competencies for students
- Upon final approval of the practicum site, the Director of Field will finalize the affiliation agreement or contract. This document will be signed by duly authorized representatives of the site and the Texas State University College of Applied Arts Dean

3.02: Field Instructor Selection Process

The School of Social Work has adopted policies and procedures that govern many aspects of the practicum. For new practicum sites, the field instructor selection process is a part of the initial agency affiliation process. The field instructor's resume is reviewed with the agency application. A similar process is utilized for affiliated sites wishing to utilize new staff as field instructors.

3.03: Field Instructor Resources

The agency-based field instructor is an extension of the School of Social Work in partnering to meet the educational needs of students. The School of Social Work recognizes this partnership and provides the following resources:

- Field instructor training
- Individual field consultation from faculty assigned as liaisons to the agency
- Continuing Education Unit (CEU) opportunities will be provided throughout the academic school year to support field instructors' continuing education requirements for social work licensure by the State of Texas (see Texas Administrative Code – Part 34 Texas State Board of Social Work Examiner, Chapter 781 Social Worker Licensure, Subchapter E – License Renewal and Continuing Education)
- A field handbook
- Professional development opportunities

3.04: Criteria for Practicum Site Participation

Field instruction is a collaborative educational partnership between the School of Social Work and community agencies in the education of social work students in preparation of social work practice. The learning experiences within the agency facilitate the student's opportunity to apply and extend knowledge and acquire skills necessary in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The School of Social Work has established the following criteria for practicum site participation:

- Practicum site's philosophy of service shall be compatible with the philosophy, values, and ethics of the social work profession in efforts to provide a positive learning experience for the student
- Practicum site shall be related in purpose and function to the mission, methods, and curriculum of the School of Social Work
- Practicum site should maintain a social work service as a recognized function of the agency/organization or have a planning function relevant to providing or improving human services
- The site should be able to provide a range of learning experiences consistent with the service functions of the agency, the student's learning needs, and the objectives of the field practicum course
- The administration and staff of the site shall have respect for professional social work education and acceptance of the objectives and educational focus of field instruction
- The site shall support Texas State University's policies and practices must be nondiscriminatory in the provision and delivery of services and in the employment of personnel
- The site shall have access to qualified field instructors
- Agencies shall provide release time for field instructors to carry out field instruction responsibilities and to attend field-related trainings and meetings
- The agency shall be staffed with personnel to ensure that the basic agency program is developed and maintained sufficiently without reliance on students
- Sites shall make available suitable space, telephones, supplies, and work equipment for the student to carry out their responsibilities
- Agencies shall agree to the execution of an affiliation agreement between the School of Social Work, the College of Applied Arts, and the practicum site
- The site must provide necessary measures to protect student's safety. This may minimally include training in policies and procedures for conducting home visits with agency staff; interacting with potentially difficult clients; and handling emergencies
- The agency must communicate changes in supervision to the Office of Field Education as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements for student supervision
- The site will support the student intern's obligations to Texas State University and the School of Social Work for written assignments, projects, and integrative seminars
- The agency must provide the student intern with one hours per week of individual social work supervision from an approved field instructor

4. Criminal Records and Disclosure to Potential Field Placements

4.01: Criminal Records

The School of Social Work takes seriously the need to protect the public and to provide appropriate opportunities to individuals wishing to enter the social work profession who have criminal records.

4.01.01: Placements for Students with Criminal Records

The Office of Field Education will make a reasonable effort to identify a suitable field agency that will provide a placement for a student with a criminal record. Certain types and calendar dates of criminal convictions may result in some agencies declining to offer a placement. In some instances, it may not be possible for the Office of Field Education to find a placement willing to interview or accept the student. In such a case, it is likely that the student will be unable to complete the BSW or MSW program.

4.02: Arrest and/or Convictions Following Field Application

Students are required to notify the Director of Field about any arrest or conviction for criminal activity that occurs after their most recent field application. The School of Social Work cannot guarantee a placement for a student with a criminal record.

4.02.01: Criminal Convictions

In the event a criminal conviction becomes known to the School, the student will be required to have a conversation with a member of the Office of Field Education to discuss their criminal record and possible implications for practicum, career, and licensing. The student will be invited to provide additional information about the context of the offense and any mitigating circumstances. The student will be advised that they have an ethical and professional responsibility to share information regarding the criminal background with a potential field instructor or appropriate agency representative.

4.03: Dismissed/Expunged Criminal Convictions

Students are not legally required to report a criminal conviction that has been dismissed or expunged from their record. There may be ethical considerations and/or unanticipated complications, and it may be helpful to speak with the Director of Field regarding this. Students may also find it useful to contact Student Legal Services for information and assistance related to criminal convictions and whether/how certain convictions can be expunged.

4.04: Agency-required Background Checks

Agencies may require a student to complete a criminal background check through [CastleBranch.com](https://www.castlebranch.com) to verify their background. If a student disputes information contained

in a background check, the student is responsible for providing evidence satisfactory to the agency that the criminal information is in error.

4.05: Suitability for Social Work Practicum Placement and Career

In deciding about suitability for a social work practicum placement and career, the following will be considered:

- The nature of the crime(s) disclosed by the applicant and/or discovered through the background check
- Any false statement made by the student related to their criminal history
- The relevancy, if any, of the crime(s) of the false statement(s) to a practicum placement and career in social work

4.06: Communication of Relevant Information

The Director of Field, or designee, will communicate relevant information, including the criminal record, to the potential field instructor/agency and/or the assigned field advisor/liaison. In collaboration with agency personnel at the potential field site, the field instructor or designated agency representative will make the final determination as to whether the conviction will prevent the student from being placed in that agency setting.

5. Accommodations for Student Disability

5.01: Accommodation Requests

Students having special needs/disabilities that require accommodations for the successful completion of field education must notify the Texas State University's Office of Disability Services (<https://www.ods.txstate.edu/>) and the Office of Field Education. Requests for in class accommodations will be submitted through the Office of Disability Services to each field liaison, no later than the end of the first week of classes. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in accommodations being denied; however, every effort will be made to ensure the student's needs are met appropriately and in a timely manner. See the University Office of Disability Services policies on submitting accommodations timely.

5.02: Suitability of Agencies

Agencies are not required to provide student accommodations; however, the Office of Field Education will meet with students to determine the suitability of agencies that can support the accommodation necessary to complete field education.

6. Field Placement Process

6.01: Placement Process

The Office of Field Education is responsible for identifying placements and coordinating students in agencies. Students are asked not to approach possible placement settings to secure their own internships and to work cooperatively with the Office of Field Education to explore potential opportunities. In general, the placement process follows these steps:

1. Students attend a field information session, complete, and submit a Field Education Application and a University Career Services reviewed résumé (2-page maximum)
2. A field team member reviews the completed application and begins to coordinate the placement assignment process. They may also review the student's file, consult with other faculty, and meet with the student as necessary to identify strengths and needs for field education. Students who will be entering generalist field placements may be asked to participate in a placement-planning meeting prior to a tentative field assignment being made.
3. Based on the above information and available field placements, the student is tentatively assigned to a field placement. We attempt to place students as close to their geographic area as possible; however, students may be placed in field agencies up to a 60-mile radius.
4. Students are asked to interview with one tentative field placement so that both parties can confirm that the placement is a good match. Once the student and field instructor agree to the placement, the field instructor completes an online Placement Acceptance, and the placement is finalized.
5. If the field instructor decides the placement is not a good fit, the field team will work with the student on another option. While we cannot guarantee a specific placement for any student, we make every effort to match students to one of their areas of interest. In the event we are unable to do this, a student will work directly with a field coordinator to identify another option that can provide learning opportunities aligned with the student's educational goals and interests.

6.02: Out of Area Students

Students who live outside of the Central Texas area will need to collaborate with the Office of Field Education to secure an internship. The Office of Field Education considers out of area to be outside of the Central Texas corridor, which is San Antonio, New Braunfels, San Marcos, Kyle, Buda, Austin, Dripping Springs, Bastrop, and Round Rock

6.02.01: Unaffiliated Match Form

Students whose preferred internship location falls outside of these boundaries (San Antonio, New Braunfels, San Marcos, Kyle, Buda, Austin, Bastrop, or Round Rock) are required to complete an Unaffiliated Match Form. Students are required to complete the form on Qualtrics and identify a minimum of three agencies, contact information, and

geographic locations of the agencies. Out of area students will be required to identify a field instructor, appropriate for the students' given level of education, to provide supervision in the agency. Students are not expected to secure or finalize their own internships but are expected to collaborate with the Office of Field Education throughout the process. Once the Office of Field Education has identified an appropriate field placement for an out of area student, the process for the agency to become affiliated with the Texas State School of Social Work will commence.

6.03: Unsuccessful Placement Interview

If a student has an unsuccessful placement interview, the Office of Field Education will request feedback relevant to the student's presentation of self, assessed readiness for practicum, or appropriateness of placement choice in relation to required previous experience. The student will be invited to meet with a member of the Office of Field Education to discuss agency feedback. Following this discussion, a student may be required to meet with an advisor for specific professional coaching, participate in Career Services mock interviewing and professional development, and/or prepare a Professional Growth Plan for review and approval by the Office of Field Education.

6.03.01: Multiple Unsuccessful Placement Interviews

The professional concerns must be addressed before continued efforts are made to identify a field placement. If a student has not secured a field placement after three interviews, a determination will be made regarding suitability to continue in the program.

6.04: Unsuccessful Placement Processes

An unsuccessful placement process is regarded as when a student engages in the placement process which does not result in the successful completion of an internship. This includes, but is not limited to, a student failing to communicate during the placement process and needing to defer their internship to a future semester, unsuccessful placement interviews, or being terminated from an internship prior to the end of the semester. If a student has three unsuccessful placement processes, a determination will be made regarding suitability to continue in the program.

6.05: Agencies Without Social Workers

There are some placement settings that provide strong educational internship experiences for students even though they do not employ social workers with the requisite degree and post-degree experience. The Office of Field Education supports the opportunity for agencies to coordinate off site field instruction for social work students. The Office of Field Education works with a limited number of such organizations to coordinate "off-site supervision" from a qualified social work field instructor with a designated on-site task supervisor who works in the program and can provide daily oversight for the student.

6.05.01: Role of Offsite Field Instructor

It is preferred that the agency secure an offsite social work field instructor who has an affiliation with the organization and/or knowledge of the program and population served (e.g., staff member in another agency, board member, consultant etc.). The offsite field instructor is responsible for directing the student's overall learning experience and for guiding the task supervisor's activities with the student. An offsite field instructor has the same responsibilities as every other field instructor to provide at least one hour of direct supervision a week, help develop the Educational Learning Plan, complete the student's mid evaluation at the midpoint of the internship and final evaluation at the end of the internship, and participate in site visits with student, field liaison, and task supervisor.

6.05.02: Expectations of Offsite Field Instructors

The success of these arranged placements depends on the abilities of the offsite field instructor and task supervisor to clarify expectations concerning their roles, responsibilities, and relationship to each other, the School of Social Work, and the student. It requires regular ongoing communication and coordination between the offsite field instructor and task supervisor. It is expected that the student, field instructor, and task supervisor will meet at least three times per term, and more if necessary.

6.06: Requests for Placement

The Office of Field Education will consider requests for placement in organizations that are not yet approved field sites. Students requesting such consideration must work with their field advisor to explore feasibility, including availability of suitable field instructor(s) and learning opportunities. Affiliation agreements must be secured before placements can be made. Private practice businesses are not considered agencies and do not meet the criteria for student intern placement sites. The School of Social Work does not approve private practice agencies for student placements under any circumstances. The School of Social Work will assess suitability of the agency and potential conflicts of interest or dual relationships. In the event an agency is not suitable, the agency will not become affiliated with Texas State University for student internships.

6.07: Employer-based Practicum (EBP)

The School of Social Work strongly recommends students complete their practicum requirements in agencies where the student has never been employed or is not currently employed. However, there is a potential for MSW advanced year students to submit an application for consideration for an employer-based practicum (EBP). An EBP requires approved, qualified employment hours directly linked to the nine CSWE competencies, as well as a minimum of 10 hours/week for full-time students or 5 hours/week for part-time students outside of their typical employment.

6.07.01: EBP Application and Checklist

The student, in consultation with their employer, must complete and submit the EBP Application and Checklist in addition to their Field Education Application, both documents are available on the Field Education webpage. EBP applications are reviewed by the Field Education Committee during the fall and spring meetings.

6.07.02: EBP Application Criteria

Students must demonstrate the following criteria in their application and supporting documentation:

1. The student must submit a current resume utilizing the Texas State University Career Services resume format.
2. The application must contain a narrative describing the organization's mission and how social work practice is reflected within the organization.
3. Field education supervision must be distinct from employment supervision. The student must identify the individual who will serve as the Field Instructor and describe how field supervision will remain separate from employment supervision. The student will provide an organizational chart identifying employment supervision and field education supervision and outlining the reporting structure for each role.
4. The student will have a CSWE-qualified social worker serving as the Field Instructor who assumes responsibility for the student's field education and competency development. The student must identify the proposed Field Instructor and upload a copy of the Field Instructor's resume.
5. The student must demonstrate how employment responsibilities and proposed learning tasks provide opportunities to develop and demonstrate all nine CSWE competencies at the student's level of practice. Students will provide:
 - a. A current job description
 - b. A narrative describing how current employment responsibilities align with the nine CSWE competencies
 - c. Students may utilize the Educational Learning Plan (ELP) as a guide when developing their proposal; however, submission of the ELP is not required as part of the Employer-Based Practicum application.
6. Students must complete structured field learning experiences outside of their primary employment department, program, or unit throughout the practicum.
 - a. Full-time practicum students must complete a minimum of ten (10) hours per week outside of their primary employment department.
 - b. Part-time practicum students must complete a minimum of five (5) hours per week outside of their primary employment department.
 - c. Students must identify at least one competency-based learning task outside of their primary employment department, program, or unit for each of the nine CSWE competencies.

- d. Students must provide a narrative explaining how these hours will be completed
- 7. The agency supports the student's obligations to the university, including written assignments, field seminar participation, competency evaluation activities, and other program requirements. Verification of this support must be provided through the employer supervisor's signature on the application and/or an attached letter of support.
- 8. The agency must have a formal affiliation agreement with Texas State University's College of Applied Arts and the School of Social Work. If no agreement exists, the agency must agree to obtain an affiliation agreement. All new affiliation agreement must be formally affiliated prior to the start of the internship. Students may request this information from the Employer Based Practicum Coordinator through the swfield@txstate.edu email.
- 9. The student is aware if the employer terminates the employer or internship relationship, the student will have to withdraw from field education and reapply in the next semester.

7. Student Learning and Evaluation

7.01: Student Internship Start Date

Student internships begin the first week of the semester in which a student is scheduled to begin field education (fall or spring semesters).

7.02: Academic Calendar

For full-time students, the internship is approximately 15 weeks (1 semester). For part-time MSW students, the internship is approximately 30 weeks (2 semesters). Part-time MSW students who begin their internship in the spring have approximately 25 weeks to complete their internship, 15 weeks in the spring semester and 10 weeks in the summer semester.

7.02.01: Academic Breaks

Students should anticipate holidays and academic breaks (spring break, Thanksgiving, etc.) and plan their schedules to assure completion of required hours. Students should discuss with their field instructor if they will be completing hours during this time. Students may use academic break time to make up missed internship hours from the semester or they can bank extra hours for unplanned emergencies.

7.03: Carrying Forward Hours

When part-time MSW students complete their internships over two semesters, students may only carry forward up to 10% of their required contact hours into the next and final

semester. (E.g., MSW foundation year students must complete 200-220 hours in the fall semester with the remaining hours completed in the spring semester. MSW advanced year students completing their internship in the fall and spring semesters must complete 250-300 hours in the fall semester with the remaining hours completed in the spring semester. MSW advanced year students completing their internship in the spring and summer semesters are encouraged to complete up to 340 internship hours during the spring semester and complete 160 hours during the 10-week summer semester.

7.04: School of Social Work Field Education Orientation

All students must complete the School of Social Work Field Education Orientation and receive their liability insurance prior to engaging with clients or having any client contact.

7.04.01: Pre-field Activities

Students are allowed to begin pre-field activities such as agency orientation and training activities at their placements up to one week prior to the first day of class in August and January. Students must complete the mandatory field orientation and have a copy of their liability insurance prior to starting internship hours. Students must track these hours and include them on time sheet zero and submit this document to their field liaison.

7.04.02: Pre-field Agency Onboarding or Training

Prior authorization is required from the Office of Field Education if an agency requests student interns to begin agency onboarding or training prior to the field orientation. Students may not accumulate more than 40 internship hours prior to completing the field orientation and activities cannot include any client contact. Students must track these hours and include them on time sheet zero and submit this documentation to their field liaison. If an agency would like to request an intern complete training hours prior to their completion of the orientation, the agency must provide the following information using this Qualtrics link: https://txstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3aqXDcJYiQ5EzRk

- What is the name, title, date, and purpose of the training?
- How many hours will the training include?
- How will this training support the student within the internship?
- Names of students attending the pre-field training from the Texas State School of Social Work

7.04.03: Core Course Work

Students cannot complete training, meetings, or other activities while they are in the placement process prior to their internship semester(s). Students cannot begin their internships while still completing core course work.

7.05: Educational Learning Plan (ELP)

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) identifies nine core competencies for all social work students in accredited professional programs. Texas State University's School of Social Work adheres to these competencies and practice behaviors to guide both the activities completed in the practicum and to evaluate the social work student's progress towards achieving competencies. The Educational Learning Plan identifies field placement activities that support the student's development of professional social work practice and informs the evaluation of students' level of competency as outlined in the field evaluation. This is a working document that guides student intern activities in field practicum.

7.05.01: Development of ELP

The Educational Learning Plan is collaboratively developed by the student, field instructor, and/or task supervisor (where applicable) and provides the basis for the development and demonstration of the professional practice competencies. Involvement in these activities will provide the evidence to support the competency ratings on the student's final field evaluation. The field liaison is available as needed to support the development of this plan.

7.05.02: Purpose of ELP

Social work practice activities are site-specific and individualized with the goal of facilitating the student's successful professional development. The expectation is that the student will have various experiences that will allow them to be evaluated through observable behavior. Student's progress towards achievement of social work practice behaviors will be assessed with a final evaluation demonstrating student's proficiency in the application of knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes in social work practice. Field instructors will identify whether students meet performance standards.

7.05.03: Assessing the Value and Relevance of an Educational Activity

The following questions are useful to assess the value and relevance of an educational activity:

- What is the purpose of the activity? Will it give the student an opportunity to develop the practice skill/competency being evaluated?
- Does the activity build upon or encourage the student to examine knowledge or skills brought from past experience? Learning is incremental – a process of growth; learning activities need to be appropriate to the student's present level of competence.
- Does the activity challenge the student to grow and provide satisfaction in carrying it out? Doing familiar tasks or "busy work" does not increase competency.
- Is there a balance between observational and participatory activities? It is important to provide ample opportunity for the student to put theory into practice.

- How feasible is the activity? Are there agency resources to support the activity? Once an activity has begun, there should be sufficient agency resources to ensure its completion.
- Does the activity give the student an opportunity to increase independent performance? Activities should permit the student to progress from supervised to self-directed practice.
- Does the activity give the student a sense of ownership and accomplishment? Activities should be clearly linked to social work competencies, allow for some autonomy, and encourage growth.
- Does the activity engage the student in thinking about the total problem/case/issue? Task focused activities increase growth when students can appreciate how they link with other pieces of the intervention plan.

7.06: Time sheets

Students must use the Texas State School of Social Work issued time sheet to record contact hours in the agency each week. Student interns should document their field agency contact hours using the Student Intern Time Sheet. The time sheet is a required tracking tool to document work completed in the internship and contact hours completed each week. The time sheet is submitted to the field liaison every week. The form should be signed by all parties, dated, and turned in as requested by the field liaison. Instructions on how to fill out the time sheet along with acceptable contact hour activities are found in the Time Sheet Instructions. Student time sheets should reflect field agency policies relating to employee breaks and/or lunch breaks. Students must take and document a 30-minute break if they are interning more than six hours in one day. If students participate in and document self-care activities during their 30-minute break, this time may be included towards their total internship hours.

7.07: Supervision Logs

Field instructors and students must document their weekly supervision meetings. The Supervision Form is intended to document weekly field supervision meetings between student interns and field instructors. Social work specific supervision, provided by a credentialed social worker, is a CSWE requirement and must be conducted one-on-one. Group supervision is permitted on alternating weeks and may not be the only form of supervision. Students should prepare for their weekly supervision meeting by completing this supervision form and discussing elements of their ELP. The form should be signed by all parties, dated, and kept by the student for their records and used as notes in preparing the final field evaluation.

7.08: Evaluation

The field evaluation is designed to evaluate the student on their development of professional competencies that align with the School of Social Work's goals and objectives and CSWE's core practice competencies.

7.08.01: Evaluation Process

Students will be evaluated on each CSWE competency. The student and field instructor, in consultation with the task supervisor (where applicable), determine a performance rating for each of the professional behaviors using the rubric embedded in the evaluation as a guide. The average of the combined rating scores for each behavior within a competency represent the holistic rating of the competency for each student. In addition, student and field instructor, with input from task supervisors (where applicable), are given opportunities to identify strengths, concerns and areas of growth through a series of open-ended evaluative questions. The field liaison, in coordination with the field instructor, uses this information and their professional assessment to determine whether the student receives a passing grade for field.

7.08.02: Purpose of Ongoing Evaluation and Site Visits

The ongoing evaluation of a student's performance is an integral part of the field instructor's responsibilities. During weekly supervision sessions, the field instructor can help the student identify specific performance strengths and weaknesses, evaluate progress toward developing competency in social work practice, and demonstrate professional knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive/affective processes. Site visits, which include the field liaison, field instructor, the student, and the task supervisor (where applicable), are used to review the student's performance in relationship to demonstrating the behaviors identified on the educational learning plan and the field evaluation. A minimum of one site visit per internship is required. The site visit should also provide the student with a clear sense of direction for future learning activities.

7.08.03: Sources of Evaluative Information

In addition to the field instructor's direct observation and supervisory discussions with the student, using information from multiple sources increases the reliability of the evaluation. Various sources of evaluative information can include:

- Student written reports, case evaluations, process recordings, audio or video recordings, supervision logs, and self-evaluation indicating activities which provide evidence of level of competence
- Field instructor observations of student learning activities (sessions with service users, presentations, project related work, participation in staff meetings, etc.)
- Feedback from task supervisors (where applicable) and other colleagues and professionals who have worked with or observed the student.

7.08.04: Rating Student Performance

Students are evaluated twice during an internship. A midfield evaluation is conducted between the student and field instructor. This is a time to give students direct, clear, and specific suggestions on how to demonstrate social work competence. The midfield evaluation is submitted to the field liaison upon completion. At the end of the internship, the field instructor and the student evaluate the student's overall performance in a final field evaluation process. The evaluation focuses on rating all competencies and behaviors using the rubric embedded in the educational learning plan.

The following continuum should be used to provide student ratings for the midfield and final evaluation. For the final evaluation, each competency must clearly state whether a student has met the required performance standard through a rating of Met or Did Not Meet the CSWE competency required. Students must either meet performance standards (4) or perform well above the standard (5) at the time of the final evaluation.

5	4	3	2	1	N/A
Exceeding	Meeting	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Failing	Unable to Complete
Performs well above the standards	Meets performance standards	Performs somewhat below the standard but shows potential for improvement	Performs far below the standard with minimal evidence of potential to improve	Does not show potential for performing satisfactorily	Agency did not have the opportunity for the student

7.08.05: Recommending a Grade

The field instructor provides students field practicum evaluation ratings only. Field instructors do not issue grades. The field practicum is a "Pass"/"No pass" course and is entered by the instructor of record, the field liaison. The field liaison determines the student's grade based on the field evaluation, the field instructor's recommendation, and the field liaison's professional assessment.

The integrative seminar instructor is responsible for assigning final field grades. For most BSW and MSW students, the field seminar instructor is also their field liaison. For those students who have a different liaison and seminar instructor, the liaison informs the field seminar instructor of the recommended grade. Students who, in the professional assessment of the field instructor and the field liaison, are meeting expectations for the term, will receive a "Pass" grade. The field instructor, student, and field liaison sign the completed field evaluation. A grade cannot be assigned until all time sheets are completed and the field evaluation is completed and signed.

In accordance with the grading policies of the School and the University, sometimes a grade of “Incomplete” is given due to unique circumstances. The requirements for changing a grade of “Incomplete” to a “Pass” or “No Pass” are clearly delineated in a time-limited written “contract” developed jointly by student, field instructor, and field liaison.

The field liaison **must** consult with the Director of Field Education about all students with incomplete grades in field and students who may not be demonstrating passing level work in field. The Policy on Unsatisfactory Performance in the BSW or MSW Program Handbook clearly delineates required procedures if a student’s performance in field is below passing level. (See program handbooks)

7.09: Unsatisfactory Performance in Field

Students in field education are held to the Field Student Professional Standards and Conduct. The field instructor plays a major role in gatekeeping and identifying unsatisfactory performance early and should discuss any areas of concern with the student as soon as they are identified. The field instructor and/or the student should notify the field liaison about the performance concerns if they persist. In situations where concerns continue, the MSW Field Coordinator or BSW Field Coordinator (in consultation with the BSW Program Director and the MSW Program Director, where necessary) will arrange a Professional Growth Plan meeting with the field instructor and student (in accordance with the Policy on Unsatisfactory Student Performance in the BSW or MSW Handbook). The purpose of the meeting will be to identify those elements of performance identified as unsatisfactory, develop a plan whereby the student can be supported to make the identified changes, and identify a date by which they will meet to review whether the changes have occurred.

7.09.01: Faculty Concern of Student Progress

As detailed in the Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance Policy (see section 11.03: Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance Policy), if a faculty member has a concern regarding a student’s academic or professional behavior and/or development, the faculty member will assess the concern to determine the appropriate level of intervention either through addressing student concerns (Level 1), elevated intervention (Level 2), or a Program Standards Committee referral (Level 3).

7.09.02: Field Instructor Recommended “No Pass” or Dismissal from Placement

If a field instructor recommends a “no pass” in field or if a student is asked to leave a placement with no opportunity for remediation, the field liaison consults with the Director of Field or designee. Together, they will decide that either the concern(s):

1. Warrant a performance review by the Program Standards Committee, in which case the field liaison will initiate the review process, or

2. Do not warrant performance review, in which case the Director of Field or designee and the field faculty will develop a Professional Growth Plan for addressing the concerns

If it is determined a student will receive a “no pass” or failing grade in one field education course, they will automatically fail the stacked field education courses.

Students will be provided options for withdrawing from field education courses if applicable. The Director of Field, or designee, will meet with the student to determine the best course of action for re-enrollment in field education courses with a corresponding Professional Growth Plan. Other potential actions may include, but not be limited to remediation courses, postponing field education, referral to another program, or dismissal from field education. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the University Registrar to determine the steps to withdraw from courses during the semester.

7.10: Student Integrative Seminars

Integrative field seminars are part of the overall field education experience. Seminars are a required part of the field education sequence of courses and must be successfully completed for the student to receive a passing grade. The three (3) hour seminars meet every other week either in person, online, or a hybrid of both formats and are designed to discuss specific field problems; integrate course work with field experiences; provide an orientation to various agency services and functions; provide students with a structure in which they can support and learn from one another; relate conceptual learning to practice; and increase the knowledge of other agency’s functions, services, policies, and problems.

Attendance for integrative seminars is mandatory. One unexcused absence will result in the student’s grade being lowered by one letter, and two unexcused absences will result in the student failing the course and earning an ‘F.’ For students not generating a discussion post or completing the assignments is equivalent to an absence (for on campus and online students).

All assignments must be completed to pass the class. If an assignment is not submitted, the student will not be able to pass the class and will earn an ‘F,’ regardless of the number of points they have accumulated. Students must earn at least a ‘B’ to successfully pass the class. If a student fails the seminar course, they will automatically fail the practicum course and both courses must be repeated.

7.10.01: Assignment to Field Seminar Sections

The Office of Field Education assigns students to field seminar sections. Seminar section assignments for students completing their degree program on campus are primarily based on geographic locations of internship placement sites. Assignments can be changed by the Office of Field Education based on program needs, including the need to balance

enrollment. Changes to a field seminar assignment do not provide an exception or an opportunity for students to advocate for assignment to a different seminar.

7.10.02: Availability for Seminar

Students are responsible for adjusting personal obligations to ensure they are available for all scheduled seminar class times (e.g., Mondays at 6:30 pm) and avoid scheduling conflicts with the field seminar to which they are assigned.

7.10.03: Seminar Participation

Students are required to lead discussions with their peers and engage in small group processing of their experiences in their field placements. Students are expected to share their experiences, seek feedback from peers, and to offer constructive feedback and support to other students. Students must be aware and careful not to divulge confidential agency or client information during seminars. Students are encouraged to speak with the field liaison in private if there are concerns about confidential information or feedback being disclosed during seminar.

7.10.04: Student Responsibilities

- Students are expected to prepare, and to contribute to the discussion, and to each other's learning. This is not a lecture course.
- One of the positive benefits of the integrative seminar is the opportunity for mutual problem solving. Students are expected to share both positive and negative experiences and to seek peer and instructor feedback.
- Students are expected to fully participate each week for the entire seminar.
- One unexcused absence/missed forum results in lowering the grade by one full letter. Two unexcused absences will result in failure of both the integrative seminar and field practicum.
- Complete all required field assignments and research projects.

7.10.05: Field Practicum Assignments

The assignments for the field practicum are designed to enhance and integrate social work theory and practice. Assignments are geared toward helping the student meet the educational objectives of the field experience and to support practice within the social work domain. The students are given a course calendar in the class syllabus that outlines each integrative seminar and due dates for assignments.

8. Changing a Field Placement Assignment

8.01: Considerations for Changing a Field Placement

Once a student has been placed in an agency, they are expected to remain in that agency for the entire academic semester/year. The Office of Field Education will not move a student because they do not like their agency or their placement. Occasionally, a change in a field placement is necessary and may be granted for the following reasons (before mid eval):

- Change in personal circumstances (academic, finances, transportation, health)
- Agency unable to provide accessibility to students with disabilities
- Change in School of Social Work policy
- Internal matters of the agency
- Agency ethical violations

8.02: Procedures for Changing a Field Placement

When any individual involved in the placement, including the student, field instructor, field advisor, field liaison, or field coordinator has concerns or thinks the placement should end, a respectful process of information sharing should occur by following the Procedure of Changing a Field Placement (see below).

1. Field liaison or field instructor and student should discuss the concerns. The student or field instructor may prefer to begin with their field liaison or field coordinator if the matter is delicate. A careful delineation of the factors involved is required.
2. Field instructor, student, and field liaison or field coordinator discuss the concerns and explore alternatives. The field liaison or field coordinator informs the Director of Field, or designee, of the concerns. If a resolution is not found within the organization, a decision to end the placement is made by the field liaison or field coordinator in consultation with the Director of Field (or designee). The field liaison or field coordinator notifies the field instructor. Students will work with their field liaison or field coordinator to develop a responsible transition plan from their placement.
3. When a decision is made to remove a student from placement, the field instructor will be asked to provide written comments to the Director of Field regarding their professional assessment of the student's performance. Depending on how long the student has been in the placement, the field instructor may be expected to complete the mid and/or final field evaluation.
4. To be reassigned, the student, field advisor/field liaison, and/or field coordinator explore the feasibility of other placement options based on probability of completing educational requirements within the semester. In some instances, the student may not be re-placed in a new agency and will have to postpone their practicum for the next available semester.
5. Any student requiring a change in a field assignment will participate in a meeting with the Office of Field Education to assess the student's educational needs and relevant circumstances. A written agreement will be reached regarding the pertinent

information to be shared with potential field instructors. In instances where a student has a Professional Growth Plan related to field, the student will not be able to move forward with field education until the plan has been reviewed and approved by the Office of Field Education.

6. Some reassignments may involve assigning the student to a different field advisor/liaison. However, in most cases, where an advising relationship has been established, it is preferable to keep that relationship intact.
7. The Director of Field will make an informed determination of the student's field hours to consider carrying forward or counting towards field education. There are no guarantees the field contact hours will be carried forward and a student may begin at zero hours in a new internship placement.

9. Preparing for Termination of the Field Placement

9.01: Planning for Terminating the Internship

The ending of field placement is a significant part of social work practice and a time of transition for students and service users and community partners. It is useful to plan the ending process for each service user/community partner with your field instructor and to help service users process their feelings about saying goodbye and review progress, strengths, and areas for future work.

9.02: Volunteer/Employment Following Internship Completion

Students sometimes wish to apply for jobs or consider volunteering at their placement at the conclusion of their internships. While this may be an appealing option, it is still important to acknowledge and process the ending of the student intern role. Before agreeing to volunteer or work at an organization, it is essential to discuss with placement setting personnel how expectations differ for employees, volunteers, and students. All parties involved (student, placement setting personnel, and service users) must understand the new role.

10. Accepting Employment at the Field Placement Setting

10.01: Employment Offers

Students are occasionally offered employment at their field sites. This dual role at the placement setting can blur the distinctions between the roles of student and employee. To ensure successful completion of the student's placement, the employment arrangement should be structured to preserve the integrity of the educational internship and the

contractual agreement between the school and the placement setting. It is preferable, but not always feasible, for the employment to start after the student completes required placement hours.

10.02: Concurrent Employment at Internship

If employment begins while the placement is in progress, employment responsibilities and supervision must be different than placement responsibilities and supervision. Students should consult with a member of the Office of Field Education regarding accepting employment at the field placement setting. It is recommended that students obtain a written agreement from their agency about employment and the distinction between intern and employee.

11. Selected Texas State University Policies

This Field Education Handbook is for informational purposes only and is not an official publication of Texas State University. Official rules and regulations may be found in the Texas State University Undergraduate and/or Graduate Catalog, The Texas State University website <https://studenthandbook.txstate.edu/>, or School of Social Work Student Handbook.

11.01: Academic Misconduct Policy

Social workers must demonstrate high standards of integrity. Students knowingly using, or attempting to use, another person's work as though the work is their own, and students guilty of knowingly permitting, or attempting to permit, another student to use their work, may:

- Be referred to the Program Standards Committee with the School of Social Work
- Have their grade on the examination or other academic work affected by the academic dishonesty reduced, thus lowering their grade in the course
- Be required to withdraw from the course with a grade of "F"
- Be provided with other programmatic recommendations

11.02: Definitions of Academic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Dishonest academic behavior is defined by Texas State University and includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating on an examination or the preparation of academic work
- Copying from another student
- Using materials not authorized by the professor during a test

- Collaborating with another person without authorization during an examination or in preparing academic work
- Knowingly and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting, copying, or possessing in whole or in part, the contents of an administered examination
- Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself in taking an examination or preparing academic work
- Bribing another person to obtain an administered examination or information about an administered examination
- Plagiarizing or appropriating another's work or idea without acknowledging incorporation of that work or idea into one's own work offered for credit
- Knowingly and without authorization, using, buying, or selling a term paper, computer file or program, thesis, or other written report

Students who are unfamiliar with the University's policy on plagiarism and other types of academic dishonesty should consult the University's website. Students who are uncertain regarding what actions constitute plagiarism or other types of academic dishonesty should consult their instructor.

11.03: Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance Policy

The Texas State School of Social Work prepares students for ethical professional social work practice. Students must meet both academic and professional standards to advance successfully through the social work program. The Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance Policy can be found on the School of Social Work website:

<https://www.socialwork.txst.edu/undergraduate/policies.html> and is applicable to all students in field education.

13. Glossary of Field Terms

Advanced field year

Students completing the advanced MSW practicum and seminar

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

National association representing social work education in the United States and the School of Social Work's higher education accrediting body. CSWE sets the standards for baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work with nine social work competency based educational policies.

Educational Learning Plan

The required document which identifies field placement activities that support the student's development of the professional social work competencies as outlined in the field evaluation.

Field advisor

Any member of the Office of Field Education who works with a student to identify a suitable generalist or advanced field placement site.

Field evaluation

Portion of Educational Learning Plan that is completed at the mid-point and end of the internship and serves to assess student's demonstration of professional social work competencies as identified by the Council on Social Work Education and Texas State University School of Social Work faculty and field instructors.

Field instructor

A qualified MSW or BSW who works or volunteers at the agency, who assumes overall responsibility for the student's educational experiences during a field placement and acts as a supervisor at the agency. Provides a protected weekly hours of educational supervision and support and orients the student to the organization and program.

Field liaison

A member of the faculty of the School of Social Work who is selected to work with particular social agencies, when possible, because of interest, knowledge, and background in that particular field. The field liaison is the liaison between the School and field placement agency and is expected to serve both as consultant to the field instructor and advisor to the student. In the capacity of field liaison, the faculty member is directly responsible to the Director of Field, who has overall responsibility for the Office of Field Education.

Field placement

Professionally supervised field experience that supports the development of social work competencies while the student is concurrently enrolled in practice classes.

Field team

Faculty and staff of the School of Social Work including the Director of Field, field coordinators, field liaisons, and field advisors.

Generalist field year

First year field placement experience that encourages students to develop core social work skills and competencies. Generalist field students are expected to have direct contact with service users (individual, family, and/or group) and to have learning opportunities at the organization and community levels.

NASW Code of Ethics

The professional ethics of social work practice. The “Code” sets forth values, principles, and standards to guide social workers’ conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students. Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior, judgment, and performance and adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and the agency’s code of ethics.

Task supervisor

Onsite staff person who oversees the student’s day to day tasks if the field instructor is not available. If the field instructor is on site, it is not necessary to have a task supervisor.