



SACRAMENTO STATE

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

FIELD EDUCATION

MSW Field Manual

CURRICULUM AND POLICY GUIDE:
MSW FIELD EDUCATION

Revised November 2025

Letter from the Director of Field Education

Welcome to the Field Education Program at CSU Sacramento's School of Social Work (SSW)!

Field education is the “signature pedagogy” of social work, serving as the bridge between classroom learning and real-world practice. It is a collaborative effort between students, the Social Work Program, and Field Practicum Agencies, designed to provide a meaningful and transformative learning experience.

The CSUS-SSW Field Education Program is committed to supporting students, faculty, field instructors, and community partners by ensuring placements that align with academic goals and CSWE core competencies and foster professional development. This MSW Field Manual serves as a key resource, for guidance on policies, procedures, and expectations throughout the practicum experience. While it provides general information, specific questions should be addressed through consultation with the Field Instructor, Faculty Liaison, and MSW Field Coordinator. If additional support is needed, the Field Director and/or SSW Program Director may also be involved.

Field education is both exciting and challenging, often evoking a range of emotions. Students are encouraged to embrace open communication, actively engage in the problem-solving process, and take full advantage of this unique learning opportunity. The effort invested in field education will directly impact professional growth and readiness for social work practice.

Thank you to all students, faculty, field instructors, and community partners for your dedication to social work education, ethical practice, and lifelong learning.

Field Education Program
School of Social Work
CSU Sacramento

PREFACE

To all Students, Field Instructors, and Field Faculty

This Curriculum & Policy Guide: MSW Field Education or “*MSW Field Manual*” was written for you. It contains the what, why, and wherefore that will facilitate the education, training, gate keeping, and professional development responsibilities each of you assumes when you take on your respective field education roles.

Please review these guidelines before you begin the field practicum.

Field is the “Heart of Social Work Education.” It is the theory/practice nexus that demonstrates a student’s readiness for the profession. It is NOT an internship or apprenticeship; field practicum is an educational and professional development effort that involves real life clients and situations. Because of this, the utmost care must be given to this collective endeavor.

This Field Manual includes:

1. The School of Social Work’s vision, mission, goals, objectives and overall student standards.
2. The roles and responsibilities of the School, Field Practicum Agency/Organization, Field Instructor, and Student in the field education experience; and
3. The MSW Field Education Policies and Procedures that facilitate the:
 - Professional development of the student
 - Integration of classroom and field content
 - Prevention/resolution of field problems

The Field Education program of the School of Social Work thanks each of you for carrying out your roles and responsibilities, and thanks every agency that volunteers its time and resources to assist in the education and training of future competent professional social workers.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Client Systems:** Refers to the “focus of intervention”/“target for change”. This may be an individual, a couple, a family, a small group, a large group, an organization, a community, or society—politics & legislation and the environment in which the client exists.
- Environment:** Is the context, including the natural world, in which the client exists (context includes elements such as socio-economic and political conditions, culture, community, transportation or educational system, and so on).
- Field Instructor:** Is the student’s “social work educator in the field.” This is a person who is employed by the field agency (or who contracts with the agency) and has a Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited social work degree (BASW/BSW/MSW/LCSW). The field instructor is required to have a minimum of two years post-degree social work experience and be willing and able to provide instruction to a particular student. The field instructor must complete the School’s Field Instructor training.
- Task Supervisor:** Is an agency staff member who is responsible for the day-to-day assignments of the student and the observation and assessment of the skills portion of student learning. This person works closely with the Field Instructor to oversee the student’s placement and does not need to have a social work degree. Not every field practicum will have a task supervisor.
- Faculty Field Liaison:** Is a faculty member of the School of Social Work who is responsible for monitoring the student’s field experience and submitting the student’s grade for the field course. They are the student and field instructor’s first point of contact for all matters related to the student’s field experience during the academic year.
- Generalist:** Refers to the student who can engage in beginning social work practice with all client systems using social work roles such as advocate, broker, caseworker and employing the empowerment and strengths perspectives in their approach to working with clients.
- Levels of Practice:** Is a way of categorizing which refers to the size and complexity of the different client systems. Going from smallest (the individual) to largest (society), the terms variously used are as follows: *micro* (individuals, couples, families), *mezzo* (small treatment or task groups), *macro* (large groups, organizations, communities, society—politics & legislation); or *direct* (individuals, couples, families, treatment groups) and *indirect* (task groups, organizations, communities, society); or *small system* (individual, couple, families, treatment/task groups), and *large system* (organizations, communities, society).
- Processing:** This is a term used in the Social Work profession which refers to the act of “reflecting upon” the field experience. Students “reflect” upon what they are engaged in and what they have learned by “doing.” Processing time includes the instructional hour, time to do written field assignments (such as “process recordings” and the field journals), self-reflection, and processing after each client or major activity.

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SECTION I:

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK VISION, MISSION GOALS AND STUDENT STANDARDS

The CSU-Sacramento School of Social Work (SSW) is part of a comprehensive regional University located in the California State Capital. Its service area encompasses an urban/suburban/rural area. Given its service area, the School is committed to addressing the professional needs of both rural and urban areas. It meets this commitment by providing Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited educational programs which focus on the empowerment of all oppressed groups and issues of social and economic justice.

The School's mission of both the MSW and BASW programs is consistent with the professional competence and leadership missions of the University and the College of Health and Human Services. The following Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles were unanimously adopted by the faculty in October 2006.

VISION

We envision our graduates to be part of a globally conscious educational community with a lifelong passion for learning and a quest for excellence whose practice is guided by a commitment to sustainable human and societal development. Our individual faculty strengths join to create a mosaic of integrated program excellence. Our curriculum is distinctive and continually works toward evaluation and dynamic change through engagement and interaction with our diverse community. Through teaching, research, and collaboration we address solutions to community and world problems using various levels of intervention with a commitment to social justice.

MISSION

The CSU- Sacramento School of Social Work strives to prepare competent social workers who can both lead and serve the richly diverse region in the development and delivery of services that contribute to human well-being and social justice. Towards this end, the School offers high quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs and teaching, research, and collaboration with the community.

Our mission is strengthened by the following guiding principles:

- As the School of Social Work, we value the richness of human diversity; respect for human uniqueness; and constructive response to the challenges of diversity in an evolving pluralistic society.
- We value an educational curriculum and practice approaches that advance social justice: including, but not limited to, the attention to human rights; confrontation and transformation of oppressive forces; and empowerment of populations at risk.
- We value the importance of human relationships that are strength-based and promote human well-being, through collaborative and partnership processes.
- We value the preparation of ethically driven, critical-thinking change agents who practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

- We value recruiting and maintaining a diverse faculty who collectively share the School's guiding principles and whose individual strengths and experiences provide special expertise to accomplish the School's mission.
- We value the inevitability of change as evidenced by our commitment to a curriculum that is dynamic and responsive to different levels of knowledge and practice approaches.

GOALS

The following School of Social Work goals derived from this mission serve as goals for the MSW program.

1. **Leadership**
Provide leadership in the development and delivery of services responsive to strengths and challenges with the context of human diversity, human rights, oppression, and social justice.
2. **Competencies**
Prepare ethnically driven, critical thinking, competent entry level and advanced professional social workers with a generalist perspective and skills as applied to specific and emerging areas of practice.
3. **Curriculum**
Provide curriculum and teaching practices at the forefront of the new and changing knowledge base of the theory and research in social work-related disciplines as well as the changing needs of our diverse client systems.
4. **Global Perspective**
Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies that develop and promote a global as well as local perspective within the context of the historical emergence of Social Work practice regarding human rights, oppression and social justice.
5. **Accessibility**
Structure and offer programs and curricula in a way that provides availability and accessibility (weekend, night classes) that meet the needs of our diverse student body as well as complies with CSWE accreditation standards.
6. **Diversity**
Recruit, develop and retain diverse students and faculty who will through multi-level practice contribute special strengths to our programs and profession.

MSW PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Consistent with these mission and goals, the MSW program is designed to achieve 17 learning objectives. The first 12 objectives are emphasized in the Foundation Year. These continue to be developed in the Specialized Practice Year, with additional objectives 13 – 17.

Upon graduation, MSW's demonstrate the ability to (terms in parentheses refer to School goals):

Foundation Practice Learning Objectives

1. Apply critical thinking skills to question, understand, and analyze phenomena in the context in which they occur (critical thinking).
2. Internalize professional values and ethics of the NASW Code of Ethics and the principles for ethical decision making (values and ethics).
3. Respect the multi-dimensions of diversity and understand the meaning of these in practice with and on behalf of diverse client systems (diversity).
4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of empowerment, advocacy, and social action that advance social and economic justice (oppression and social justice).
5. Identify and interpret significant trends and issues in the history of the social work profession and its contemporary practices and issues (social work profession).
6. Apply the general problem-solving and strength-based methods and selected theory and skills specific to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (generalist practice).
7. Apply developmental and ecosystems perspectives and selected human behavior theories to multidimensional assessments in generalist practice (human development and behavior).
8. Assess the relationship of social policies to client system needs and engage in planned activities to develop policies and services responsive to human well-being and social justice (social welfare policies and services).
9. Develop an empirical base for practice through evaluation of research studies, use of research findings, and evaluation of practice interventions (research).
10. Use relationship and communication skills to establish facilitative conditions for professional relationships (relationship/communication skills).
11. Use supervision and consultation for continuous development of awareness, knowledge, values, and skills (supervision and consultation).
12. Use organizational resources to serve client systems and help develop needed resources (organizational competence).

Specialized Practice Learning Competencies

When integrated with the foundation objectives, graduates demonstrate the ability to:

13. Engage in multi-skilled practice through multi-level interventions to deliver and develop services that enhance human well-being while attending specifically to the needs and empowerment of those in vulnerable life conditions (advanced generalist)
14. Provide leadership through culturally competent direct practice; the development and administration of policies and services; and social and political action to facilitate sensitivity to cultural and ethnic diversity and the achievement of social and economic justice (social change/leadership).
15. Engage in theoretical and practice research and evaluation necessary for accountability and evidence of effective practice and to contribute to professional knowledge building (advanced research).
16. Understand and use specific theoretical models to inform strategies, skills, and techniques for practice respectively with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (advanced theory).
17. Develop the ability to apply the core concentration knowledge and skills to specific practice contexts and populations and to add pertinent specialized knowledge and skills for this practice through the planned use of electives and the Culminating Experience (generic/specific integration).

STUDENT STANDARDS

Overarching Principles, Standards, and Educational Performance Outcomes for Students in the School of Social Work.

Based on the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the MSW Program, the School of Social Work has identified the following Academic Standards for Student Performance. Students are expected to act according to these standards in all their academic efforts, both classroom-based and field education. The standards are as follows:

1. Behave in an Ethical Manner

A student who *behaves in an ethical manner* undertakes to thoroughly understand and adhere to professional and personal codes of conduct that reflect an unyielding respect for self and others. This student acts in an ethical and principled manner not because it is expedient or self-serving but rather because to do so engenders, uplifts, and strengthens the inherent value and dignity of all peoples and because it is right in outcome and means.

2. Take Responsibility for Learning

A student who *takes responsibility for learning* demonstrates intellectual curiosity and initiative. This student understands the importance of regular, punctual attendance, is prepared to learn, sets learning goals, actively engages in learning tasks, uses available resources, evaluates own actions, and works, and meets deadlines and due dates.

3. Think Critically

A student who *thinks critically* demonstrates willingness to question, patience to doubt, and readiness to reconsider. This student reflects on and evaluates information, details, evidence, and/or his or her own ideas and work to draw conclusions, solve problems, and/or conduct investigations.

4. Communicate Skillfully

A student who *communicates skillfully* writes and speaks in a clear, organized, and interesting manner. This student does so in both formal and informal situations and for a variety of audiences and purposes.

5. Collaborate Effectively

A student who *collaborates effectively* works with peers and/or mentors to produce something greater than what could accomplish individually. This student initiates their own involvement, helps lead groups to set and achieve goals, is an active learner, acknowledges contributions, and works towards solutions.

6. Produce Quality Work

A student who *produces quality work* exceeds the minimum requirements of tasks to create products or performances that reflect skill, creativity, sophistication, and scholarly achievement. This student gives attention to detail and, uses technology effectively to complete tasks, products and/or presentations.

7. Assumes Responsibility for Obstacles to Learning

A student, who *assumes responsibility for obstacles to learning* prioritizes the need to act on impediments and obstacles, seeks assistance early, as needed, from appropriate sources, and strives to increase self-awareness about learning style and resources to maximize benefits from all learning experience.

SECTION II:

MSW FIELD EDUCATION

Field Education is a core requirement of the MSW program. Field is a series of integrated courses which place students in human service organizations under the instruction of professional social work practitioners (Field Instructor), and with the guidance of faculty from the School of Social Work (Faculty Field Liaison). The Regular Semester Program has students in the field for 16 hours (MSWI) and 24 hours (MSWII) per week for 32 weeks (fall and spring semesters). At the end of the practicum, students are required to demonstrate a level of proficiency of social work practice commensurate with an entry-level BASW social work professional.

Students take field courses concurrently with social work practice courses. Field Competencies and practice course objectives are designed for maximum integration of the field/practice experience. In most cases the student's social work practice professor will also act as the student's Faculty Field Liaison, except for students enrolled in the Title IVE Stipend MSW Program. The Field Syllabus is available on the MSW Field Resource page in Canvas.

Field Education is an educationally directed practicum through which students are expected to progress in their professional development from one semester to the next. The program recognizes that students develop professionally at different rates and allows for this differential timing within reason. Students who exhibit performance or problem behaviors and/or skill deficiencies in one semester are expected to work on these areas and demonstrate improvement the next semester and throughout the remainder of the program.

The School of Social Work offers three Specialized Practice areas for the Advanced Level MSWII year: Behavioral Health, Health and Aging, and Children and Families. Advanced Level field placements provide opportunities for MSWII students to develop competencies in their chosen specialized levels of practice.

COURSE INSTRUCTORS

The Field Instructor:

Field practicum is another term for identifying field as a "class" and the Field Instructor is the student's "social work educator in the field." The Field Instructor is a degreed social worker working within the practicum site/agency, or contracted by the agency, who provides oversight of the student's learning experience while enrolled in a field practicum. Field Instructors for MSW students must hold a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. A primary role of the Field Instructor is to teach the social work perspective in a practicum setting.

New field instructors are required to attend a field instructor training sponsored by the School of Social Work Field Education Program.

The Faculty Field Liaison:

The Faculty Field Liaison is a member of the School of Social Work faculty who tracks the student's practicum and provides consultation and monitoring for the student and the Field Instructor. In most cases, the Faculty Liaison will also be the student's practice course professor. Students can expect the Faculty Liaison to monitor their placements through sites visits (at a minimum, but not limited to, once per semester), email, phone contact, video conferencing, class discussion, and in-person meeting(s).

MSWI FIELD ADMISSION CRITERIA: FOUNDATION YEAR

ACCEPTANCE INTO MSW PROGRAM

A student needs to have been accepted into the MSW program and have an official status of “graduate student.” A full-time MSW student will start a field practicum in the first semester in the graduate program. A part-time student will start a field practicum in the fall semester of the second year of the three-year program.

MANDATORY MSWI FIELD INFORMATION SESSION & ORIENTATION

All MSWI students are required to attend the Mandatory MSWI Field Information Session and Orientation (these are two separate events that occur on separate dates):

- **MSW Field Information Session** (upon entry to the program/summer): This session helps the student better understand the mission of field education. As well, students will learn the process for applying for a field practicum, the referral process, and how to interview and accept a field practicum site.
- **MSW Field Orientation** (1st week of Fall semester/August): This orientation occurs directly before students enter their placement. Topics covered: The Learning Agreement, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Competencies, Safety in the Field, Legal and Ethical Concerns, and Self-Care.

FIELD APPLICATION

Student must submit a completed MSW Field Application (May for incoming MSWI students and March for incoming MSWII students).

JUSTICE INVOLVED BACKGROUNDS

Students with misdemeanors or felonies in their background (even if the convictions were long ago or have been expunged) must meet with the MSW Field Coordinator or the Field Director prior to receiving a field referral. Students are required to complete disclosure documentation regarding their justice involved backgrounds. This information remains confidential and is used for the sole purpose of supporting the student with the possibility of obtaining an appropriate field practicum opportunity.

MSWII FIELD ADMISSION CRITERIA: SPECIALIZATION YEAR

MSWI FIELD CONVOCATION

Students must attend this mandatory field convocation discussing the specialization year, how to apply and interview for a MSWII field placement. This mandatory convocation occurs in early spring semester of the MSWI year.

STUDENT/AGENCY MEET & GREET

Students must attend this mandatory event. The purpose of this event is to allow students and community partners to meet and explore specific practicum opportunities available for the next academic year. Students are encouraged to review the list of participating agencies prior to the event, visit agency websites, and prepare for professional interactions at this event. Field practicums are not arranged or confirmed at this event.

MSWII FIELD APPLICATION

The student must submit a completed MSWII Field Application by the designated due date. This application is due in the MSWI spring semester, in or around, February. After attending the

Student/Agency Meet & Greet, incoming MSWII students will indicate their top three field practicum agency choices in their field application for their specialization year practicum.

AGENCY INTERVIEW, AGENCY ACCEPTANCE AND FIELD REFERRAL PROCESS

Based on the information provided in the field application, the student is referred to an approved practicum agency indicated in their MSWII Field Application. Once the referral is received, it is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with the agency and schedule a formal interview.

Following the interview, the student either:

- Accepts and is accepted by the referred agency or
- Declines placement with the referred agency or
- Is declined placement by the referred agency

Note: Students may have up to three opportunities to interview for a social work practicum, but this is not guaranteed. At any time, the Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator may need to assess the student's field practicum readiness. This assessment could lead to an alternate field education plan. The School of Social Work does not guarantee a field placement for any student. Students must demonstrate a certain level of professionalism and aptitude to be accepted at a placement.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

The MSWII student must complete the “Advancement to Candidacy” form in early spring semester (See MSW Handbook) and successfully advance to be allowed to register for the field course.

FIELD COURSES AND CO-REQUISITES

Field education courses must be taken concurrently with social work practice courses.

Level	MSWI Foundation	MSWII Behavioral Health	MSWII Child & Family	MSWII Health, Disability & Aging
Practice Courses	204A/B	206A/B	207A/B	208A/B
Field Practicum Courses	295A/B	296A/B	297A/B	298A/B

All students, including part-time students, are required to take their social work practice course while they are also enrolled in a field practicum course and must meet all other University prerequisites (see the University Catalog). Students must be in good academic standing to proceed into a field placement. Students with grades of “Incomplete” or “No Credit” in the preceding practicum course will not be allowed to enter or continue in their field practicum or continue to the next course sequence.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

MSWI: Foundation Year

The time requirement for the MSWI field practicum course is 2 days/week, 8 hours/day, over a 32-week academic year (Fall and Spring semester). *

Fall	Spring	Total Hours
14 weeks x 16 hours = 224 hours	18 weeks x 16 hours = 288 hours	32 weeks x 16 hours = 512 hours

**NOTE: These hours may vary depending upon University and Field Agency holidays.*

- Field placement days for MSWI students are scheduled to occur on Thursdays and Fridays to accommodate the schedule for MSWI classes.
- Students will schedule their field hours with the agency Field Instructor to meet the needs of the agency and to fulfill the students required 16 hours per week in their practicum.
- Students may attend their practicum on alternate days, but must have approval from the Field Director, Graduate Program Director, and the practicum site. Alternate field days cannot overlap or interfere with any portion of other MSW courses the student is enrolled in.

MSWII: Specialization Year

The time requirement for the MSWII field practicum course is 3 days/week, 8 hours/day, over a 32-week academic year (Fall and Spring semester). *

Fall	Spring	Total Hours
14 weeks x 24 hours = 336 hours	18 weeks x 24 hours = 432 hours	32 weeks x 24 hours = 768 hours

**NOTE: These hours may vary depending upon University and Field Agency holidays.*

- Field placement days for MSW II students are schedule to occur on Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday to accommodate the schedule for MSWII classes.
- Students will schedule their hours with the agency Field Instructor to meet the needs of the agency and to fulfill the students required 24 hours per week in their practicum.
- Students may attend their practicum on alternate days, but must have approval from the Field Director, Graduate Program Director, and the practicum site. Alternate field days cannot overlap or interfere with other MSW courses the student is enrolled in.

MSWI and MSWII Levels

- Time spent commuting between the student’s home and the agency as well as non-practicum related lunches may not be counted toward the field hour requirement.
- Time invested in practicum-related workshops must be pre-approved by the agency Field Instructor to be counted toward practicum hours.
- Practicum hours must be accrued during the time when the agency is active so the student can participate in activities that will aid in their development around core competencies and be involved in the “life of the agency,” e.g., staff meetings, case conferences, and in-service trainings. These hours almost always occur during typical business hours (8am to 5pm), Monday through Friday. If a student cannot be available during these daytime hours, it is probable they will not be able to enroll in the field course. See “Evening and Weekend Policy,” below and in Appendix I.
- Students may complete agency orientations and/or training in the summer prior to the fall field semester. However, the hours spent pre-semester will need to be approved by the Field Director or BASW Field Coordinator. Students must inform the Field Director and/or BASW Field Coordinator if they are attending agency-related activities during the summer or prior to the field calendar beginning to discuss possible approval. Students are not permitted to bank field hours, nor will there be a reduction of the student’s expected field hours during the academic year.

- Students must follow the Field Calendar published at the beginning of each academic year. Students may not accumulate hours to complete the requisite hours before the specified ending date for field in each semester, and the School of Social Work assumes no responsibility for any student who engages in field activities outside designated field time.
- Any alternative field practicum schedule must meet with the approval of both the agency and the Field Director and cannot conflict with the student's current enrolled class schedule. These arrangements should allow for the student to participate in the "life of the agency," e.g., staff meetings, case conferences, in-service trainings, etc.
- Most placements run from early September through mid-May for the academic year. Some agencies may require students to extend their placements beyond the dates on the Field Calendar, but the student must be informed and must acknowledge and agree to this exception prior to accepting the placement.
- The School of Social Work, Field Education Office, on occasion, requires students to attend on campus or virtual events, including field seminars, during their normal field hours. Time spent in these events may be included in the field hours for the day and students are not required to make up these hours missed in their field agency. All such required meetings will be listed on the Field Calendar and students are expected to share this information with their Field Instructor/Agency. If a student has an approved alternative field schedule and that student does not miss a field day to attend the Field Office's required event, the alternate field day cannot be "flexed" or substituted for attendance to a required event.

Evening and Weekend Policy

Many students who work full time request evening or weekend practicums because of their employment. The School of Social Work, Field Education Office believes that participating in a field practicum during evening and weekend hours might not provide the student the learning opportunities and training necessary to fulfill the objectives/learning goals of an amplified practicum learning experience.

Field hours must be held during the time when the agency is active so the student can participate in activities that will aid in their development around core competencies and be involved in the "life of the agency," e.g., staff meetings, case conferences, in-service trainings, etc. These hours almost always occur during typical business hours (8am to 5pm), Monday through Friday. If a student cannot be available during these daytime hours, it is probable they will not obtain a field placement. The reasons for this policy include (and are not limited to):

- Evenings and weekends offer little to no opportunities for case management as linkages are usually with agencies that are only open during daytime/business hours, Monday through Friday.
- Agencies usually manage assessments, treatment team meetings, and staff meetings during regular and typical business hours. It is essential for core competency development that social work practicum students get the opportunity to experience and participate in such meetings.
- There are often limited opportunities for students to shadow other experienced social workers and other workers during evenings and weekends.
- Social Work students cannot attend necessary skills trainings (i.e., Sacramento County's AVATAR training) or conferences that are only offered during regular and typical business hours.
- The objectives of the Learning Agreement cannot be met by exclusively attending a field practicum during evenings or weekends.

See Evening and Weekend Policy in Appendix I.

STIPEND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIELD PRACTICUM INTERNSHIPS

The School of Social Work offers MSW stipend opportunities through the Title IV-E Child Welfare, Public Behavior Health (PBH), and Adult & Aging Services (AAS) Programs, the availability of stipends and scholarships varies from year to year. Most of the MSW field practicums are unpaid. Various agencies do offer stipends in varying dollar amounts and compensation frequencies. Students who are particularly interested in field practicums offering stipends should indicate so on their field application. The University also has stipend and scholarship opportunities available; information can be located on the School of Social Work and University webpages. A referral to a practicum offering stipend opportunities is not guaranteed.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students in need of accommodation(s) in their field practicum due to a disability must follow the University procedures regarding students with disabilities (see University Catalogue). Students should contact the University's Disability Access Center (DAC) 916-278-6955, for assessments and accommodation plans, prior to applying for a practicum opportunity. Students must initiate contact with Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator by indicating accommodation needs within the Field Application. Accommodations in the classroom often do not equate to accommodations within field practicums. Please consult with DAC and the Field Director. If a student recognizes a need for an accommodation during their practicum, they should proceed with the University's process and communicate with the necessary field support persons (Field Director, MSW Field Coordinator, Field Instructor, and Faculty Liaison).

FIELD SEMINARS AND OTHER FACULTY LIAISON CONTACT

Faculty Liaisons can develop additional means of monitoring students' placements outside of the practice class. In addition to practice class, Faculty Field Liaisons may require students to meet with the Faculty Liaison on a regular basis to discuss practicum concerns. Faculty Field Liaisons may also initiate contact with the student and/or field agency to support one or more parties.

Students are scheduled to attend five 3-hour field seminar sessions each semester. These sessions take place on a Thursdays for MSWI students and Wednesdays for MSWII students. Students are to be excused from their practicum site to attend this required seminar for each scheduled session. The student's attendance to field seminars is counted toward required field hours. The pre-scheduled field seminar dates are included in the field calendar each academic year and made available to students and field instructors/agencies via their respective Canvas pages; students must also share the dates with their Field Instructor at the beginning of their practicum each semester. Field instructors are expected to schedule field practicum activities around the pre-scheduled field seminar dates.

MSW FIELD COMPETENCIES

The following section lists the 9 social work competencies from the Learning Agreements for the MSW1 Foundation year and the MSWII Behavioral Health, Children & Family, and Health & Aging specialization year.

1. Student demonstrates ethical and professional behavior.

- 1.1 Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context.
- 1.2 Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.
- 1.3 Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.
- 1.4 Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
- 2. Student advances human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.**
 - 2.1 Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational and community systems levels.
 - 2.2 Engages in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
- 3. Student engages anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice.**
 - 3.1 Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels.
 - 3.2 Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence the bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituents, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.
- 4. Student engages in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.**
 - 4.1 Applies research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs.
 - 4.2 Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.
- 5. Student engages in policy practice.**
 - 5.1 Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect service delivery and access to social services.
 - 5.2 Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
- 6. Student engages with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**
 - 6.1 Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies. (Constituencies include individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.)
 - 6.2 Uses empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.
- 7. Student assesses individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.**
 - 7.1 Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks when assessing clients and constituencies.
 - 7.2 Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies. Student intervenes with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

8. Student intervenes with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

- 8.1 Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Evaluates (monitors and critically analyzes) interventions and outcomes.
- 8.2 Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

- 9.1 Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes.
- 9.2 Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

MSW FIELD SYLLABI

The MSW Field Syllabus outlines the Course Objectives and the Competencies of the practicum experience at the agency site. The Field Syllabus outlines the field assignments and expectations. Field Syllabi are located in Canvas.

- SWRK 295A/B: MSWI Foundation
- SWRK 296A/B: MSWII Behavioral Health Specialization
- SWRK 297A/B: MSWII Child & Family Specialization
- SWRK 298A/B: MSWII Health Specialization

REQUIRED COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The Field Education Office requires the following assignments. Satisfactory completion of these assignments is required to receive credit for the field course. Faculty liaisons have discretion to require additional field assignments. Many of these assignments are completed and submitted on the online field data base system called “FieldConnect.”

1. **Learning Agreement:** Early in the practicum, Students and Field Instructors engage in an assessment of student educational needs, and together develop a Learning Agreement. Faculty Liaisons, if needed, are available to assist in developing the Learning Agreement. The Learning Agreement should be considered as the educational roadmap for the student’s learning experience throughout the academic year. It should be reviewed regularly during the field instruction hour by the student and Field Instructor and modified as needed. This will be submitted using the online program, FieldConnect.
2. **Practice Course Syllabi:** Students must provide their Field Instructors with access (or a copy) of their practice course syllabi and should discuss ways of integrating course material with the field experience. Students must give Field Instructors sufficient advanced notice about any field-related assignments that require Field Instructor participation and/or review.
3. **Field Journal:** The purpose of this assignment is for students to demonstrate the ability to engage in self-reflection and integration of classroom knowledge with field practicum experience. Journals also provide an opportunity for Liaisons to monitor the progress of the field practicum.

4. **Mid-Semester Progress Report:** Halfway into the first semester, the Field Instructor completes the evaluation and reviews it with the student. This is submitted using the online program, FieldConnect. All Faculty Field Liaisons must review the mid-semester progress report and agree to contact the student or field site with any questions or concerns related to the evaluation score or comments.
5. **MSW Student Field Evaluation:** At the end of each semester, Field Instructors will complete the end-of-semester Field Evaluation, accessed via FieldConnect. The student is responsible for completing the student's self-evaluation as well as scheduling adequate time to meet and discuss the Field Instructor's evaluation.
Field Evaluation Completion Process:
 - The student completes their Self-Evaluation and submits via FieldConnect. The Field Instructor receives notification that the student has completed their self-evaluation. **Note:** Student must complete and successfully submit the self-evaluation in FieldConnect for the field instructor to gain access.
 - The Field Instructor completes their evaluation of the student and reviews directly with the student.
 - Once the Student and Field Instructor have signed/submitted the evaluation, the Faculty Field Liaison reviews the evaluation. While a Task Supervisor may not have access to FieldConnect, they should have input into the student evaluation and are encouraged to provide feedback directly to the Field Instructor as part of the evaluation process. **Note:** Students are encouraged to save a copy of their field evaluations (pdf) for future reference. The final (signed) evaluation can be accessed using the online program, FieldConnect.
6. **Evaluation of Field Instructor and Agency:** At the end of the practicum, students will complete a survey of their Field Instructor and the agency. The Field Director reviews each survey and provides feedback when appropriate to address areas of concern or strength that have been documented.

NOTE: Faculty Liaisons may require additional assignments, but these must be clearly stated in writing and provided to the student at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, Liaisons may require students to meet individually and/or as a group during the semester, outside of practice class. Students who fail to complete field assignments in a timely manner may receive a "No Credit" for field practicum.

SUGGESTED COURSE ASSIGNMENTS: PROCESS RECORDINGS

The purpose of this assignment is for students to practice skills of recall and retention of the content of client interviews, and to engage in self-reflection and self-evaluation of their practice. Faculty Liaisons may use other formats at their discretion. While the Process Recording is assigned by the Faculty Liaison, the Field Instructor should also review and discuss it with the student. Process Recording formats are provided in Appendix III.

GRADING

Field Education is a year-long practicum graded on a "Credit (CR)/No Credit (NC)" basis. A grade is given at the end of each semester. A student may not proceed to the next semester unless they receive "Credit" for the preceding semester. Field Instructors do not assign grades. Field Instructors evaluate students and provide input into the overall assessment of students' performance in the field. The Faculty Field Liaison assigns either Credit (CR) or No Credit (NC) at the end of the field practicum. Grades are largely based on performance in the practicum but are also based on the completion of any field-related assignments (such as field journals, process

recordings, etc.) required by the Faculty Field Liaison. Grades are based on the following criteria:

1. Student completes all field assignments (specified above) by determined due date,
2. The quality of these assignments,
3. The student's field evaluation, completed by Field Instructor, and
4. The Faculty Field Liaison's assessment of the student's professional development relative to the practicum competencies set forth in the Learning Agreement, and whether the student is ready to practice social work at the graduate level.

Students must participate in a field education experience for the duration of the Field Calendar, 32 weeks (Regular Semester Program) practicum to receive credit for the course regardless of the student's demonstrated professional qualities and competencies. Exceptions may be made to this policy in extreme circumstances based on the discretion of the Field Director and/or the MSW Field Coordinator.

Occasionally, a Faculty Field Liaison may assign an "Incomplete – I" for the field practicum. This occurs when a student has not demonstrated the minimum competency expected of a student at the end of that semester, the student has not sufficiently completed required assignments and/or the student has missed several days of field and needs to make-up hours. In these cases, a plan for completing the required hours and/or improving in the specified competencies may be developed, with a timeline for completion (See Section V-Problem Solving Process, The Performance Improvement Plan). The Faculty Field Liaison would be responsible for developing and monitoring this plan. The student will receive the grade of "CR" (Credit) when this plan is fulfilled successfully.

The Field Instructor and student must upload and submit in full, the MSW Student Field Evaluation by the posted due date. Evaluations received after the due date may result in the student receiving a grade of Incomplete.

REPEAT POLICY

Students may receive a "No Credit" for field practicum due to inability to complete the required time commitment, and/or for inability to demonstrate minimum competence in one or more of the key competencies. When a student earns a "No Credit," the Faculty Field Liaison may recommend to the Field Director that the student be allowed to repeat the course. Permission to repeat the course is governed by the University's Repeat Policy, and by the School of Social Work's Field Problem Solving and Review Process (see Section V).

FAILING A FIELD COURSE OR PRACTICE COURSE

Field and practice courses are co-requisites and must be taken concurrently. Failing one will stop a student's progress into the next semester of field and practice. Please see examples below.

Note:

- A Student may receive two "C" grades in the MSW program and continue, as long as their GPA does not fall below 3.0. A meeting with the Graduate Program Director is required to discuss any implications of grade impact to program.
- Title IV-E students may have expectations of student's grades differing from information listed below.

Example 1

Course	Final Grade	Result
204A	C- or lower	Student must repeat 204A the following year and may not proceed to 295B until 204A is passed.
295A	Credit "CR"	

Example 2

Course	Final Grade	Result
204A	B or better	Student must repeat 295A the following year and may not proceed to 204B until 295A is passed.
295A	No Credit "NC"	

WORK, VOLUNTEER AND OR LIFE EXPERIENCES CREDIT

While the MSW program values the employment, volunteer and life experiences of MSW students, academic credits are not offered for such experiences.

SECTION III:

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN FIELD EDUCATION

THE AGENCY

Agency Qualifications

To qualify as an approved field site, an agency must be recognized by the State of California as a corporate entity. It must have written standard operating policies and procedures, policies and procedures regarding sexual harassment and discrimination, and must have policies and procedures regarding health and safety. In addition, agencies must be administratively and financially sound for students to be placed or continue to be placed within it. Agencies wishing to become field sites must submit an Agency Application <https://app.calstates4.com/csus/social-work-new-partner-request-form> to the School of Social Work Field Education Program. Upon approval by the Field Director, the agency's request will be forwarded to the University Procurement Office, which will facilitate the execution of an agreement with the agency.

Agency Role

The agency provides a setting in which practicum may occur.

Agency Responsibilities

The Agency is expected to provide each student with the following to ensure the student's learning in the field:

1. A qualified Field Instructor (See below "Field Instructor") whose responsibility is the teaching of the student. The Field Instructor must have a social work degree (MSW) from an accredited university.
2. A sufficient number and variety of assignments to support the progression of student learning. Students must be involved in practice activities *within three weeks* of the start of the placement (including shadowing, investigating community resources, watching relevant films, etc.).
3. A thorough orientation at the beginning of the practicum, to include:
 - a. A review of the agency's mission, policies and procedures, various programs or departments, and any collaboration partnerships in the community; and
 - b. A review of risk management policies and procedures (e.g., office and community safety, harassment, transporting of clients, medical precautions, suicide prevention policies, etc.) This orientation information should also be ongoing, so the student is aware of policies, changes to policies or other health safety information, including any health emergency or other relevant information
 - c. A review of the client population and the associated community and its resources.
4. Adequate workspace and access to telephones, computers, records, databases, etc. to fulfill the requirements of the agency and School of Social Work Field Education Program.
5. Opportunities for the Field Instructor to observe the student. See Section IV under "Instructional Methods."
6. Reimbursement for expenses the student pays for when involved in rendering services (e.g., mileage reimbursement for agency-related travel).

7. Adequate insurance coverage for students as stipulated in the University agreement with the agency, particularly for students who are expected to use personal vehicles for agency purposes (The School discourages the use of personal vehicles to conduct agency business, unless the agency fully insures the student).
8. Access to staff, committee, and seminar meetings when appropriate.
9. Use of selected agency records (appropriately disguised to ensure client and agency confidentiality) for class assignments.
10. Use of agency consultation resources when appropriate.
11. Release time/support for the Field Instructor so that s/he can meet the School's criteria for working with a student (see *Responsibilities of the Field Instructor*).
12. EMPLOYMENT-BASED FIELD PRACTICUM: These agencies agree to consider the employee's status as a social work student paramount to their employment status during the assigned practicum days with the agency. For more information, see "Employment-Based Field Practicum Application" on Canvas Field Resource page.
13. AGENCIES WITHOUT A DEGREED SOCIAL WORKER ON STAFF: These agencies must provide the student with a Task Supervisor. A Task Supervisor is an agency staff member who is currently working in the role of the assigned tasks for the student and is responsible for the day-to-day assignments of the student and the observation and assessment of the skills portion of student learning. The Task Supervisor will also work with the Field Instructor in supporting the student while at the practicum site.

THE FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Field Instructors are qualified staff members of an agency or have contracted with any agency, and who possess a Master of Social Work Degree and who, with the approval of agency administrators and the School of Social Work Field Education Program, are willing and able educators of social work students. Field Instructors are considered part of the extended faculty community of the School of Social Work, making their responsibility unique and demanding. Field Instructors who volunteer or contract with an agency to provide field instruction are considered "off-site Field Instructors."

Field Instructor Qualifications

1. Master's social work degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited social work program.
2. Minimum of two years, relevant full-time, supervised post-degree work experience.
3. There may be occasions when a Field Instructor has not had a minimum of two years, relevant full-time, supervised post-degree experience. The Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator approves this modification. Modifications are based upon, but not limited to, pre-degree experience, agency opportunities, agency staff, and/or the presence of an experienced Task Supervisor.
4. Sufficient term of employment at the agency to ensure familiarity with agency policies and procedures and availability to meet student's needs.
5. Agreement to act as Field Instructor on a continuing basis during the academic year or full placement period and to participate in the required "Introduction to Field Instructor Training" required of all Field Instructors and to engage in a 3-hour "Advanced Field Instructor Trainings" every 3 years thereafter.

6. If the Field Instructor and the student have had a pre-existing professional or social relationship, this information should be shared with the Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator or other faculty so that the appropriateness of the practicum can be determined.

FIELD INSTRUCTOR ROLE

Field Instructors carry out three different roles relative to each student: they are educators, teachers, and gatekeepers.

1. Educator: As an “educator,” they guide and assess the overall professional development of the student.
2. Teacher: As a “teacher,” they facilitate “learning opportunities” for students, model for and observe the student and provide meaningful feedback.
3. Gatekeeper: As a “gatekeeper,” they assist the Faculty Field Liaison in assessing whether the student is appropriate for the profession – demonstrates the personal/professional capacities/behaviors requisite of professional social workers.

Field Instructor Responsibilities

The Field Instructor must:

1. Have a Masters social work degree from a CSWE accredited school of social work; and a minimum of two years’ work experience post degree.
2. In the early stages of the practicum, the Field Instructor facilitates the student receiving an average of three hours of training per week. Training may include one hour of formal face to face regularly scheduled supervision each week. The field instruction hour(s) can be individual or group. If the agency chooses weekly group field instruction, this must be coupled with biweekly individual field instruction. Assessment materials shall be prepared by the student and reviewed by the field instructor (i.e., process recordings, audio/videotapes, case presentation, projects, etc.).
3. Provide time for reading student material, holding informal conferences and meetings and consulting with Faculty Field Liaison(s).
4. Complete the student’s Learning Agreement, the Mid-Semester Progress Report, and the “Student Evaluation.” These documents are completed and submitted using the online program, FieldConnect.
5. Provide ongoing assessment and feedback to students regarding the Learning Agreement Competencies.
6. If new, attend the Field Instructor Orientation (6 hours) to meet the School’s accreditation requirements.
7. If ongoing, attend Advanced Field Instructor Training (3 hours) every three years to meet the School’s accreditation requirements.
8. Engage in ongoing collaboration with the Faculty Field Liaison to enhance the student’s educational experience in the practicum.

9. Be familiar with and uphold the NASW Code of Ethics, identify with the social work profession, demonstrate a strong commitment to social work values and adhere to the laws that regulate social work practice.
10. Identify individualized learning opportunities (clients, projects, and tasks) within and outside the agency setting in line with the needs and curriculum and goals of the student.
11. Identify student challenges and work with the Faculty Field Liaison on how to address student concerns. The Faculty Field Liaison, in partnership with the Field Instructor may develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The student must be informed and involved in the development of the Performance Improvement Plan.
12. Off-Site Field Instructors: Must meet with the student weekly for one hour supervision; these visits may be in-person or virtual. In addition, the Field Instructor must communicate with the Task Supervisor to obtain feedback on the student's progress in skill development and must review the student's case notes, process recordings (if assigned), etc. Lastly, the off-site Field Instructor is responsible for completing the student's Learning Agreement, Mid-Semester Progress Report and the end-of-the-semester Student Evaluation.
13. Task Supervisor: Is an agency staff member who is responsible for the day-to-day assignments of the student and the observation and assessment of the skills portion of student learning. It is expected that the Task Supervisor model skills and observe the student in his/her daily assignments, meet with the Faculty Field Liaison as appropriate, and provide relevant feedback to the Field Instructor for completing the Mid-Semester Progress Report and the end-of-the-semester Student Evaluation. Task Supervisors are not required, but recommended to complete the Introduction to Field Instructor training t. In agencies where the Field Instructor is not an agency employee, the Task Supervisor may be required to complete the training.

Off-site field Instructors

Off-site Field Instructors are responsible for ensuring the responsibilities noted above are carried out, in whole, through both their own efforts as well as those of the Task Supervisor (see below). The off-site Field Instructor must meet with the student weekly for one hour supervision via in-person or virtual meetings. The focus of these meetings is social work content—social work perspective, values, ethics, practice theories and theories for practice. The reference point for discussion should be the Learning Agreement. These weekly hours constitute the “instructional hour.” In addition to the instructional hour, the off-site Field Instructor must communicate with the Task Supervisor to obtain feedback on the student's progress in skill development and must review the student's daily tasks. Lastly, the off-site Field Instructor is responsible for completing the student's evaluation in collaboration with the Task Supervisor.

Task Supervisors

A Task Supervisor is an agency employee who may or may not be a social worker and is responsible for the day-to-day assignments of the student and the observation and assessment of the skills portion of student learning. It is recommended the Field Instructor and Task Supervisor meet prior to the start of the practicum to delineate roles and responsibilities and review these directly with the student. It is expected that the Task Supervisor model skills and observe the student in his/her daily assignments, meet with the Faculty Liaison as appropriate, and provide relevant feedback to both the student and the Field Instructor. The Task Supervisor does not need

to have a social work degree. It is highly encouraged that the Task Supervisor also attend the Field Instructor Trainings but is not required.

THE STUDENT

The student's primary obligation is to their own learning and professional development through the provision of social work services in the field practicum setting in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics and the agency's policies and procedures.

Students are expected to adhere to their assigned field practicum agency's personnel practices, policies, and procedures. *Failure to do so may result in termination from the field practicum and a "NC" grade for the course.* On their designated field days, students are expected to adhere to the same workday hours as the professional social work staff in the field practicum agencies. Time missed in absences must be made up by the student, unless explicit permission from the Field Director has been issued.

The field experience comprises the task and activities agreed to by the Field Instructor and the student as documented in the Learning Agreement and in alignments with the Field Course Assignments required of all students enrolled in field as outlined in the course syllabi. The tasks and activities agreed to by the Field Instructor and student are to be documented in the Learning Agreement.

Students will meet with their Faculty Liaison during the first-class session of their practice courses to review field course assignments. In some cases, students Faculty Field Liaison will not be the same as their practice professor.

It is the responsibility of each student to attend the first-class session in order to meet with their Faculty Liaison. *It is recommended that* students not in attendance at the first practice class session schedule an appointment and meet with their Faculty Field Liaison prior to starting their field placement.

If students have any questions or concerns regarding their field practicum site, their first point of contact is their Faculty Field Liaison. During the academic year, students should discuss field-related concerns with their Faculty Field Liaison before they are brought to the Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator. If a problem or question arises during the time when faculty are on academic holiday, the student must contact the MSW Field Coordinator and/or the Field Director.

ATTENDANCE IN FIELD PRACTICUM

Students are expected to attend all classes, trainings, practicum, and events as scheduled. As professionals in training, students are expected to be reliable and dependable in their attendance, in keeping appointments, and in assuring that the practicum agency, Field Instructors and/or clients are informed should an absence be necessary.

A student is expected to telephone the agency Field Instructor at the beginning of the field day (or at an earlier date/time if appropriate) to report an illness or any other emergency requiring absence during the student's field time. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the Field Instructor to make up field hours in ways convenient to the agency and which consider client needs; students must also include their Faculty Field Liaison in this communication.

- Students must complete a sufficient number of field practicum hours to meet the minimum requirement of hours. Field practicum is a class, and students are expected to review and adhere to the course's attendance policy outlined in the syllabi for the field practicum course.
- Students are responsible for logging in their completed field hours in the FieldConnect database system for Field Instructor approval and Faculty Field Liaison review.
- A student's protracted absences (more than two consecutive days) must be addressed by the Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison. When a disruption of the field experience, due to repeated or protracted absences, is determined to interfere with a student's learning and/or services to clients, a decision regarding the student's continuation in the field practicum will be made in accordance with the Problem-Solving process outlined in this manual. All absences over 2 consecutive days or occasional absences, which combine to significant time lost, should be reported to the Faculty Field Liaison as a make-up plan will need to be determined.
- Students who experience a disruption to field due to health-related matters may be directed to fulfilling their practicum attendance requirements by utilizing a field absence make-up plan. Should a student need to withdraw from a field practicum due to illness, that student must submit official medical documentation to the field office indicating the student's health-related fitness for field practicum activities before a new practicum can be arranged.
- Requests for time off for religious observance and professional conferences shall be assessed on an individual basis.
- Whenever a field absence make-up plan is required, the plan should be completed by the Faculty Field Liaison in collaboration with the Field Instructor and student. The make-up time should be made in accordance with the agency's needs, Field Instructor availability, and the student's learning needs.

Disclosure of Student Status

In accordance with federal and state law, the School of Social Work requires social work students to identify themselves as social work students when interacting with clients either verbally or through using name tags except in emergency situations where it is clinically contraindicated as determined by student and Field Instructor or another supervisor. "Student" status should be clearly designated in signing notes in records/chart and all other documents produced by student trainees for or on behalf of the field practicum agency.

Student Rights and Privacy

The School of Social Work requires that students understand informed consent and waive specific rights to privacy, in relation to their education, field conduct, field practicum performance, and personal information. Outlined below are the specific policies regarding student rights and instances in which the waiving of rights is deemed necessary.

Privacy/Confidentiality of Student Performance

A student's field practicum and performance/conduct in a practicum agency are neither private nor confidential, even if the student is engaged in an employment-based field practicum wherein the student is also an employee of the field agency. Field Instructors are considered an essential part of the field team and thereby entitled to receive and share information regarding a student among and between appropriate field faculty members *pertinent to the placement*, from the time of the practicum referral interview through completion/termination of the field placement. Student conduct during the field practicum referral process through the entire field practicum period is a matter of educational concern to the faculty and staff of the School of Social Work.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The federal *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974*, as amended, seeks to

guarantee both a student's right of access to education records, financial aid records and financial records, and the confidentiality of student information. Institutions may not disclose information contained in education record without the student's written consent except under certain conditions. A student's records may be released to parents, guardians or other third parties by providing a written authorization or consent.

Students are asked to sign the following statement as part of their Field Application:

"I hereby give permission to Sacramento State, School of Social Work, Field Education Program, and its faculty, to verify any and all information contained within this application. This can include contacting former employers, field practicum agencies, and/or field instructors, reviewing school records, etc. I understand that should any information affect my professional student status, and/or practicum role and thus the field practicum experience, the School of Social Work shall be authorized to assess and discuss the information with the appropriate parties. In doing so, I consent to Sacramento State the release of the above referenced records within its possession and/or control that may constitute educational records under the FERPA and by so consenting waive any right to privacy I may have in said records under state and/or federal law. I also understand that I am entitled to a copy of any records released by Sacramento State pursuant to this consent. I further authorize any former employers, field practicum agencies, field instructors, and/or current or prior educational institutions I have attended to release the records identified herein."

Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality of Clients, Agency, and/or Agency Personnel

NASW Code of Ethics: 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

Disguise of Confidential Client Material

When students use case material from their agency in the context of their academic coursework (e.g. Process Recordings, Case Records, Meeting Minutes, Group Recordings) they are required to do the following:

1. Change client's names (first, last, and initials).
2. Delete any reference to agency name and/or worker names.
3. Delete any reference to address or any information specifying geographical area, such as street names, businesses, or hospitals.
4. Delete any information that would enable identification of clients, agencies, or agency personnel.

THE FACULTY FIELD LIAISON

The Faculty Field Liaison is the university-based field educator who oversees and monitors the student's field practicum. The Faculty Field Liaison enhances the student's learning through their functional responsibility as mediator, advocate, and consultant between the student and the Field Instructor and engages the student in self-assessment, self-reflection, and educational planning with respect to the student's field practicum.

Faculty Field Liaison Role

The Faculty Field Liaison's role is threefold:

1. To assist and assess students in their professional growth and development as they progress through the field education curriculum
2. To assist Field Instructors in the development of appropriate learning opportunities or support them in their role as a Field Instructor; and
3. To mediate or resolve problems affecting a student's progress in the field.

Each student is assigned a Faculty Field Liaison. In most instances the student's liaison is also the student's practice course and field seminar instructor and generally, all practice course instructors are full time faculty members.

Field Faculty Liaison Responsibilities

The Field Faculty Liaison:

1. Serves as the link between the School of Social Work Field Education Program and the Field Practicum Agency.
2. Consults with the student and Field Instructor about field assignments, Learning Agreement, Student evaluation, etc.
3. Serves as the student's advocate to ensure that the School's expectations of the agency are being met.
4. Serves as troubleshooter, problem-solver and mediator in the event a problem in the field practicum experience is identified (whether the problem rests with the student, agency, or Field Instructor).
5. When needed, develops a student's "Performance Improvement Plan."
6. Reviews/approves and provides feedback to the student on each of the required field assignments.
7. Meets with each assigned student on a regular basis, individually or in group (typically in field seminar), to ascertain the student's progress towards professional development and to assess the quality of the field education experience based on Liaison/Student discussion about the tasks/activities or cases in which the student is engaged.
8. Contacts Field Instructors in the first few weeks of the Fall semester to ensure agency orientations are underway and to verify contact information (phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc.).
9. Conducts a site visit each semester (in person or through video conferencing). Due to the specific nature of the Title IV Program, Faculty Field Liaisons will conduct monthly site visit throughout each semester for Title IVE Students. The site visit must include the student and the Field Instructor.
 - Fall Site Visit: ensures the viability of the placement experience once it begins and establishes a working relationship with the Field Instructor
 - Spring Site Visit: Reviews (adds to or modifies) the Learning Agreement and ensures the student can work towards all competencies
10. Must be available to both the student and the Field Instructor.
11. Assigns the student's grades for the field course based on course grading policy.

SECTION IV:

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND RESOURCES FOR FIELD INSTRUCTORS

INSTRUCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIELD INSTRUCTOR

The Field Instructor plays a key role in the professional education of the social work student. The Field Instructor, who has the closest and most continuous relationship with the student, serves as both a role model and a teacher.

The Student/Field Instructor relationship provides the context for significant growth and learning for the student. It is a joint educational process based on ongoing assessment, feedback, matching of resources, and professional development. Over the course of the practicum the Field Instructor may be called upon to address challenging or sensitive issues such as the student's inability to separate personal/professional issues, holding the student accountable for meeting agency and School requirements and accommodating the student's particular learning needs.

An early focus of field instruction should be on the educational assessment (the knowledge, skills, strengths and limitations) of the student. It is based on a review of previous education and work history, an evaluation of learning style and learning phase, an understanding of the student's professional goals, and identification of the strengths and challenges with which the student approaches the identified learning tasks. Adult education theory, learning style theory, learning stages and developmental theory all inform the educational assessment.

It is important for the Field Instructor to be aware of his/her own characteristic learning/teaching style, operating/communication style, knowledge and skills, strengths and weaknesses as these will influence transactions with the student. The Field Instructor may be called upon to develop new approaches to the teaching tasks that meet the learning needs of individual students.

If the Field Instructor and student have had a pre-existing professional or social relationship, this information should be shared with the Field Director, so that the appropriateness of the placement can be determined.

THE LEARNING AGREEMENT

Adult education theory emphasizes the shared responsibility between the instructor and the learner for the quality and content of the learning – teaching transactions. Building on this notion, it is a School policy that each Field Instructor and student jointly develop a written educational contract (Learning Agreement) that defines the field education experience they will be participating in together while in a field practicum. The Learning Agreement is available on the FieldConnect database system. In the early weeks of the field practicum, the completion of the Learning Agreement is initiated by the student, and the final completion is done collaboratively between the Field Instructor and student (see Field Calendar for due dates). A digitally signed copy should be completed and submitted through FieldConnect for review and approval by the Faculty Field Liaison.

FIVE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVING THE STUDENT AND GIVING DIRECT FEEDBACK

The School of Social Work Field Education Program requires the Field Instructor to directly observe the student when the student is carrying out required activities, roles, and responsibilities during practicum hours, unless there is an assigned task supervisor. It is recommended that the Field Instructor spend time and effort in explaining the reasons for the direct observation. In other words, the student is being observed because this is an effective way to increase a student's competency. If this instructional method is approached in a thorough and planned manner, it can be rewarding for both the student and client.

If the student is highly anxious about being observed, highlight observed strengths and improvements, praise the student for tolerating the experience and ask them to self-evaluate, limiting your critique until the student grows more comfortable with the process whenever possible. Once students get used to engaging in observational methods, they tend to feel better seen, understood, supported and helped by the Field Instructor.

Five Observational Methods are described in the table below:

1. Student Shadowing Instructor Session
2. Student Participating in Instructor Session
3. Live Observation of Student
4. Written Process Recordings
5. Audio/Visual Recording

1. Student Shadowing Instructor Session

The student observes Field Instructor or a seasoned worker in a session. After the session, the student outlines what was noticed about the session. The focus is not on what the student "liked" about what the Field Instructor did in the session. More so, the student speculates on what the worker was attempting to accomplish, how the client participated in the session, and other deeper level considerations about the session.

2. Student Participating in Instructor Session

The student observes and participates in the session with a Field Instructor or a seasoned worker. The client is asked permission with the idea that the client is helping train the student. During or at the end of the session, the worker invites the student to contribute to the session.

3. Live Observation of Student

Live observation of the student can occur behind a one-way mirror or by the instructor being in the room with the student and client. The observation can be strictly that or it can be interactive with the instructor communicating directly to the student and/or client.

In the simplest form, the instructor introduces themselves at the beginning and makes a few brief comments at the end; in maximum form, the instructor and student conduct a session together. To introduce the student to this, the field instructor might begin by inviting the student to "visit" one of the instructor's sessions to observe and comment.

A handout on "Live Observations" is available in the Appendix IV.

4. Written Process Recordings

There are many different formats for a Written Process Recording, but in all, the student records the interaction or dialogue between the client and the student. Also included are the student's real time thoughts and emotions, as well as the client's behavior and perceived emotions.

Small System: Social work students most often record what is remembered about face-to-face sessions with clients. But social work students may also record telephone conversations with clients, or contacts with a client's family member(s), colleagues, or professionals in other settings.

Written recording teaches the student to listen and remember and is a good indicator of the student's perceptions of his/her experience and interventions.

Large System: The student's written account should include all the above, but the focus is on the group dynamic, and the group demonstrated roles and skills (or lack thereof); the focus is not on the interaction between student and the client. Students and Field Instructors may find agendas, work plans, and minutes of meetings useful in the student's effort to record the dynamics involved in large system practice. Ultimately, however, the large system process recording should focus the student's attention on group dynamics, large system interventions, use of self, and group skills development.

Recordings have a number of purposes including: 1) keeping the Field Instructor informed of what the student is doing; 2) encouraging the student to reflect on and conceptualize from practice; 3) encouraging the student to plan ahead; 4) encouraging the student to sort and remember important information about his/her practice; 5) providing a framework for the "instructional hour", individual conferences; and 6) serving as a tool for evaluating the student's progress over time.

It is recommended that the student write 2 process recordings per year: Fall Semester: Small system (i.e., 1x1 client session), and Spring Semester: Large system (i.e., client group, staff meeting, board meeting).

Examples of social work process recordings are easy to find on the internet. Example of small system and large system are included in the Appendix III.

5. Audio/Visual Recording

Audio and video recordings may be used in place of or in addition to written process recordings. A student records an entire session and then presents a sample of the session to the Field Instructor. The Field Instructor provides constructive feedback and asks the student to reflect on his/her experience of the client work.

Agency policy dictates this process since agency consent forms are needed. Many field sites regularly use audio/visual recordings and have offered to serve as a resource to help other agencies begin this practice.

ASSIGNMENT TIMETABLE AND LOAD

The Field Education program expects students to be provided a thorough orientation to the agency before becoming involved in direct practice activities or indirect practice actions. However, students are expected to become involved in client focused practice within the first three weeks of the practicum. Early work includes “shadowing” with clients, groups, committees, or projects that allows students to begin the process of integrating the learning from class and field. Field Instructors are advised to review the practice course syllabi of their students to ensure congruency between field practicum assignments and practice course assignments. Additionally, a review of the practice course syllabus will assist the Field Instructor to plan the field practicum assignments in a “building block” format that is congruent with the “progression of learning” perspective built into all practice courses.

“Processing” is defined as time to reflect upon what the student is engaged in (seeing a client, participating in a staff or committee meeting) and what the student has learned from that engagement—what is being learned by “doing”. It is recommended students be provided time for processing each day they are in field (approximately 10-15 minutes after engaging in some major activity). Processing time includes the instructional hour, time to do written process recordings, self-reflection, and time to write the required weekly Field Journal entries.

Given the above, in general, MSWI students are expected to engage with their Field Instructor’s least complex cases of their Field Instructor’s caseload, while MSWII students should be able to carry more complex cases. Overall, MSW student caseloads should be manageable for the time students are expected to spend in other organization activities and in “processing.”

Any questions regarding sufficiency of assignment load should be addressed to the Faculty Field Liaison.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT

Assessment of the student’s performance as it relates to the CSWE competencies should be an ongoing process that begins at the time of referral and interview. The student and Field Instructor should regularly give feedback to each other regarding the field education experience. Students and Field Instructors should discuss any concerns as they emerge and communicate those concerns with the Faculty Field Liaison. Students should not be surprised by ratings or feedback on their final evaluation completed by their Field Instructor.

The two required evaluations, completed and submitted in FieldConnect, include:

1. Mid-Semester Progress Report: Field Instructors are responsible for completing a mid-semester progress report which is due midway in the fall semester.
2. Student Field Evaluation: Field Instructors are responsible for completing the end-of-the-course Student Field Evaluation.

SECTION V:

FIELD PROBLEM-SOLVING AND REVIEW PROCESS

Students have a right to practicums that:

- Offer an environment in which students can develop the social work competencies outlined in the student's Learning Agreement.
- Offer an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.
- Provide a safe practicum environment

HARRASMENT. DISCRIMINATION OR RETALIATION COMPLAINTS

IF STUDENT HAS A COMPLAINT

If a student has a complaint of unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, including at a field practicum agency, they should contact the CSUS Office for Equal Opportunity. The applicable CSU policy for complaints of this nature is Executive Order 1074. (<https://calstate.policystat.com/search/?q=EO%201074>). Students making such complaints are strongly encouraged to notify their Faculty Field Liaison, the Field Director, and the MSW Field Coordinator. Likewise, EO 1074 requires that except in the case of a privilege under California law, any member of the University community who knows of, or has reason to know of, allegations or acts that violate this policy, shall promptly inform the Office for Equal Opportunity-Inclusive Excellence at: <https://www.csus.edu/president/inclusive-excellence/office-equal-opportunity/> or (916) 278-5770, or the individuals listed above, so that prompt remedial action may be taken. For complaints of unsafe conditions in field practicum sites, please notify either the Field Instructor or the Faculty Field Liaison as soon as possible.

The University takes seriously any claim of discrimination, harassment or retaliation. The specific facts of a complaint will determine both the steps for handling the claim and the ultimate outcome. For these reasons, the outcome may never be determined at the outset. If a harassment, discrimination, or retaliation complaint warrants investigation, such an investigation will be carried out under the oversight of the Title IX Coordinator and consistent with Executive Order 1074. During any investigation, the university may implement interim measures to maintain a safe and non-discriminatory educational environment.

The University has authority to pursue student claims against those identified in the Executive Order, but it has limited control over the actions an outside agency might take in response to a complaint that is determined to have merit. The student will not be required to continue at an agency which they believe has not satisfactorily resolved a valid complaint of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation. The safety and well-being of the student is paramount.

IF STUDENT ACCUSED

In cases where a student is accused of discrimination, harassment or retaliation in a practicum agency, the Field Director or the MSW Field Coordinator will notify The University Office of Equal Opportunity.

THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

If the student identifies a problem in the field practicum which does not involve discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, then they should bring it to the attention of the Field Instructor as soon as possible. A student may consult with the Faculty Field Liaison first for guidance on how to approach the Field Instructor.

A Field Instructor may also identify a problem. In this case, the Field Instructor should discuss the concern directly with the student and attempt to work out a plan for solution. The Field Instructor may consult with the Faculty Field Liaison in advance, if needed. The Field Instructor will notify the Faculty Field Liaison if there is a plan to address any performance concerns, prior to the Field Instructor initiating a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Faculty Field Liaison should be involved in monitoring and addressing the concerns presented by Field Instructor.

If the student and Field Instructor are not able to develop a workable solution, the student (or Field Instructor) should meet with the Faculty Field Liaison for consultation and/or direct intervention. This may include a telephone call, online meeting, and/or site visit (in addition to the required minimum visit) by the Faculty Field Liaison to the agency. If a Performance Improvement Plan is created to address an identified problem, the student may remain at the practicum site. The Field Instructor and the Faculty Field Liaison will support and monitor the PIP to ensure a successful outcome. The PIP should be developed with collaboration between the student, Field Instructor, and the Faculty Field Liaison. The PIP should also include a reasonable timeframe for evaluation and documentation. Performance Improvement Plan templates and samples are available on Canvas.

If a solution cannot be reached, or the student does not adhere to the PIP's expectations, or if new problematic behaviors arise, the Field Instructor and/or Faculty Field Liaison, after consultation with the Field Director (or when appropriate the MSW Field Coordinator) may decide to terminate the practicum. The termination may occur with or without the agreement of the student. **A student may not terminate a practicum without permission of their Faculty Field Liaison, the Field Director and/or the MSW Field Coordinator.**

If a student violates university, field program, or agency policies, or demonstrates non-compliance, insubordination, or fails to follow directives and these incidents are evaluated as a pattern of behaviors, steps within the problem-solving process may be skipped. Depending on the nature of the adverse actions, the student's practicum may be immediately placed on hold, or terminated, and a Field Professional Review Committee (see below) meeting may be called to determine an appropriate outcome.

THE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a performance contract used when a student's performance falls below the expected MSW competency. The PIP identifies the student's current performance challenges and describes the expected changes to be achieved in a set timeframe for demonstrated improvement. The Faculty Field Liaison will create the plan in collaboration with the Field Instructor and student. The Faculty Field Liaison will review the PIP with the student at an agreed upon frequency to monitor the student's progress. Insufficient progress towards the expectations listed in the PIP may result in further action. This action could include termination from the field practicum site, a "Field Professional Review Committee" and/or a Grade of No Credit (NC).

WHEN A PRACTICUM IS TERMINATED

When a practicum is terminated, the Faculty Field Liaison will consult with the Field Director and, when appropriate, the MSW Field Coordinator, about the next steps. The following are possible scenarios:

1. ***The reason for termination is not based on student performance:*** The student may be referred to another practicum, if available. The student may be credited for the time spent in the first placement but may receive an Incomplete grade in the field practicum for that semester until the new Field Instructor has enough time with the student to complete an evaluation. This may delay the student's ability to progress forward in field practicums until the Incomplete has been satisfied.
2. ***The reason for termination is based on excessive but legitimate absences, and there are no other performance issues involved:*** If the student's circumstances do not allow for consistent attendance in a practicum, the student will receive a "No Credit" for the practicum and may be able to repeat the course the next time it is offered. In this case, the student will need to withdraw from the corequisite practice course as well. Students should consult with the Graduate Program Director/School Advisor to construct a new academic plan.

The Faculty Field Liaison may assign an incomplete grade for the field practicum when there is evidence that the student will be able to resume consistent attendance within a reasonable amount of time. The Faculty Field Liaison should consult with the MSW Field Coordinator and/or the Field Director when discussing a student's plan to resume practicum activities following an attendance concern. If permitted to move forward, the student should be prepared to make up all missed. In that case, a new field referral may be made, and the student will not be required to withdraw from the practice class.

3. ***The reason for termination is due primarily to student performance issues:*** The Faculty Field Liaison, the Field Director, and when appropriate the MSW Field Coordinator will review the student's situation. The review will look for evidence of the following:
 - The degree of seriousness of the performance issues. Examples of serious performance issues include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Student behaviors that place the agency, agency employees, or clients in potential harm.
 - ii. Student behaviors that contravene the NASW Code of Ethics.
 - iii. Discrimination, harassment or retaliation behaviors. NOTE: In cases where a student is accused of discrimination, harassment or retaliation in a practicum agency, the University Office of Office of Equal Opportunity-Inclusive Excellence will be notified.
 - iv. Student behaviors that indicate significant emotional, psychological, physical or cognitive impairment that interferes with the student's ability to perform the tasks of the practicum and thus develop the competencies of the field course. NOTE: If impairments are related to a student's previously documented disability, the student should reach out to the University Disability Access Center (DAC) - <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/disability-access-center/>. The Field Education Office can consult with the DAC to determine if reasonable

accommodations can be made to allow a student to successfully continue in a field practicum.

- v. Student fails to follow agency protocol in areas such as, but not limited to mandated reporting, documentation, appropriate communication with agency constituencies and clients.
 - vi. Student violates agency policies, is non-compliant, insubordinate, fails to follow directives or fails to obtain or follow supervision.
- Insufficient baseline level of competence.
 - Non-adherence to the School of Social Work's Student Standards.
 - Non-adherence to the University's Student Code of Conduct. NOTE: If there is evidence that the student has violated the University's Student Code of Conduct, the case will be referred to the Student Conduct Officer.
 - The sufficiency of training and supervision provided to the student by the agency.
 - A low level of the student's self-awareness and ability to receive constructive feedback, and the student's commitment to improve.
 - Whether the agency and student followed the problem-solving process, and whether the student demonstrated an effort to improve performance prior to termination. The student's history of problem behaviors in previous field practicums and the field practicum process related to program competencies, professionalism, and the School of Social Work Student Standards.

If, based on the above criteria, the Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator and the Faculty Field Liaison determine, in their professional judgment, that the student's performance issues are remediable and that continuation in field is appropriate, the student may be referred to another placement (if available) and permitted to continue in both the field and practice courses. A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be developed within the context of the new practicum site, identifying the competencies that need to improve, and a timeframe developed for improvement. The student may receive an Incomplete for their field course until the new field instructor can observe the student for a sufficient time to evaluate the student's performance. The student may be required to extend their time in the field practicum to make up any missed field hours during the "re-placement process." Re-placement is not guaranteed, nor is there guarantee that the Field Director or MSW Field Coordinator will locate another practicum site. If another practicum referral is issued, the student must successfully interview for a new practicum and comply with and demonstrate an adherence to the student standards and field practicum expectations. The student *may* be eligible for a maximum of three referral practicum opportunities but is not guaranteed.

The Field Instructor and/or other agency management, in collaboration with the Faculty Field Liaison may define the level of seriousness of the student's behavior. The steps outlined in the problem-solving process may not always be sequential. Steps in the problem-solving process may be bypassed depending on the nature of the student's adverse action. A Field Professional Review Committee (see below) may be warranted.

THE FIELD PROFESSIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (FPRC)

The field education program has a dual responsibility: to the student's educational progress and to the well-being of the clients served in the social work profession. The well-being of clients is a paramount social work value. In some cases, the Field Director, Faculty Field Liaison and the MSW Field Coordinator may have concerns about the student's readiness or ability to continue in field education at this time, based on the criteria listed above. In these cases, the Field Director will convene the Field Professional Review Committee (FPRC) meeting.

The Field Professional Review Committee may consist of the following:

- Field Director
- MSW Field Coordinator
- MSW Program Director
- The assigned Faculty Field Liaison
- The student's practice professor, when different from the Faculty Field Liaison
- One other member of the Field Committee or faculty as determined by the Field Director (optional)

FIELD PROFESSIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (FPRC) PROCESS

1. When deemed appropriate, the Field Director will convene the FPRC by notifying the members via email a minimum of 5 working days before the FPRC meeting. The Field Director will notify the student by email, via CSUS email, of the meeting within a minimum of 5 working days before the scheduled FPRC meeting. The emailed notification will include, but not limited to, (1) the meeting's purpose, (2) concerns about the specific field competencies, and/or policy violation (e.g., NASW Code of Ethics, School of Social Work Student Standards, agency policy, etc.), (3) the factual basis for the competency concerns and/or violation; (4) any documents/information relied on by decision makers that raised concerns about the student's readiness for field or ability to continue in field; (5) the student's option to bring any witnesses who have first-hand knowledge of the circumstances; (6) the student's option to bring someone to the meeting as support; and (7) the range of possible outcomes of the FPRC meeting.

NOTE: Relevant information about the student's past field performance (if applicable) both positive and negative, may be included.

2. If the student chooses to bring a support person, the student must advise the Field Director no later than one business day before the FPRC meeting of the name of the person the student is bringing. The nature of the student's relationship must be provided (i.e., friend, family member, university support service staff, etc.). The support person will be allowed to attend the meeting for support only. The support person may not address the committee or speak on behalf of the student. If the student's support person does not adhere to their role, the FPRC chair may ask the person to leave the meeting. If the student does not communicate the support person's planned attendance or provide information according to the requirements noted above, the request for their attendance may be denied.
3. If the student chooses to bring witnesses who have direct, first-hand knowledge of the field situation, the student must advise the Field Director no later than one business day before the FPRC meeting the names(s) of any witness(es) the student is bringing.
4. During the FPRC meeting, Committee members will hear information relating to the student's termination from the field practicum. This may include information gathered by Committee members, as well as written information submitted by knowledgeable persons (e.g., Field Instructor, Task Supervisor, practicum agency personnel, etc.) The Committee may also hear information about the student's behavior or performance in

previous practicum sites, other academic courses, the pre-placement process, and any other related information as reported by Field Instructors, Task Supervisors and Faculty Field Liaison, the Field Director, MSW Field Coordinator, other School staff, and/or documented in field evaluations, that may reveal a pattern of behavior or performance consistent with the current problems in field. Concerns relating to past field practicum performance must have been communicated to the student at the time the concern was first recognized for it to be included in the FPRC. The student's strengths in field, including those shown at previous practicum sites, will also be shared. The student will be given the opportunity to address the Committee with information about the matter and will be given an opportunity to respond to any information provided by the Committee members. The student's response should include discussion about their professed readiness to enter or remain in field.

5. After all information is presented, the student and any other non-Committee members present will be excused, and the Committee will deliberate on an outcome which may include whether to allow the student to be referred to another practicum site during the current semester. If the student is not referred to another practicum site, the Committee may decide one of the following:
 - i. The student will receive a "No Credit" for the field practicum for the current semester. They will be notified via CSUS email as to what competencies must be improved before re-applying for a new field practicum opportunity.
 - ii. The student will receive a "No Credit" for the field practicum for the current semester. If the Committee has strong reservations about the student's overall appropriateness for social work field education, the Committee will notify the student via CSUS email that the student is not eligible for another field practicum, and the matter will be referred to the MSW Program Director and/or the Director of the School of Social Work.

If the Field Professional Review Committee determines the student should be given a "No Credit" for the current semester field practicum, the student must also withdraw from the corresponding practice course, regardless of how well the student may be performing in that course and/or how close they are to completion of the course.

APPEAL PROCESS FOR THE FPRC DECISION

A student may appeal the Field Professional Review Committee's (FPRC) decision to not refer them to another practicum during the current semester by requesting that the Director of the School of Social Work review the decision of the Field Professional Review Committee. The School's Director will only review the FPRC's process and will not consider new information that was not presented during the FPRC meeting. If the student is not satisfied with the Director of the School's decision, they may appeal to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services.

On the rare occasion that the Committee recommends to the School's Director that a student is not suitable for a current or future field practicum placement, the Director shall initiate the School's Level II Student Review process (see MSW Program Handbook for details).

SECTION VI:

GENERAL POLICIES OF FIELD EDUCATION

PLACEMENT PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

Under the delegation and oversight of the Field Director, the MSW Field Coordinator is responsible for arranging field referrals for all MSW students. Students may not contact an agency directly regarding field referrals or practicum arrangements without prior approval from the Field Director or the MSW Field Coordinator. Agencies are not permitted to arrange placements with students without an official referral from the field office; the student must go through the formal placement process as outlined below.

Referrals for Title IVE MSW Students are determined by the Title IVE Program and arranged by the field office.

Field Education policies and procedures facilitate the placement of students into settings that best meet the educational needs of each individual student.

MSWI STUDENTS

The placement process for incoming MSWI students begins in late spring semester, after students have been admitted to the MSW program.

- Each student must attend the mandatory MSWI Field Information session where they will learn about the mission of social work field education, the practicum referral process, and program expectations.
- Students then submit an MSWI Field Application via FieldConnect.
- Once the application is complete and submitted, the MSW Field Coordinator matches the student to a practicum site and sends a field practicum referral to the student and respective agency. Consideration is given to the student's previous experience, learning needs, available sites, etc. Referrals are sent to the student's CSUS email. Students may receive up to 3 referrals which will be sent one at a time.
- Student must contact the designated agency representative within 3 business days to request an interview. The agency will not be contacting the student for an interview. The interview is a chance for the student and the agency to determine whether the practicum site is a "good match."
- Students prepare for the field practicum site interview and should be mindful of the following:
 - Research the agency website. Find out exact location of interview.
 - Prepare for Agency Questions
 - Prepare Your Questions to the Agency
 - Dress professionally
 - Be on time
 - Send agency your resume ahead of time
- After the interview, the student must complete the Student Interview Response and Liability Waiver Form via FieldConnect. The agency representative must complete the Agency Interview Response form via FieldConnect to officially accept or decline a student. If the agency declines the student, they must notify the student directly and it is the student's responsibility to immediately contact the MSW Field Coordinator to develop a plan for next steps related to the practicum referral.
- If applicable, students interested in consideration for an Employment-Based practicum opportunity must turn-in an Employment-Based Field Practicum Application or

Request to Complete Second Year at Same Agency. This application is available on Canvas. The application must be emailed to the MSW Field Coordinator for review once completed.

- Student should check-in with the practicum site contact person in early August to ensure that the practicum is still available, and to verify the start date. At times, during the summer months, practicum opportunities may change with some agencies for various unforeseen reasons, and they can no longer host students. In such cases, the student may be referred to another practicum site, if available. Practicum referrals are not guaranteed.
- Students attend the mandatory MSWI Field Orientation held in the first week of the fall semester, usually scheduled on a designated field day one week before field practicums begin. This orientation will review program expectations, student responsibilities, law and ethics, safety in the field, etc.

Agencies are responsible for informing the student of all requirements, including the background check component; the university does not gather this information on behalf of the agency partners.

For incoming MSW2 students:

- Students must attend the MSWI Field Convocation which takes place in the spring semester of their MSWI academic year. This session reviews the field practicum placement process and explains the considerations and referral matching process as it relates to students' chosen specializations. Students are also informed the MSWII practicums are a competitive process.
- Students should update their resume. It is recommend that students use the University Career Center Handbook as a resource for resume writing: [Career Center Handbook](#)
- Students attend the mandatory Agency Meet & Greet, a gathering of 75+ agencies providing practicum opportunities for social work students. Representatives provide information about their organizations and share student expectations. Students do not sign up for practicums at the Meet & Greet, nor do agencies conduct interviews or secure practicums at this event. It is simply a chance to share and gather information about practicum opportunities. **Attendance at the Agency Meet & Greet is mandatory.**
- Students submit an MSWII Field Application via FieldConnect, listing their top 3 practicum site choices. Due to the competitive nature of MSWII practicums, the field office makes every effort to match students with either of their top choices.
- Students receive an official MSWII field practicum referral from the field office. Referrals are sent to the student's CSUS email. Students may receive up to 3 referrals which will be sent one at a time.
- Student must contact the designated agency representative within 3 business days to request an interview. The agency will not be contacting the student for an interview. The interview is a chance for the student and the agency to determine whether the practicum site is a "good match."
- Students prepare for the field practicum site interview and should be mindful of the following:
 - Research the agency website. Find out exact location of interview.
 - Prepare for Agency Questions
 - Prepare Your Questions to the Agency
 - Dress professionally
 - Be on time
 - Send agency your resume ahead of time
- After the interview, the student must complete the Student Interview Response and Liability Waiver Form via FieldConnect. The agency representative must complete the Agency Interview Response form via FieldConnect to officially accept or decline a

student. If the agency declines the student, they must notify the student directly and it is the student's responsibility to immediately contact the MSW Field Coordinator to develop a plan for next steps related to the practicum referral.

- If applicable, students interested in consideration for an Employment-Based practicum opportunity must turn-in an Employment-Based Field Practicum Application or Request to Complete Second Year at Same Agency. This application is available on Canvas. The application must be emailed to the MSW Field Coordinator for review once completed.
- Student should check-in with the practicum site contact person in early August to ensure that the practicum is still available, and to verify the start date. At times, during the summer months, practicum opportunities may change with some agencies for various unforeseen reasons, and they can no longer host students. In such cases, the student may be referred to another practicum site, if available. Practicum referrals are not guaranteed.

If a student cannot successfully obtain a placement with up to three interviews, the Field Director and/or the MSW Field Coordinator, after discussion with the student, may determine that the student is not ready to enter field at that time, and will make recommendations to the student concerning how he or she might improve readiness.

UNSUCCESSFUL PLACEMENT INTERVIEW

While the Field Education Office attempts to place all students in accordance with the School's field practicum referral procedures, it does not guarantee all students will be successful in the practicum interview. Students may be permitted to interview with up to three agencies, however this is not guaranteed. Students who are denied a practicum by more than one agency, or who decline/refuse to accept field practicum referrals, or a combination thereof, must meet with the MSW Field Coordinator and/or Field Director. The possible outcomes of such a meeting may be as follows:

1. Student may be asked to work or volunteer at a human service agency to gain more professional experience and maturity; or
2. Student may be advised to delay their field practicum due to personal life complications that seemingly interfere with the student's ability to present in a professional manner during practicum interviews or assume the responsibilities of a social work student; the student may be referred to appropriate campus/community services if warranted; or
3. Student may be advised to re-consider the appropriateness of Social Work as a profession. If necessary, the School of Social Work's Level I or Level II Review may be initiated (see *Graduate Program Handbook*).
4. The student may be eligible to receive another field practicum referral if the assessment of the Field Director or MSW Field Coordinator deems it appropriate. The student may be asked to complete additional assignments, meetings, or other requirements to address "field readiness."

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No student may be placed in an agency wherein they or an immediate family member was/is a client now or within the last five years; employee with a responsibility to social work students or is a Field Instructor. Since the School does not ascertain client information from agencies or

students, it is the responsibility of the student to decline (or not select) a practicum based on a conflict of interest. Declining a placement due to a conflict of interest is not evaluated in the same manner as “refusing to accept a placement,” as outlined in this policy under *Unsuccessful Placement Interviews*.

Students who are interested in a practicum site that may be perceived as a conflict of interest are encouraged to discuss the situation with the Field Director or MSW Field Coordinator before requesting or accepting the practicum. Students who are found attempting to secure or who secure a practicum in an agency where they, or a member of their family, are or were a client during the previous five years and the student either knew or reasonably knew this information, the student will be administratively dropped from the field course and will not be permitted to enroll in the future.

Criminal Convictions

The School takes seriously the need to protect the public, as well as to provide appropriate opportunities to social work students with justice involved histories or lived experiences wishing to enter the social work profession. The School is committed to assuring that individuals who might pose a threat to any client group or practice setting be prevented from causing harm. Also, the School is committed to the value and belief that any justice involved history is not in-and-of itself indicative of a person’s readiness or potential to enter and effectively contribute to the social work profession.

The School makes no presumptive judgments about students who have justice involved histories. This policy is intended to ensure that the Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator can make a reasonable effort to identify a potentially suitable field practicum site that will provide an appropriate practicum experience for a student with a justice involved record. Students need to know that, in fulfilling this effort, certain types of records, and dates of criminal convictions may result in agencies declining to offer the student a field practicum opportunity. In some cases, it may not be possible for the Field Office to find a practicum site willing to interview or accept the student.

The Field Education Office will provide a student may attempt to provide a student with up to three placement referrals, but this does not guarantee a student will be accepted by the agencies. A history of felony or misdemeanor convictions may present a barrier to acceptance by any University approved agency and may prohibit the student from completing the social work degree requirements.

Note: Students must disclose information within their background that may be criminal in nature and present obstacles for students to obtain placement. Students participating in Title IV-E must follow all procedures identified by the Title IV-E program.

*** STUDENTS MUST DISCLOSE CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS ***

- **DISCLOSE TO MSW FIELD COORDINATOR or FIELD DIRECTOR:** Before or during the field application period, students with justice involved convictions must make an appointment with the MSW Field Coordinator or the Field Director to disclose the convictions in an individual meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the most

appropriate matching of the student with a field practicum referral. Students will be asked to complete disclosure documentation and provide consent to the MSW Field Coordinator or Field Director to discuss their background with potential practicum agency. Students need to list all convictions along with their current status/resolution. Even if a student's justice involved record occurred long ago or has been expunged, information may emerge during a social work background check and become an issue for securing a practicum. This information is used for the sole purpose of Field Practicum referrals and matching.

- **DISCLOSE TO AGENCY:** Students are also required to disclose the justice involved record with the prospective field practicum agency. Students should be prepared to discuss their background in the context of how they have grown and changed. The Field Director or MSW Field Coordinator may reach out to an agency on behalf of a student, but this does not relieve the student of the requirement to disclose and discuss their justice involved history/background with an agency. The Field Office cannot guarantee acceptance.

EMPLOYMENT-BASED FIELD PRACTICUMS

Many students ask if they can use their place of employment site as a field practicum site. The use of employment as a MSW field practicum site must be approved by the Field Director or MSW Field Coordinator. Approval is granted only if certain conditions are met, and the employment site is appropriate for an amplified social work field education experience for the student requesting the opportunity. The Field Education Office recognizes two types of employment-based practicums:

Job Conversion Practicum

“Job Conversion practicums” are for students who have been employed at their agency for at least one year and consider themselves “career employees.” These students plan to remain in their place of employment in the future, and the agency wishes to make an educational investment in the employee. The goal of Job Conversion practicums is to provide significantly different opportunities for students to gain social work experience with different populations, services, sites, etc.

New Job Practicum

“New Job practicums” are for students who are hired into a new agency within the last few months. If approved, the specific assignment/opportunity of this practicum can only be used one time during the student's program.

The requirements listed on the Employment-Based Application include:

1. **Application:** The student must submit a completed application by the designated due date. The application is available on the MSW Field Resource page via Canvas. The student must discuss their desire to apply for an employment-based practicum with the MSW Field Coordinator or Field Director, prior to submission.
2. **Agency's Official Agreement:** The agency *must agree* that the employee will be treated as a student and can complete the academic requirements of the practicum. Practicum requirements involve completing activities that might not otherwise be a part of the student's current job description. Whereas employees may not have to go to city council meetings, read research articles, relate the NASW Code of Ethics to agency cases or write personally reflective journals for a professor, the student will. Doing these activities may necessitate lighter employee caseloads, a longer probationary or orientation period,

planned and varied assignments for educational purposes and additional hours above the normal workweek to achieve the practicum requirements.

3. **Field Instruction:** There must be an available Field Instructor, approved by our program, who has a MSW degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program and at least two years of post-graduation work experience. At a minimum, the Field Instructor must commit to provide at least one hour of regularly scheduled “field instruction” per week and be in good standing with the University. Note: the approved Field Instructor must be someone other than the student’s immediate supervisor (see below).
4. **Field Instructor Training:** New Field Instructors must complete the introductory training on how to be an effective Field Instructor. This training is offered in-person, on campus two times per academic year (May and August) and is also available asynchronously online for individuals onboarded in between in-person training dates. The training is available to all agency employees, including Task Supervisors. Sign up information is provided after completing applications. For info and registration: <https://www.csus.edu/college/health-human-services/social-work/field-education.html#field-instructor-training>
5. **Employment Supervision:** The agency must provide an employment supervisor who is a different person than the Field Instructor. This is to ensure, in part, that the Field Instructor is free to focus on the educational aspects of the practicum while the employment supervisor can focus on workload issues. If it is not possible to provide an employment supervisor who is different than the Field Instructor, the MSW Field Coordinator and/or Field Director should be conferred with for further assessment and discussion. Approval is not guaranteed.
6. **Field Assignments:** The field instruction tasks/assignments must be significantly new and different from the student’s current or past job duties and must be in accordance with the *School of Social Work’s field curriculum*. The activities must occur during sustained periods of time during the week (minimum of 4 hours at a time) preferably at a different location than the site of employment.
7. **No Role Confusion:** The student must present evidence that role confusion (between student and employee) will not occur. A general rule is that role confusion will always exist in agencies with fewer than 25 employees unless you are physically located in separate places for the employment and the practicum.
8. **Weekend/Evening Policy:** Many students who request employment-based practicums want to attend practicums on the weekends and/or at night. The Field Education Office believes that attending field practicums during those hours would not provide the student the opportunities and training necessary to fulfill the objectives/learning goals of their learning agreement. Field hours must be held during the time when the agency is active so the student can participate in the “life of the agency,” e.g., staff meetings, case conferences, and in-service trainings. This is almost always during the day (8am to 5pm), Monday through Friday. If a student cannot be available during these daytime hours, it is probable they will not obtain a field practicum.
9. **The Educational Requirement for Diversity:** The Field Education Office requires that students move outside of their comfort zone while in a practicum. It is recommended that

students use the practicum experience to explore different agencies, populations, theoretical perspectives and supervision. An application will be rejected if the employment-based practicum maintains a student in the same kind of agency environment with the exact same population and the exact same kind of supervision.

10. Developing CSWE Core Competencies: The School of Social Work is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). There is a strict requirement that the program ensure that a field practicum help the student develop specific core competencies. These nine core competencies, listed below, *must* be a focus of any student's practicum experience and must be referred to in the student's employment-based application.

1. Demonstrates ethical and professional behavior.
2. Advances human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice
3. Engages anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice.
4. Engages in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Engages in policy practice.
6. Engages with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Intervenes with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

11. Liability and Separation Waivers: As part of this application, the student needs to sign a special liability waiver. The student must allow the agency/Field Instructor to release to the Field Education Program information regarding the student's field practicum performance for student evaluations, including if said performance results in the student's separation from their field practicum. The general liability waiver is completed using FieldConnect.

12. Field Meeting: The MSW Field Coordinator or Field Director may request a meeting with the agency to discuss the content of the application, the student's employment and/or proposed field practicum. The Field Office may request further clarification or information prior to issuing a decision.

13. Field Education Office Approval: MSW Employment-Based Field applications must be approved by the MSW Field Coordinator or the Field Director. All parties (student, field instructor, employment supervisor, faculty field liaison and agency director) will be notified about the final decision by email. The Title IVE Program is responsible for reviewing and approving all Employment-Based Field Applications for all Title IVE Students.

Note: There may be times when the accrediting body, CSWE has provided additional guidance regarding employment-based field practicum requirements. The Field Director will work with students to ensure the process reflects the requirements of the School of Social Work and CSWE.

OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT BY PRACTICUM AGENCY

The School of Social Work recognizes that the goal of most MSW students is to secure employment as a MSW social worker upon graduation. Community agencies also prefer to hire employees who are well educated, appropriately trained, and have proven themselves as valuable members of the team. Thus, there are times when practicum agencies will offer paid employment

positions to practicum students who have not yet completed their practicum. *While professional activity and learning are not incompatible, there is a difference between the goals of educational development and those of employment.*

Students who accept offers of employment may maintain their practicum in the same agency during the academic year upon approval of the Field Education Office only when the following guidelines are met:

1. **A Complete Application:** The student must complete an application which outlines the job responsibilities, practicum tasks, and the way in which both will be delineated if the student accepts the offer of employment. The application is available on the MSW Field Resource page via Canvas or by contacting the Field Office.
2. **Agency's Official Agreement:** The agency *must agree* that the employee will be treated as a student and will be able to complete the academic requirements of the practicum. Practicum requirements involve completing activities that might not otherwise be a part of the job description. Whereas employees may not have to go to city council meetings, read research articles, relate the NASW Code of Ethics to agency cases, or write personally reflective narratives for a professor, the student will. Doing these activities may necessitate lighter work caseloads, a longer probationary or orientation period, planned and varied assignments for educational purposes and additional hours above the normal workweek to achieve the practicum requirements.
3. **Field Instruction:** There must be a MSW *degreed social worker* who will act as the student's Field Instructor. The Field Instructor must have at least two years of post-graduation work experience and complete the required 6 hours of Field Instructor Training offered by the CSUS School of Social Work. The Field Instructor must be someone other than the person who will supervise the student's work as a paid employee to ensure, in part, that the Field Instructor is free to focus on the educational aspects of the practicum rather than on workload issues. The Field Instructor must provide at least one hour per week of field instruction.
4. **Employment Supervision:** The agency must provide an employment supervisor who is a different person than a Field Instructor. If it is not possible to provide an employment supervisor who is different than the Field Instructor, the MSW Field Coordinator and/or Field Director should be conferred with for further assessment and discussion. Approval is not guaranteed.
5. **Good Academic Standing:** The student must be in good academic standing within the School of Social Work with all passing social work grades and assessed favorably by Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison prior to submission of the application.

Note: Due to the nature of the Title IVE Stipend contract, students in the Title IVE Program must discuss any employment offer with the Title IVE Program Director prior to accepting an offer.

UTILIZING STUDENTS IN PLACE OF EMPLOYEES

Social Work Field Education is not to be used for the purpose of filling vacant positions within an agency. The School of Social Work does not support any organization utilizing students as employees under the guise of field instruction apart from the employment-based practicum. Field practicum is a class where students are expected to receive an amplified learning opportunity to grow as future social work professionals. Students are not expected to perform at the same caliber as long-standing employees of an agency but are expected to take advantage of the learning opportunities provided to help with developing their "professional self."

FIELD INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

All new Field Instructors are required to participate in “Introduction to Field Instruction” training offered by the School of Social Work – Field Education Program. Task Supervisors are recommended to attend, as is any agency employee who works consistently and directly with the student. New Field Instructors are required to attend an "Introduction to Field Instruction" training. Ongoing Field Instructors must renew their training by attending an "Advanced Field Instruction" training every three years thereafter.

A certificate of completion for Continuing Education Units (CEUs), approved by the California State Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS), is available for those in need of such units after the training is complete. A CEU certificate will be emailed to those attendees upon receipt of license information. Participation in the entire training is required to receive CEUs.

The Introduction to Field Instruction Training covers:

- Competency-based instruction and complex practice behaviors
- Agency orientation
- Completing/using the Learning Agreement
- The student assessment process
- Learning styles
- Instructional methods
- Problem-solving

The Advanced Field Instructor Training varies by topic with a focus on developing the competency of the Field Instructor.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

The University provides social work field practicum students with professional liability insurance through a CSU system-wide policy. The name of the policy is “SLIP: Professional Liability Insurance Program.” Students must be currently or previously (in the case of “incomplete grades”) enrolled and registered in their respective field courses to be covered under the policy for the calendar year when a current agency-university agreement is in effect. A current certificate of this policy can be obtained through a request to the Field Director, or the agency may request a copy of the policy certificate by reaching out to the University Procurement Office.

No other insurance is purchased or provided to students by the School of Social Work. Agencies requiring students to carry other insurance, including malpractice insurance must make this known to the students before/during the interview process so that the student can make an informed choice about the field practicum site.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Sacramento State University does not provide automobile insurance for students. Liability related to field practicum students transporting clients in personal vehicles is between the agency and the driver in agreement together. The University does not cover the cost of automobile insurance for any of its students in field practicums. Sacramento State shall not be held responsible or liable for incidents related to field practicum students transporting clients.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES IN TIMES OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT

DISPUTES/STRIKES

In the event that a field agency is experiencing a severe dispute between Labor and Management, such as a strike, student attendance at field placements may not be possible. The field education policy regarding student practicums and strikes is based upon principles of educational integrity; it focuses on how educational expectations, goals, and objectives can be met and maintained. A student's educational experience--rather than the merits of any given strike--is of primary consideration. The School ascribes to the educational principle that a strike-bound agency is not able to provide a climate conducive to a sound educational experience.

If an agency is in a strike situation before the beginning of the practicum, no students will be placed in that agency. If the agency reaches resolution of the strike situation at some point during the academic year, the agency may be used for a mid-year practicum, depending upon reassessment of the agency and its ability to meet the learning and educational expectations of the Field Education Office. Designated field faculty will complete the assessment.

If a strike occurs in an agency where students are in an practicum:

- Students should confer with their Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison and, ultimately, the Director of Field Education to determine the most appropriate course of action.
- Students may not remain in the agency if the strike is expected to last an extended period that will negatively impact core competency development and the accrual of practicum hours.
- Students who miss practicum hours due to a strike may have to make up the hours so that they satisfy their field practicum hours commitment and competency development as mandated by our accrediting organization, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
- Students may make up these hours during regular semester breaks, or by extending the practicum into the early summer months.
- If the strike persists for a protracted period and another comparable placement is available, the School reserves the right to re-place the student so that they may complete their education in normative time.
- Exceptions to this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

SECTION VII:

SAFETY GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS

GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY

These guidelines have been created in recognition of the fact that physical and mental health vulnerability of professional social workers (and violence in the lives of clients) are realities. No social worker is immune to these vulnerabilities, regardless of practice setting or geographic location. Issues of safety are relevant in all communities and settings and must be addressed. The following guidelines are set forth to facilitate awareness of safety issues. Students are required to review these guidelines, to ask questions and discuss with their Field Instructor the safety guidelines and procedures of the field agency.

The School of Social Work Field Office and faculty will address safety issues as they relate to the content of lectures and discussions in the classroom, and during mandatory orientations.

Each agency is responsible for orienting field practicum students to the safety policies and procedures of that setting. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency's physical plant/ building(s), and with clients prone to violent behavior. Security of personal belongings should be covered. Agency protocols and procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of an injury, and safety or security problem should be reviewed.

To ensure that students become familiar with agency safety protocol, field instructors are required to complete the *Field Placement Safety Protocol, Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting Form*. See form in Appendix IX.

Students must not be required to engage in assignments in which they feel physically at risk. The agency should make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for staff. If a student's concerns about safety begin to interfere with the learning process, the Faculty Field Liaison should be contacted to facilitate exploration of the concerns.

HEALTH RISKS

Exposure to diseases is a safety issue in many agencies, including those that are not designated health facilities. Therefore, all students are to assess for themselves, health risks associated with different settings and discuss with the Field Instructor appropriate precautions even though the agency may not have requirements for vaccinations or other such preventive health measures.

GLOBAL PANDEMIC OR OTHER SERIOUS HEALTH RISKS

If an event arises, such as the Global Pandemic, like that associated to COVID-19, the Field Office will work to immediately respond to and collaborate with students and field practicum agencies regarding safety.

The Field Office expects that students understand their practicum site may have to alter the way they provide services and/or may decide to terminate the student's practicum prematurely. Practicum sites may shift from providing on-site services to remote, remote to on-site, or a combination of any of the above during an academic year. Students are expected to adhere to the agency policy. The agency is requested to present the student with all safety protocols, guidelines,

and procedures. If the practicum site makes the decision to terminate the field experience, the Field Office will make efforts to support the student's remaining practicum needs. This may result in a delay to the student's ability to complete practicum on-time, and/or delay graduation. The Field Office cannot guarantee that replacement into an alternative practicum will occur under these circumstances. We acknowledge that this may cause financial implications and recommend students reach out to University Financial Aid to discuss further.

Students are expected to adhere to all field education policies related to any health crisis and may be requested to adhere to any pre-placement requirements, such as health immunizations or other requirements. Requirements of the above may be initiated by the University and/or field practicum agency. If the field practicum agency is initiating additional health-related requirements, the student should be made aware of the requirements as soon as possible, preferably during the interview phase.

The Field Office will communicate to all field practicum students when a health crisis or other disruption occurs in a reasonable manner as information is made available. The communication may likely be available via MSW Field Resource page via Canvas and may include updates of policies, requirements for attending field practicums, or other essential information. Communication regarding serious health risks/hazards may change daily and it is a student's responsibility to check their communication regarding the most up to date information.

PROCEDURES WHEN SAFETY ISSUES ARISE

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or injured while in a field practicum, the Field Instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should contact the Faculty Field Liaison, MSW Field Coordinator, and the Field Director immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.

The student or the Faculty Field Liaison and the Field Director should complete a University's *Report of Incident or Accident Form* (<https://www.csus.edu/administration-business-affairs/risk-management-services/forms/report-of-incident-or-accident.html>). The Field Director and/or Faculty Field Liaison should contact the University Risk Management Department for further consultation as needed.

SAFETY TIPS FOR STUDENTS IN THE FIELD

Agency Protocol

It is important for students to know the agency safety and security protocol for office and home visits with clients. In the absence of formal policies, the Field Instructor and student should discuss any issues related to safety and security in the practicum setting. All safety related procedures and policies are to be documented in the Safety Protocol Verification document and submitted in FieldConnect.

The guidelines and suggestions below may be helpful to students, Field Instructors, and Faculty Field Liaisons as they consider specific safety issues in their settings. The School recognizes that general safety guidelines may not address specific agency situations and steps taken by students or agency personnel will likely be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc.

Security of Belongings

All students in the field are expected to have a secure place to keep all personal belongings while at the field practicum site. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked such as a desk drawer or filing cabinet. It is best practice to not leave any personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed.

Valuables should be left at home. If it is necessary for the student have access to personal items while at the field practicum site, it is recommended that those items not be brought into practicum settings. Valuable Items may be left in cars and should be placed out of view. Students are fully responsible for the security of their personal and/or valuable property. The University, the School or the Field Education Program is not responsible for any lost or stolen items that occur during practicum.

Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients

When working with clients, it is important to remember the treatment and/or intervention process often surface vulnerable feelings and may challenge a clients usual coping mechanism. With some people, this can contribute to problems with impulse control, and can raise issues of safety for the client, the social worker, the field practicum student, 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 clients may be intoxicated, actively using substances, in withdrawal, or may have other medical or neurological disorders. Again, we would like to emphasize that students consult with agency Field Instructors regarding preparation for and handling of 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.

Safety Tips for Office Meetings

If a student is scheduled to meet with a client with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important that the student initiate a discussion on the situation and fully share their concerns with the agency Field Instructor. When considering the location of the meeting, it might be helpful to think about the elements of the environment, exists, seating arrangements, etc. whether there is more than one exit, and where each person might sit. It may also be helpful to think about whether to include someone else in the meeting, and what to wear (i.e., comfortable yet professionally appropriate shoes, slacks, etc.). When discussing the time of the appointment, it can be helpful to think about whether or not many people are around at the time being considered for the meeting. It is also important to discuss a plan for backup and assistance in the event the client becomes agitated. Students should fully understand and adhere to all agency policies and procedures regarding client meetings or other communication.

Safety Tips for Travel

When a student is traveling by car to an agency or to home visits, it is advisable to know where they are going, and to look at a map before driving to unfamiliar areas. In general, remember to be alert, to lock doors and close windows.

When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students carry the least number of valuables with them as possible. Money, identification, keys, and other essentials might be carried in a pocket. If a handbag carried under the arm is grabbed, it may be best to let go of it and not fight or struggle with an aggressor, risking significant injury or harm.

It is helpful to dress in comfortable clothes that reflect your professionalism as well as support movement, including wearing sturdy and practical walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert, and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of their surroundings, including people in the immediate area, animals, or other obstacles.

Safety Tips for Home Visits

Agencies that require students to attend home visits, should provide adequate training regarding their policies and expectations, prior to a student completing this task.

It is important to review any essential documentation about the client prior to the home visit. If there is a question of safety, students should plan accordingly with Field Instructors. It might be decided that the meeting be held at a neutral place or going with another worker is the appropriate plan.

SECTION VIII: SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Second Life and various blog sites are just a few examples of ways to connect with others and share information. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. Students are expected to adhere to social work values and ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether using a personal site(s), agency site(s), or University site(s).

Highlighted below are just a few of the relevant NASW Code of Ethics standards:

- SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS - informed consent (Section 1.03), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07).
- SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES – respect (Section 2.01), confidentiality (Section 2.02)
- SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS PROFESSIONALS – private conduct (Section 4.03), misrepresentation (Section 4.06)

As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities, such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting your professional identity, versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. Your *professional image*, that is, the professional self you develop that is guided by social work values and ethical standards, extends beyond the field agency and physical setting of an office.

As social workers, we must be cognizant of the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals and those obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication tools. As with the Hippocratic oath to “first do no harm,” it is imperative to consider how to be connected within the context of social media while protecting yourself, your field practicum site, the clients you interact with, the Sacramento State University School of Social Work, and the Social Work profession.

To better understand how to manage social media, ask your Field Instructor the following questions:

1. Does your field site have a policy on the use of social media communication tools? If so, review the policy with your field instructor. If not, what expectation does the agency have regarding the use of social media during field hours?
2. How much personal information is shared with clients and former clients as well as agency staff and professional colleagues?
3. What are the most common ethical concerns you should be aware of when using social media as a professional social worker?

See Appendix VI for handout “Guidelines for Using Social Media.” Used by permission from the Boise State University School of Social Work, Field Education Program.

APPENDIX I:

EVENING AND WEEKEND POLICY

Many students who work full time request evening or weekend practicums because of their employment schedule. The School of Social Work, Field Education Office believes that field practicum hours during evening and weekend hours would not provide the student the opportunities and training necessary to fulfill the objectives/learning goals of their practicum.

Field hours must be held during the time when the agency is active so the student can participate in the “life of the agency,” e.g., staff meetings, case conferences, field instruction and in-service trainings. These activities are almost always during the day (8am to 5pm), Monday through Friday. If a student cannot be available during these daytime hours, it is probable they will not obtain and/or secure a field practicum.

Specific Concerns:

- Evenings and weekends offer little to no opportunities for case management as linkages are usually with agencies that are only open during the day hours (8am-5pm) on Monday through Friday.
- Agencies usually have assessment and treatment team meetings and staff meetings during the weekday, typical business hours. It is essential that field practicum students get the opportunity to experience and participate in staff meetings.
- For County agency practicums, students cannot attend the necessary county trainings to be able to use AVATAR and thus they will **not** be able to do the clinical paperwork or progress notes, at most they can shadow that process.
- There are often limited opportunities to shadow other experienced social workers and other workers during evenings and weekends.
- It is essential that graduating students gain the experiences/training/shadowing that is offered during the work week.
- The needs of the Learning Agreement typically cannot be met by attending field practicum during evenings or weekends.

APPENDIX II:

FIELDCONNECT INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT

DESCRIPTION:

FieldConnect is the online database being used to complete the required documentation by the Field Education Office including the Learning Agreement, Mid-Semester Evaluation and End of Semester Evaluation. FieldConnect establishes an online system of communication between student, field instructor and faculty field liaison.

ACCESSING FIELDCONNECT

Student Log In

1. Go to <https://app.calstates4.com/csus/>.
2. Click the "Log in" button at the top of the page.
3. If you are already logged into your Saalink you will be logged into the system right away. If you are not, it will redirect you to the Saalink log in page.
4. Once logged in you can view your current placements (or past placements) and execute forms related to your placement.

Faculty Log In

1. Visit <https://app.calstates4.com/csus/>.
2. Click the "Log in" button at the top of the page.
3. If you are already logged into your Saalink account you will be logged into the system right away. If you are not, it will redirect you to the Saalink log in page.
4. Once logged in you can click "Manage Course" to view the students in your courses. Click view forms above the list of students to view any forms that have been submitted.

Field instructor Log In

1. Go to <https://app.calstates4.com/csus/>.
2. Click the "Community Partner Log in" button at the top of the page.
3. If you forgot your username or password click the tab that says "request new password"
4. Once logged in, click "View/Manage Students" and then the placement number (far left side) to view/execute forms.

APPENDIX III:

PROCESS RECORDINGS

SUGGESTED PROCESS RECORDINGS FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

PROCESS RECORDING OF A SMALL SYSTEM CLIENT

1. Please be sure to disguise all identifying information to maintain client confidentiality.
2. The client may be an individual, a couple, or a family – children and adult(s). The interview being recorded must be an initial interview, but not one in which an agency intake form needs to be filled out or eligibility determined. The questions must be yours, not from a form.
3. Follow the outline below:

A. Introduction

- The Agency: Briefly describe the nature and purpose of your agency.
- The Client: Age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and a brief overview of client's family, living and work situation.
- The Need: Reason for Referral/Presenting Problem
 - a. Initial presenting problem: Who referred the client to the agency and to you? When? Why? What has been done since then to the time this client was assigned to you?
 - b. Any collateral contacts you have had on behalf of this client and the information obtained from these and other sources.

B. The Interview (see suggested format)

- Number and specific purpose of the interview being recorded.
- Time and Location of the interview.
- Appearance and affect of the client during this interview.
- Transcript of the interview: You are encouraged to tape-record and transcribe the interview. If recording is not possible, please write the complete interview in the form of a conversation exactly as it occurred, from the first hello to the last goodbye. Do not summarize portions. Whether or not tape-recorded, include all non-verbal behavior observed (yours and client's) as well as your (unspoken) thoughts and feelings as they occur during the interview.

SUGGESTED FORMAT

The Agency: _____

The Client: _____

The Need: _____

The Interview

	Conversation	Client Affect	Students Thoughts & Feelings	Field Instructor Comments
1. Client				
2. Student				
3. Client				
4. Student				

4. Analysis

Go over your process recording line by line and identify:

- A. From client's verbal and non-verbal communications – examples of stressors of the client, and any feelings, anxieties, transferences, ambivalences and resistances, coping mechanisms...anything that tells you something about the client.
- B. From your verbal and non-verbal communications – examples of social work values, principles and techniques, counter-transferences. If at any point you feel your communication did not reflect the values/principles etc. appropriately, what could you have done or said differently?
- C. Identify the beginning, middle and ending phases of the interview. Was the intended purpose of the interview achieved? Is yes, substantiate...
- D. Based on the information you have about the client so far – what is your assessment at this time? Is the client functioning at an age-appropriate level? If not, at what level is he/she functioning?

**PROCESS RECORDING OF LARGE CLIENT SYSTEM
(Treatment or Task Group, Organization or Community)**

The Agency/Unit you represent. (Describe the agency, its services, the demographics of its client population and staff; and other relevant descriptions.)

1. Purpose of meeting:
2. Who is at the meeting:
Roles of individuals and units/agencies represented.
3. Need for meeting:
Presenting problem; who called the meeting? Why? What has been done about the problem in previous meetings? What social policies pertain to the presenting problem?
4. Transcript of group dynamic:
Who said what? What is the affect of different individuals and their responses/statements?
What is the nature/characteristic of the different interactions?

	Conversation	Affect/Nature of Interaction	Unanswered Questions/ Thoughts/ Feelings of Student	Field Instructor Comments
1. Person 1				
2. Person 2				
3. Person 3				

Summary Description of Group Dynamics: Was purpose accomplished? Why or why not? What is the future collective action of the group?

APPENDIX IV: LIVE OBSERVATION

Sacramento State University
School of Social Work
Field Education

Live Observation: *Field Instructor Observing the Student*

It can be exceptionally anxiety-provoking for students to be directly observed by a field instructor, and the instructor's presence in the room may artificially change the dynamic with the client. That said, there is evidence that clients take comfort with the instructor being in the room and visible at times as they feel their care is improved (Locke & McCollum, 2001), particularly if the purpose and procedures are clearly explained to them at the onset of treatment and are reviewed again prior to the instructor's presence. Also, once students become oriented to this training technique, they tend to feel better seen, understood, supported and helped by an able instructor.

Live observation can occur behind a one-way mirror or by the instructor being in the room with the client. The observation can also be interactive with the instructor communicating directly to the student and/or client. In the simplest form, the instructor introduces themselves at the beginning and makes a few brief comments at the end; in maximum form, the instructor and student conduct a session together. To introduce the student to this, the field instructor might begin by inviting the student to "visit" one of the instructor's sessions to observe and comment.

Provide client and student with clear instructions about your purpose and role and what they can expect. Tell the client that you are there more to observe and help the counselor (i.e., the student) than to observe and critique them and that "three heads may be better than two" at problem-solving. If the student is highly anxious about being observed, highlight observed strengths and improvements, praise the student for tolerating the experience and ask them to self-evaluate, limiting your critique until the student grows more comfortable with the process whenever possible.

At times, you may also appear in session to directly talk with the client as a sort of quality assurance check-in with the student present. You may ask the following questions:

1. What is your understanding of what you and your counselor/case manager (i.e., the student) are working toward together?
2. What is the most helpful thing about your time with your counselor/case manager (i.e., the student)?
3. What progress do you feel you are making? How are you accomplishing this?
4. How satisfied are you with the efforts your counselor/case manager (i.e., the student) is making to assist you?
5. How satisfied are you with your own efforts to assist yourself?
6. If your counselor/case manager (i.e., the student) could make one change that would improve the sessions for you, what would it be?
7. How could I support your counselor/case manager in supporting and assisting you?
8. Anything else you'd like me to know?

APPENDIX V: SAFETY IN THE FIELD

FIELD PLACEMENT SAFETY, PROTOCOL, CONFIDENTIALITY AND MANDATED REPORTING VERIFICATION

Sacramento State University Risk Management policies require that the School of Social Work obtain documentation confirming that field students receive safety protocol orientation in their field placement. This orientation must occur before the student has direct contact with clients, or within the first 4 weeks of placement, whichever comes first. Orientation should cover the topics below. Both Field Instructor and Student must sign this form. Please attach this completed form to the *Learning Agreement* before submitting to the Faculty Field Liaison.

Topics to be covered:

SAFETY

1. Working with potentially violent clients.
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy
2. Safety precautions in the neighborhood or surrounding areas.
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy
3. Precautions when making home visits and transporting clients.
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy
4. Emergency procedures in case of a client crisis.
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy
5. Emergency procedures in case of other dangers (e.g., severe weather, fire, other misc. threat).
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy
6. Protocol for driving in the course of placement duties, to include car accidents.
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy
7. Health and wellness precautions (e.g., contagious disease).
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy

ETHICS

8. Agency procedures safeguarding client confidentiality.
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy
9. Policy and procedures for mandated reporting of abuse/neglect and client danger to self or others.
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy
10. Expectations regarding boundaries, student self-disclosure, appropriate contact and professional role with clients.
How covered: ___ formal training ___ consultation with FI or other staff ___ written policy

I, _____, have received orientation on the topics above.
STUDENT PRINTED NAME

Student Signature

Date

Field Instructor Signature

Date

APPENDIX VI:

Social Media Guidelines

Guidelines for Using Social Media* Sacramento State University-School of Social Work Field Education Program

*Borrowed with permission from Boise State University School of Social Work

Social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Second Life and various blog sites are just a few examples of new and exciting ways to connect with others and share information. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. *Students are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether using a personal site(s), agency site(s), or University site(s).*

Common issues that students need to understand, and manage, when utilizing social media include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) in our relationships with clients, colleagues, and in our practice settings. Utilizing social media communication tools as a social work professional requires ongoing attention to these ethical challenges.

As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities, such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting your professional identity, versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. Your *professional image*, that is, the professional self you develop that is guided by social work values and ethical standards, extends beyond the field agency and physical setting of an office.

As social workers, we must be cognizant that the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals and that those obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication tools. As with the Hippocratic oath to “first do no harm,” it is imperative to consider how to be connected within the context of social media while protecting yourself, your field site, your clients, the School of Social Work, and the profession.

As you get started in your field placement, it may be helpful to explore the following questions with your field instructor and/or task supervisor.

1. Does your field site have a policy on the use of social media communication tools? If so, review the policy with your field instructor. If not, what expectation does the agency have regarding the use of social media during field hours?
2. How much personal information is shared with clients and former clients as well as agency staff and professional colleagues?
3. What are the most common ethical concerns you should be aware of when using social media as a professional social worker?

To help facilitate these conversations, consider the following topics for discussion with your field instructor and/or task supervisor.

What are the agency guidelines regarding the use of Facebook and who can you friend?

Managing friend requests and maintaining privacy settings is critical regardless of whether you use social media for personal and/or professional reasons. Allowing clients, former clients, or others in your professional circle to cross into your personal life may complicate and blur your professional boundaries. This is particularly tricky when managing Facebook accounts. As a professional, you must fully consider the extent of your privacy settings, how you will manage friend requests, your level of self-disclosure, and how you will monitor wall posts or other interactions on your site.

Be aware that if you do not employ any privacy settings on your social media site, your profile is public, and anyone can see what is on your page. Additionally, people can see when you are tagged in photos, view comments made by others, note your status updates, and see who you've friended. All professionals must evaluate the scope of their social media connections. Since this is still an emerging professional topic, some professionals may be cautious and guarded in their use of social media while others may be more open and exposed. *It is your responsibility as a professional social worker to abide by the Code of Ethics, including your virtual communications and use social work values and principles to guide your interactions.*

What privacy and confidentiality concerns should I consider when texting, emailing and/or using Twitter?

With the proliferation of handheld devices such as smart phones, iPhones, and Blackberries, accessing the Internet and connecting with others is literally in the palm of our hands. Text, email and Twitter are quick and effective ways to communicate with others however many ethical, legal, and clinical issues must be addressed when using these communication tools.

There is huge potential for unintentionally sharing protected information so always use good ethical judgment. Be cautious about discussing information about your field placement, classroom work, or agency staff. *Do not discuss confidential or private information about clients, colleagues, or agency practices even if you are disguising the information.*

In general, consider the security, privacy and confidentiality of all communication methods and when in doubt, seek consultation and supervision before embarking into unfamiliar or uncertain areas. Observe all state and federal regulations such as FERPA and HIPAA, as well as University Policy.

Be aware: Employers and volunteer organizations are more frequently requesting passwords and permissions to see what is behind your privacy settings. You have the right to refuse permission. However, doing so may be a consideration in whether or not you are offered opportunities to work with them. Further, allowing organizations to see everything may also be hazardous to future opportunities. Make sure you know what's "out there."

Can I check my personal social media accounts during field hours?

In general, your time in field and the resources provided to you in your field placement are to be used for field related matters. Before using social media communication tools on behalf of your agency, be sure to seek approval of any messages or posts. Be careful not to endorse or promote a product, cause or position without prior approval. If you have personal sites, it is best to maintain them on your own time using your own computer.

I can't find anything in the Code of Ethics that specifically mentions social media, so does that mean the Code of Ethics does not apply?

Absolutely not! The NASW Code of Ethics provides a variety of standards that social workers should consider when engaging in the use of social media. Here are a few examples of the Codes applicability to social media.

- ✓ **Standard 1.06 states that “social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships...in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client...and social workers...are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries”**
(1.06c) The Code goes on to note that “dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively” (1.06c) Our ethical obligations to clients, colleagues and other professionals are no different when using Facebook, Twitter or other social media channels as well as communications via our cell phones such as texting or email.
- ✓ **Standard 1.07(i): social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured.**
We all know there is no such thing as privacy on a social media site or the Internet. Comments can be forwarded or copied, posts and pictures can be found on search engines years after the initial publication, and archival systems save information even after you delete it. Always consider the image you are portraying by the photos and comments you post. Understand how privacy settings work and review them regularly. Refrain from providing too much personal information such as your home address or full birth date. Don't post in advance when you plan to be on vacation or away from home for an extended period of time. Be sure to project the image you want potential faculty members, future employers, advisors and friends to know you by.
- ✓ **Standard 4.03 states that “social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.**
Social media channels provide an excellent means to build community; however, as you navigate these channels, do no harm to yourself, your field site, your clients, the School of Social Work or to the social work profession in the process. Do not pretend to be someone else or hide your identity when using social media. Be clear if you are sharing personal views and use good judgment regarding sensitive issues. Verify information before you post it, correct mistakes in a timely manner, and be aware of legal liability issues such as copyright infringement, defamation, and posting proprietary information.

Also, see <http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/naswtechnologystandards.pdf> for additional standards regarding social media policies provided by NASW and ASWB.

What should I do next?

Take some time to review these guidelines with your Agency Field Instructor and seek to identify other ethical standards that are applicable in your practice setting. As a social work student, you are continually developing a professional identity, and you must be cognizant that your private world has a greater likelihood of becoming public when using social media. Agency Field Instructors, colleagues, and even clients may have access to information via the Internet that you would otherwise limit to your friends and families, so we encourage you to consider the personal versus professional role of social media in your life and your field setting.

Tips to maintain a positive online presence:

1. **Clean up your digital dirt.** Remove any pictures, content, or links that can send the wrong message to employers. Ask yourself, "How do I show up in the world?" Try a Google search on yourself periodically to see what comes up.
2. **Remember the internet is public domain.** They are called social networking sites for a reason. It is becoming commonplace for employers to do an online search for candidates before making job offers. A good guideline is to not put anything out on a social networking site that you would not want to see on the front page of the paper.
3. **Use social networking sites to your advantage.** Maintain your online profile by portraying an image consistent with how you want to be perceived. Your profile is a way for you to demonstrate to employers your communication skills using proper grammar and spelling. Convey your professional image by choosing your photo and your screen name carefully. Include great references on your profile from a variety of different people to "paint" a positive professional image of yourself.
4. **Using social networking sites may not be for you.** If using social media tools is not fun for you and it just feels like more work, that is O.K. These tools are not for everyone. If you are just going through the motions of putting something out there to have a presence, do not do it. Your lack of enthusiasm and lack of passion will show through, and that is NOT the image you want to portray. Your time and energy will serve you better to focus on areas that you believe in.
5. **Be thoughtful about your posts.** There is no expectation of privacy when using social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on both you, the School of Social Work, the practicum agency and/or the University. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, seek advice from your supervisor, Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison and the Field Director.

*Based in part on guidelines from UNC Chapel Hill, & SJSU