



BSSW Field Manual 2021-2022

Statement Regarding the Impact of COVID-19 on UT Field Education

Social Work practice and field education have been deeply impacted by COVID-19. The College of Social Work takes very seriously its responsibility to balance the concern for student safety and wellbeing with our concern for a quality learning experience. This has been particularly challenging for field education, because field takes place in the social work practice setting.

As the University returns to in-person classes on campus this fall, social work students will begin in-person placements at field organizations. Although UTK does not require COVID-19 vaccination, agencies may require proof of vaccination as a condition of placement. Students are expected to follow all guidance outlined in the document “UTCSW Student COVID Guidelines for Field Placement,” which can be found on the field course Canvas site.

During the COVID pandemic, the Council on Social Work Education has allowed new flexibility for students completing employment-based placements. Please see Section 6.7, “Placement in Employment Setting,” for more for information on this. These changes in the structure of field for this academic year are reflected in the manual. Students should pay particular attention to UT requirements for self-screening and reporting. We want students to have a safe field experience and to take seriously our responsibility to protect colleagues and clients from exposure to a dangerous illness.

Table of Contents

Statement Regarding the Impact of COVID-19 on UT Field Education	2
1.0 BSSW Program Mission, Competencies and Curriculum	5
1.1. Program Mission	5
1.2. Professional Competencies.....	5
1.3. BSSW Curriculum	6
1.4. College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct.....	8
1.5. Cultural Diversity and Social Justice.....	9
2.1. BSSW Field Education	11
2.2. Educational Philosophy.....	11
2.3. Field Structure.....	12
3.1. Roles and Responsibilities in Field Education	13
3.2. Director of Field Education.....	13
3.3. Associate Director of Field Education.....	14
3.4. Field Coordinator	14
3.5. Field Faculty Liaison	15
3.6. Field Instructor.....	17
3.7. Task Instructor	18
3.8. Student.....	18
3.9. Academic Advisor.....	20
4.1. Selection of Field Agencies	20
4.2. Procedures for Selection of Field Agencies	20
4.3. Criteria for Approval as a Field Agency.....	21
5.1. Selection and Training of Field Instructors	21
5.2. Criteria for the Selection of Field Instructors	22
5.3. Field Instructor Orientation	23
5.4. Field Instructor Training.....	23
6.1. Placement Planning Process	23
6.2. Admission to Field.....	23
6.3. Placement Planning	24
6.4. Students with Disabilities.....	26
6.5. Evening and Weekend Placements.....	26
6.6. International Placements.....	27
6.7. Placement in Employment Setting	27

6.8.	Field Practicum with Stipends.....	29
7.	Pre-Placement Requirements	29
7.1.	Screening Procedure Requirements	29
7.2	Professional Liability Coverage	30
7.3	Personal Safety Training	31
7.4	Required Pre-Placement Documents	32
8.0	Procedures during Agency Placement.....	32
8.1.	<i>Self-Screening and Reporting Procedures for COVID-19.....</i>	32
8.2.	Professional Conduct in Field.....	34
8.3	Orientation to Field Practicum	34
8.4	Managing and Recording Time in Field.....	34
8.5	Use of Technology and Social Media in Field	36
8.6	The Learning Plan.....	39
8.7	Health Insurance.....	39
8.8	Transportation and Vehicle Insurance.....	39
8.9	Field Hours outside of the Semester Schedule.....	40
9.0	Evaluation and Grading Procedures	41
9.1	Field Practicum Grading Policy	41
9.2	Evaluation of Student Competence	42
9.3	Student Evaluation of Field Practicum	42
10.0	Problems in Field.....	43
10.1	Managing Problems in Field.....	43
10.2	Requests to Terminate a Placement.....	43
10.3	Sexual Harassment.....	44
10.4	Unsatisfactory Progress in Field.....	45
10.5	Dismissal from Placement and Appeal Procedure.....	46
10.6	Incompletes in Field.....	48
10.7	Student Removal from a Field Practicum	49
10.8	Professional Misconduct.....	50
10.9	Return to Field after Withdrawal from a Field Course	50

1.0 BSSW Program Mission, Competencies and Curriculum

1.1. Program Mission

The mission of the BSSW program is to develop generalist social workers who are strategic thinkers, life-long learners and opinion shapers. The program is offered on the Knoxville campus and Online. The knowledge-base, skills, and values necessary for generalist practice are taught in an environment that fosters professional development, critical thinking, and leadership and prepares students to take appropriate action guided by the best available scientific evidence. We are dedicated to preparing practitioners for the challenges of today's complex pluralistic world. Since the amount of knowledge doubles approximately every five years, what is taught today may soon be obsolete. Our challenge, therefore, lies in the on-going development and implementation of a curriculum that prepares and energizes students for generalist practice today and in the future.

1.2. Professional Competencies

The BSSW student is prepared to become an entry level generalist practitioner who is able to serve diverse populations in a variety of practice settings. Students are able to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of a social worker into their practice and become competent entry level professionals. The BSSW Program has adopted the following nine core competencies from the Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

Upon completion of the BSSW program students are expected to be able to:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice.
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

1.3. BSSW Curriculum

The social work curriculum is designed to achieve the primary objective of preparing students for entry level professional practice. The curriculum is the same for the campus and online programs. Students should address any questions about curriculum requirements to the BSSW Program Advisor.

The curriculum follows the general education requirements of the University of Tennessee and the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the accrediting body for social work programs. Students must graduate with a minimum of 120 credit hours with 50 of those credit hours in social work.

The social work curriculum builds on a strong liberal arts base. The humanities and the social and behavioral sciences are emphasized to help students understand human diversity and the transactions between people and the environment. The curriculum combines classroom experience and agency-based field placements. Courses provide a knowledge base in social work practice, human behavior, social welfare policy, and research.

Each course in the social work sequence builds upon another, reinforces core concepts and skills while including content of greater complexity. An illustration is the three course social work practice sequence. SW 312 introduces generalist practice with individuals and families, while SW 313 further defines generalist practice with a special focus on crisis intervention and case management with selected client populations. SW 315 emphasizes generalist practice with groups and communities. Each course in this practice sequence has a skills lab that provides opportunities for students to develop and refine interpersonal skills. The *Field Practicum Learning Plan* is used in both the junior and senior field practicum to organize the students' learning activities around the identified competencies.

The baccalaureate social work curriculum is outlined below:

Social Work

Curriculum

Junior

Social Work 312 - Interviewing Skills/ Helping Relationships in Social Work Practice

Social Work 313 - Social Work Practice with Individuals & Families

Social Work 314 or 317 - Human Behavior and the Social

Environment
Social Work 315 - Social Work Practice with Groups, Organizations, &

Communities

Social Work 380N - Field Practice in Social Work I Social Work 385 Field Seminar I

Senior

Social Work 410R or 417R - Social Work Research

Social Work 416 - Social Welfare Policies & Issues

Social Work 460 or 467 - Integrative Seminar

Social Work 480N - Field Practice in Social Work II

Social Work 481N - Field Practice in Social Work III

Social Work 485 Field Seminar II

Social Work 495 Field Seminar III **OR**

Social Work 483N - Field Practice in Social Work (block)

Social Work 496 Block Field Seminar

Course Descriptions

BSSW course descriptions can be found at: <https://www.csw.utk.edu/bssw-field-manual-forms-resources/> or in the BSSW Program Office.

BSSW Honors Program

The honors program provides highly motivated social work majors with the opportunity to pursue advanced coursework and graduate with honors. Students completing the honors program must complete a senior research project related to field. Students are to consult with their field instructors when planning the research project and are required to obtain all necessary permissions from the field agency in addition to gaining approval from the University IRB.

1.4. College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct

Separate and distinct from the University of Tennessee's Standards of Conduct, and the CSW's standards for academic performance, there are certain cognitive, emotional and character requirements that students must possess that provide the CSW with reasonable assurance that students can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and the professional practice of social work. Students in the CSW are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their year in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom and in their practice. Attention to these standards will be part of evaluations made by faculty responsible for evaluating applications for admission and faculty responsible for evaluating students' classroom and practicum performance.

- **Professional Behavior.** The social work student behaves professionally by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, adhering to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Tennessee Board of Social Worker Standards of Conduct (1365-01-.10) as found in the Tennessee Board of Social Work Certification and Licensure General Rules and Regulations, <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1365/1365-01.20100729.pdf>
- **Interpersonal Skills.** The social work student communicates and interacts with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals in a professional manner, and demonstrates respect for and consideration of other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals in spoken, written and electronic form. The social work student expresses their ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and ability to listen to others.
- **Self-awareness.** The social work student is willing to examine and change their behavior when it interferes with working with clients and other professionals, and is able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.
- **Professional Commitment.** The social work student has a strong commitment to the essential values of social work (the dignity and worth of every individual and their right to a just share of the society's resources). The social work student is knowledgeable about and adheres to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Rules of the

Tennessee Board of Social Worker Certification.

- **Self-care.** The social work student recognizes the signs of stress, develops appropriate means of self-care, and seeks supportive resources if necessary.
- **Valuing Diversity.** The social work student appreciates the value of human diversity. Social work students do not impose their own personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on other students, faculty, staff, clients or professionals. Social work students are willing to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system.

The following list provides examples, but is not exhaustive, of professional misconduct:

- Misuse, alteration or falsification of documents
- Unauthorized or improper use of University equipment, services and facilities
- Harassing, coercing and intimidating behavior
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching
- Criminal activity
- Failure to comply with an order from a legitimate university authority and failure to attend required meetings called by university faculty or administration such as Academic Committee Meetings and Field Evaluation Meetings
- Threatening behavior and verbal abuse
- Inappropriate relationships
- Inability to secure, sustain, or perform satisfactorily in a field placement

1.5. Cultural Diversity and Social Justice

University of Tennessee College of Social Work Diversity Statement

The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In accordance with the Council on Social Work Education and the U.S. National Association of Social Workers, the College of Social Work defines "the dimensions of diversity as the intersectionality of multiple factors including" age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

"As a consequence, the college values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. A person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustices." (Rev. 2-15-2013)

Commitment to Cultural Diversity and Social Justice

In accordance with the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and the [CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#) (EPAS) for MSSW and BSSW Degree Programs in Social Work Education, The University of Tennessee College of Social Work faculty, staff, and students shall do the following:

1. "Act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin[or ancestry], color, sex [gender], sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion [creed], or mental or physical disability" [NASW Code of Ethics, 6.04(d)].
2. Practice within the defining principles "of service, social and economic justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, and integrity and competence" (CSWE, Educational Policy, Purposes, 1.0).
3. "...Enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice" (CSWE, Educational Policy, Purposes, 1.0).
4. "...Develop and apply practice in the context of diverse cultures" (CSWE, Educational Policy, Purposes, 1.0).

To this end, the MSSW and BSSW curricula shall provide content and learning experiences to prepare social workers "...to practice without discrimination, with respect, and with knowledge and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation (and)...to alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice " (CSWE, Educational Policy, Purposes, 1.2).

Please refer to the NASW Standards for Culturally Competent Practice for more information. <http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/NASWCulturalStandards>.

2.1. BSSW Field Education

2.2. Educational Philosophy

The Council on Social Work Education has identified field as the signature pedagogy of socialwork education: “It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum- classroom and field- are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice”

(Council on Social Work Education, Educational Policy 2.3).

The field practicum for the BSSW program is a sequence of courses in which the student applies theoretical knowledge within a social welfare context under the instruction and supervision of persons recognized by the college as competent practitioners. The professional competencies and policies of the field practicum are formulated by the faculty and periodically revised to reflect changing practice and developing theory and to conform with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education.

The educational philosophy underlying the field practicum is a blend of the idealism and pragmatism that is characteristic of the profession. Within a framework of social work values and knowledge, the student in the practicum: tests out theory; develops skills and demonstrates competencies; evaluates their own performance; and gains an understanding of generalist practice.

The field agency is the arena in which practice is carried out and is an essential source of learning for the student. Students may engage in agency placements in person or through remote/online activities. Through interaction with agency staff, service to clients, and exposure to the programs and policies of the agency, the student learns from the agency and, in turn, contributes to its programs. The agency field instructor is a professional colleague entrusted by the college with the task of assisting the student in the application and integration of knowledge. The process facilitates the student’s professional socialization and provides the student with an opportunity to test their knowledge, values, skills and commitment to the profession.

Knoxville and the surrounding counties have a wide variety of human services agencies that are potential practicum sites. The following are examples of the kinds of settings available: public welfare, homeless shelters, mental health centers, hospitals, schools,

family service agencies, public housing, residential treatment centers, and a variety of geriatric service programs. Client populations are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, and residency in rural/ urban neighborhoods. The college considers the student an adult learner, capable of participating in the design of learning experiences that will meet the college's educational competencies and the student's own career goals. Thus, the field practicum is the result of a dynamic four-way interaction of college, agency, field instructor, and student.

2.3. Field Structure

The field curriculum is sequenced and integrated to provide students with opportunities for developmental learning. Each field course (practicum) builds upon the previous one, reinforcing core concepts and skills while introducing content of greater complexity. Students attend a concurrent field seminar for each field course. Seminar assignments play a critical role in the integration process. The Field Practicum Learning Plan is used in all field course to organize the student's learning activities around the identified competencies.

The basic structure of BSSW field is as follows:

1. SW 380N Junior Social Work Practicum I - Fall, Spring, or Summer semester.
2. SW 480N (Fall), 481N (Spring) Senior Social Work Practicum II and III
3. SW 483N (Spring Only) Senior Social Work Practicum- Also referred to as "Block Field". Junior and Senior Field Seminar courses are held concurrently with the practicum, fall, spring, and summer.

The emphasis in the junior practicum is on the introduction to and early development of basic social work skills. The junior practicum includes a significant amount of time in observation and shadowing and in orientation to the professional agency context. Every effort is made to enable students to remain in the same agency placement for the junior and senior placements. The beginning of a practicum experience at any level is focused on orientation to the specific placement agency, staff, and services. If a student is able to complete this process in the junior practicum, the student is better able to engage immediately in more advanced placement activities early in the senior practicum. This should enable the student to have more time and opportunity to practice and refine social work skills, thereby developing higher levels of competency for practice.

Although juniors and seniors use the same Field Learning Plan, juniors are only required to address three competencies and ten specific practice behaviors. This enables the junior student sufficient time to engage in orientation and training activities and to complete the required competencies and practice behaviors for junior placement.

The senior placement emphasizes continued development and refinement of generalist social work practice skills. Senior students are required to substantively address all nine competencies and related practice behaviors on the learning plan.

Field seminars, held concurrently with field practice, are designed to facilitate the integration of classroom learning and the agency practice experience. The seminar becomes a “safe place” for students to question, share, and learn from each other. Part of field seminar will be in a group style format in which students will be responsible for creating, promoting, and maintaining the group process.

In addition to the face-to-face sessions, students also participate in online discussions that require self-reflection. The seminars are conducted by adjunct instructors, who also serve as field faculty liaisons to the students’ placements.

During the practicum, students receive supervision and field instruction from the field seminar instructor and from the agency field instructor. Supervision is provided in both the seminar and in the agency setting, with a minimum of one hour of weekly supervision occurring in the agency setting from the agency field instructor.

3.1. Roles and Responsibilities in Field Education

It is essential that key persons involved in field education understand their roles and work cooperatively. The following section delineates the roles and responsibilities of key persons.

3.2. Director of Field Education

The Director of Field is responsible for oversight in all College of Social Work programs.

The responsibilities for this position are to:

1. Assure congruence between the College of Social Work BSSW curriculum and the field education program.

2. Assure congruence of field education with Council on Social Work Education accreditation standards.
3. Conduct periodic evaluations of practicum methodology and outcomes and initiate appropriate changes.
4. Supervise all field faculty and staff.
5. Provide oversight of development of all written and electronic practicum materials, including the field manuals, student forms, and website.
6. Oversee utilization of the online software system for student forms and the agency and field instructor database.
7. Develop and provide oversight of strategies for recruitment, development, and training of field instructors.

3.3. Associate Director of Field Education

The responsibilities for this position are to:

- 1) Provide leadership and support to field faculty on the Knoxville campus field faculty and staff
- 2) Collaborate with the field director to provide leadership and support to all field faculty
- 3) Lead BSSW field curriculum and policy development
- 4) Collaborate with the Director of International Education to establish and coordinate international field placements for BSSW and MSSW students.
- 5) Serve as the lead point of contact on UTK campus placements
- 6) Perform special projects to enhance the field curriculum

3.4. Field Coordinator

The field coordinator is responsible for the oversight of the practicum and congruence with the overall BSSW curriculum. In addition, the field coordinator carries responsibility for the effective and efficient coordination of all field practicum activities involving faculty, field liaisons, students, and agencies.

Specifically, the field coordinator's responsibilities are to:

1. Identify, develop, and maintain partnerships with field agencies and field instructors.
2. Facilitate student placement planning and agency interviews and confirm placement assignments.
3. Serve as field liaison for various field sites as needed.
4. Select, train and supervise field liaisons.
5. Maintain efficient reporting systems and records of field practice activities.
6. Confer with the liaison when a student's performance is below expectations and/ or 1 = Insufficient Competence ratings are anticipated.
7. Participate in the preparation and maintenance of a current field practice manual and other materials, which have an educational value for field instructors.
8. Develop and deliver orientation and certification training programs for field instructors and other training as needed.
9. Provide an orientation to the field practicum for all incoming students.
10. Plan, deliver, or coordinate personal safety training for students.
11. Coordinate and/or deliver the field seminar for students.
12. Assign student grades upon review of student competency evaluations and seminar grade.

3.5. Field Faculty Liaison

The field liaison serves as liaison between the agency and the College. The liaison acts as an educational consultant for the field instructor and the student and, when

necessary, provides a mediating or problem-solving function in the student's field education. The liaison's responsibilities are to:

1. Serve as instructor of the field seminar.
2. Maintain ongoing contacts with assigned field instructors and students via telephone, internet and through meeting at least once per semester or term. This meeting may be at the agency or by technology according to the protocol. Both the field instructor and the student need to be present for the meeting. Complete field liaison report forms within two weeks of a meeting.
3. Be available to the student and the field instructor if problems arise. If necessary, make additional visits to the agency or meet separately with the student and/or field instructor for consultation.
4. Assist the field instructor in the designing of learning experiences for the student if needed and consult with/advise the field instructor regarding the student's learning needs
5. Provide the field instructor with current knowledge about the academic curriculum and any necessary assistance in relating it to field practice assignments.
6. Review, approve, and sign student learning plans, evaluations, and time sheets.
7. Report to the field coordinator each semester on the progress of the student in placement and any problems encountered.
8. Contribute ideas for innovation and upgrading of the field practicum and for expansion into new agencies and practice fields.

9. Assess the quality of placement experiences and make recommendations to the field coordinator about retention of agency placement sites. Evaluate the quality of placements at the end of the year.

3.6. Field Instructor

The field instructor has the primary responsibility for the student's education in the field placement. The field instructor is a role model and an educator who demonstrates professional skills and behaviors and guides the student in the learning and integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills. The field instructor:

1. Selects and makes appropriate assignments that address required competencies and practice behaviors and take into consideration as much as possible the student's past experience, learning style, career goals, and unique learning needs.
2. Completes, with the student, the *Field Practicum Learning Plan*. The liaison is available for consultation, if needed.
3. Provides an orientation to the agency.
4. Informs relevant agency staff about the expectations of the BSSW program and the student's role in the agency.
5. Meets at least one hour each week with the student for an educationally-focused supervision conference.
6. Consults with the field liaison if there are questions or concerns and participates in regularly held semester conferences with liaison and student.
7. Assesses the student's progress on a regular basis and completes the mid-term and final evaluations in a timely manner.
8. Participates in field instructor training and in other opportunities for college-agency exchange.

9. Contributes knowledge and suggestions to the college for improving the field and/or academic curriculum and program.
10. Selects task instructors and provides coordination and oversight of their work with students.

3.7. Task Instructor

The term “task instructor” is used to indicate an agency staff member who assumes certain responsibilities for the student’s field education as delegated and monitored by the field instructor. The task instructor does not replace the field instructor but needs to be well informed of the professional competencies and understand their role in the student’s learning. The field instructor provides the task instructor with the necessary resources to accomplish the educational task. The field instructor helps the student integrate the task instructor’s contribution into the overall educational experience.

3.8. Student

The student is an adult learner with a commitment to and investment in preparation for a career in the profession of social work. Students are expected to:

1. Be familiar with and adhere to all policies, procedures, and guidelines stated in the BSSW Student Handbook and BSSW Field Manual.
2. Participate with the field instructor in examining the professional competencies and the learning assignments for the field practicum. These learning assignments are listed on the Field Practicum Learning Plan.
3. Prepare for weekly conferences with the field instructor by developing a written agenda, submitting written recordings and/or audio or video tapes in advance, taking the initiative in raising questions for discussion, and demonstrating the application of theoretical knowledge to practice.

4. Demonstrate professional behavior at all agency meetings and functions and in all interactions with clients and agency staff.
5. Engage actively in the evaluation process, seeking ongoing feedback from the field instructor and participating in the semester formal evaluation.
6. Bring to the field instructor any problems or dissatisfaction with the field experience and engage constructively in finding solutions, if possible. If the problems cannot be resolved, the student should contact the field liaison.
7. Use the NASW Code of Ethics as a guide in all placement activities.
8. Treat all information about clients in a confidential manner, whether in the agency, field seminar, or classes.
9. Abide by agency procedures regarding practice activities, dress code, working hours, snow days, and attendance.
10. Report absences and/or tardiness to the field instructor in advance and make arrangements with the field instructor to make up any lost hours as soon as can be arranged.
11. Provide transportation to and from the field practice agency. Students using cars for placement activities must have a current, valid driver's license and car insurance.
12. Pay for professional liability insurance and field fees annually prior to the field placement starting date.
13. Participate actively in all field practicum seminars.

3.9. Academic Advisor

Each entering student meets with the BSSW Academic Advisor who is responsible for overseeing the student's degree plan. The academic advisor helps the student plan a course of study and is available to the student if problems arise.

Students who experience problems in field practice may seek consultation from their academic advisor as well as from the field liaison. Problems in the field may or may not be related to other difficulties the student is having in academics or life situations.

4.1. Selection of Field Agencies

The field coordinator is administratively responsible for identifying, approving, developing, and maintaining field practice settings for the BSSW program. The field coordinator is expected to continuously engage with faculty, field liaisons, students, and community practitioners regarding the identification of potential field sites. The field coordinator is also expected to identify the types of settings that are needed to provide an adequate number and variety of placements to serve student needs and interests. It is the policy of the BSSW program to give preference to placement in not-for-profit organizations that serve diverse, at risk populations. However, the policy allows for approval of for-profit settings that meet all criteria listed below and provide a specific educational opportunity for students. An example is substance abuse treatment which is dominated in certain geographic areas by for-profit organizations.

Field practice sites are continuously re-evaluated as new information or changes in agency circumstances arise. Feedback from students and field liaisons is a necessary and essential ingredient in the selection, re-evaluation and retention of quality practicum sites. A field practicum site is no longer used when information indicates that the setting no longer meets selection criteria.

4.2 Procedures for Selection of Field Agencies

The field coordinator identifies prospective field settings through contacts with faculty, students, field liaisons, and community practitioners. The field coordinator then contacts prospective field agencies to determine whether they are interested in affiliation with the College to provide field placements. If the organization is open to considering this, the field coordinator arranges a site visit and also collects information regarding the agency through the website and community contacts to determine

whether the organization meets the specified criteria. Finally, an affiliation or memorandum of agreement must be agreed-upon and signed by the agency administrator and the university. These formal, written agreements are used with all field placement agencies to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the college, the field agency, and the student. These agreements are on file in the college. A signed copy is also provided to the agency.

4.3 Criteria for Approval as a Field Agency

The following are criteria for field agency selection:

1. The agency's mission is consistent with the values and ethics of the social work profession.
2. The agency is able to provide a field instructor who has a BSSW or MSSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program and has a minimum of two years of post-degree practice experience.
3. The agency must support the field instructor fulfilling the responsibilities of field instruction, including providing the student with at least one hour of supervision weekly.
4. A variety of learning experiences are available to enable students to address all required competencies and practice behaviors.
5. The agency is able to provide the student with the necessary physical resources for the learning experience, e.g., office space and supplies.
6. The agency is able to sign a **Memorandum of Agreement** with the University for student placement. The terms of the agreement must be acceptable to the University General Counsel's Office, the College of Social Work, and the organization.

5.1. Selection and Training of Field Instructors

The College of Social Work values tremendously the work of the field instructor. Persons serving as field instructors are expected to have achieved recognition for their

skills and be committed to the education of students. Field instructors must be committed to providing an educationally directed field experience for their students and have flexibility in their work schedule to devote adequate time to their students' practicum experience. The field coordinator is responsible for screening and selecting all field instructors. Input is solicited from faculty, students, and community practitioners. The college has a large pool of alumni who are well known to faculty and this facilitates the screening process.

5.2. Criteria for the Selection of Field Instructors

The following criteria serve as guidelines in the selection of field instructors:

1. The field instructor has a BSSW or MSSW from a CSWE-accredited program and two years post degree practice experience. Supervisory and/or teaching experience is preferred.
2. The field instructor must be committed to social work education and be willing to supervise students with diverse learning needs.
3. The field instructor must be available to the student while in placement and able to devote adequate time for supervision. At minimum, the student must receive one hour of supervision per week.
4. The field instructor must be willing to work cooperatively with agency staff, faculty, field liaisons, and the college to promote a successful placement experience.
5. The field instructor must be willing to complete the field instructor training program.

If a student is placed in an organization or program that meets all other criteria, but does not have a BSSW or MSSW staff person in the program, a qualified task instructor may be selected to provide daily supervision and guidance as long as a qualified field instructor is available to provide weekly supervision and oversight of the student's educational experience. This may be a social worker who is working in another program of the agency.

If a BSSW or MSSW staff person is not available within the agency, the agency may locate a social worker in the community who is willing to serve as field instructor and who meets the above criteria for field practicum instructors. This supervision may be provided on a pro bono basis or the agency may pay for the supervision time. The plan for field

instruction should be clearly identified for the student, task instructor, agency and the College.

5.3. Field Instructor Orientation

Prospective field instructors receive an overview of the field practicum, information about the field instructor training, and the field curriculum from the field coordinator at the initial contact. Whenever possible, new field instructors attend Field Instructor Training prior to commencing work with a student. If this is not possible, the field instructor may complete the online orientation program. The field coordinator may also meet with the new field instructor individually to provide an orientation to the roles and responsibilities of the field instructor, additional information about the curriculum, and instruction on how to use the learning plan and evaluation tools.

5.4. Field Instructor Training

The field instructor is central to a successful placement experience for students and every effort is made to identify, train, and develop qualified field instructors. Field instructors are equipped and encouraged to embrace their role as educators as well as practitioners. The college provides a field instructor training program to enhance the knowledge and skills of field instructors in their role as educators.

The training consists of content in the following areas: BSSW curriculum, student orientation to field, adult learning and teaching strategies, evaluating students, legal and ethical issues, dealing with difficult students, risk management, evidence based practice and integration of theory and practice. Field instructors receive training certificates for completion.

Field instructor training is offered at least one time per year. This training is also available in an online format. The field coordinator is available to provide training onsite at field agencies. Each year one or more additional training sessions are offered to field instructors. Topics have included ethics, diversity, neuroscience, self-care, and motivational interviewing.

6.1. Placement Planning Process

6.2. Admission to Field

BSSW students are admitted to the first field course in their junior year. Students are required to complete SW 312, *Interviewing Skills and the Helping Relationship in Social Work Practice*, before starting the junior field course. Students are eligible to start senior

field upon completion of junior field in the spring or summer semester. Students must work out their plan for junior and senior field with the BSSW field coordinator and the academic advisor. They must be cleared to register for field by the academic advisor.

6.3. Placement Planning

The field coordinator is responsible for initiating all contacts with agencies regarding student placement and facilitates the placement process for all students. Students are not to contact agencies or field instructors without prior authorization from the field coordinator. Field placements are selected through a joint process involving the student, the field coordinator, and personnel from potential placement sites. The process is as follows:

- Each student completes a *BSSW Field Practicum Application*, identifying practice interests, experiences, and needs. This information is used by the field coordinator to identify prospective placements for each student.
- The field coordinator initially communicates with each student by email and/or telephone. The field coordinator then conducts a professional, in-person interview with each student to discuss the student's educational interests, needs and potential placements. The field coordinator provides feedback on the student's performance in the interview to help the student prepare for the agency placement interview.
- Interview(s) are scheduled with field instructors in order to explore the match between the student's interests and needs and what the agency can provide.
- The student is required to contact the field coordinator to report on the outcome of interviews and to submit to the field coordinator a completed *Confirmation of Field Placement* for approval within two weeks of the field interview.
- The final decision regarding each student's placement assignment is made by the field coordinator.

Although the field coordinator will make reasonable efforts to assist students in securing a practicum that meets their learning, transportation, and scheduling needs, agencies offer field placements on a voluntary basis.

The college cannot secure a practicum in an agency unwilling to accept a student, nor can the college require any agency to accept a student. Agencies reserve the right to deny practicum to a student based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, student availability for placement during regular agency hours, availability of positions, assessment of student readiness and match for the specific setting, and results of the interviewing process. Agencies may also decline to offer placement to a student who fails to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to agency contacts regarding interviews or requests for information. Field instructors also assess readiness for placement by the level of professionalism demonstrated in resumes, emails, and phone conversations. Students are advised that any communication with a prospective field instructor or agency representative may enhance or diminish the likelihood of acceptance for placement.

The field coordinator's role is facilitative, including the development of a wide variety and number of placements and arranging for student interviews. The student must ultimately secure a placement for themselves by presenting in a professional manner at the interview. The BSSW Program is not responsible for securing a field placement if a student is unable to conduct a satisfactory interview with potential field placement agencies or if the student is excluded from placement by legal history or the results of agency screening procedures. A student will not be able to successfully complete the BSSW program if they are unable to secure and successfully complete all required field placements. It is the student's responsibility to adequately prepare for interviews and seek consultation from the field coordinator or academic advisor if locating or securing a practicum site becomes difficult.

Guidelines regarding professionalism and appropriate interviewing behavior will be discussed with the student during placement planning meetings with the field coordinator. Students are responsible for adhering to professional standards, including, but not limited to, attire, timeliness, preparation, and conduct.

If a student is not accepted by the agency at which they interviewed, the field coordinator will seek feedback from the agency representative regarding the results of the student's interview. The field coordinator will communicate with the student to discuss the outcome of the interview and to provide the student with feedback.

The field coordinator may facilitate scheduling an additional interview. If the student is not accepted for placement after three interviews, the field coordinator will request an Academic Committee meeting to discuss the student's readiness for field and make recommendations, which may include dismissal. The student may also be referred to the University of Tennessee Center for Career Development for additional training and consultation. As the field practicum is a required course, a student's inability or failure to

secure a field practicum may result in dismissal from the BSSW program.

If a student does not follow the instructions from the field coordinator regarding scheduling an interview, the student's field planning process will be placed on hold. The student will need to contact the field coordinator to discuss and make plans for moving forward with field planning.

6.4. Students with Disabilities

Any student in need of disability related accommodations in field should contact UT Student Disability Services (SDS) on the Knoxville Campus (<http://ods.utk.edu/> or (865) 974-6087). In order to receive accommodations in field practice, students must be registered with SDS. The SDS will notify the field coordinator of approved accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to inform the field coordinator and the agency field instructor if accommodations are needed at the field placement agency.

The College of Social Work cannot guarantee that a placement can be identified that will meet all of these criteria during any given semester or in a specific location. Organizations provide student placement on a voluntary basis and may not offer placements in every semester. It is always the social work student's responsibility to secure a placement by preparing for and presenting professionally in the field interview. Field instructors are expected to make placement acceptance decisions based on the fit between the learning experience offered by the organization and the student's learning needs and goals. Field coordinators may consult with SDS staff to explore how a student may be accommodated without altering the fundamental requirements of the placement position.

6.5. Evening and Weekend Placements

Students are advised that very few opportunities exist for evening and/or weekend placements. Field agencies generally expect students to be in placement during regular weekday business hours. Although many agencies serve clients on a 24-hour basis, most field instructors work Monday through Friday, regular business hours. The field placement is a supervised practicum, so the student must be able to be at the agency during hours that the BSSW field instructor is present.

Students who are requesting evening and/or weekend placements are advised to meet with the field coordinator early in order to determine whether any placements are available that meet the student's scheduling request. If no such placement is available, the student may need to delay field until a later semester or consider adjusting their schedule in order to complete field. Even when evening and/or weekend placements are

available, students may be required to be available for orientation, training, supervision, and staff meetings during weekday hours. A student who, for any reason, cannot be present at a field placement during days/hours that appropriate learning activities and supervision are available, may not be eligible for placement.

6.6. International Placements

Students who are interested in pursuing an international placement should first advise their field coordinator of their interest. The field coordinator will refer the student to the Associate Director of Field Education to explore potential options.

The College of Social Work encourages students to explore the option of practicum in an international setting. Students who are interested in pursuing this type of placement should first advise their field coordinator of their interest. The field coordinator will work with the Associate Director of Field Education to determine the appropriate semester, location and time frame of an international placement.

Most international field placements are scheduled during the summer term. The college has an affiliation with an organization in Ghana to provide field placements. Other options may be available through the UT Center for Global Education.

Students completing a field placement in another country will need to register with the Center for Global Education and purchase an International student ID card. Additionally, students traveling outside of the Continental US are required to obtain the necessary travel visa and vaccinations – all of which are coordinated with the Study Abroad office.

Students should be aware of the possibility that participation in study abroad field experiences may extend the length of their program. This is typically known prior to departure. However, international contexts are fluid and sometimes present unexpected challenges related to political instability and security concerns. There may also be unanticipated changes in international university settings and course offerings. The Associate Director of Field Education will make every effort to inform students of changes in the host country and/or university in a timely manner, but delays may be unavoidable.

6.7. Placement in Employment Setting

Some students may be working in social service agencies and request a field practicum in their place of employment. The Council on Social Work Education has stipulated that, for

AcademicYear 2021-2022, students may be allowed to complete a field placement during work hours if the work tasks address required competencies. The organization and the field instructor must meet the criteria for field agencies and field instructors as outlined in the field manual.

Students are advised to carefully consider any risks to their employment and/or education if they elect to complete a field placement within their employment setting. If a student wants to pursue this option the following conditions must be met:

1. The student must have completed the probationary period for employment prior to requesting a practicum at the work site.
2. A qualified field instructor must be available to provide oversight of the student's field experience and weekly supervision. The student's current employment supervisor may serve as the student's field instructor.
3. The student must submit a placement proposal and signed "*Agreement for Placement in Employment Setting*". The instructions for the proposal are in the following section. The form is available on the CSW website.
4. The agency shall allocate at least one hour per week for formal individual practicum supervision related to the student's field assignments.
5. The field coordinator must approve of the written plan.

Steps to obtain approval for plan to use place of employment as field site:

1. The student must notify the field coordinator of intent to submit the plan.
2. The student must write a proposal that outlines the following:
 - a) The name of current work supervisor
 - b) The name and credentials of proposed field instructor (may be same as work supervisor)
 - c) How the student's work tasks may address field competencies
 - d) How any competencies not addressed in the employment role will be completed
3. The student must obtain signatures on the agreement from relevant agency personnel.
4. The student must submit the packet to the field coordinator for approval

within the time frame designated by the field coordinator. The packet must contain: the written proposal and the signed contract.

Occasionally, a student may receive an offer of employment by the placement agency during the field placement. This is typically for a part-time position in a different agency program. If a student wishes to accept the offer of employment, the same criteria and procedures apply.

Students are advised to carefully consider any risks to their education if they elect to accept a job within their field placement agency. The student is to notify the field coordinator and submit the written proposal outlined above for approval before accepting employment at the field agency.

6.8. Field Practicum with Stipends

Most of the organizations that provide student field placements do not have funds to compensate students for the work that they contribute to the agency as a part of their field experience. Agencies contribute enormously to the student's education by providing free access to learning experiences and supervision. Although students pay for their field courses in tuition, field fee, and liability insurance, none of these funds are given to the field agency.

Given the cost of education, the College is supportive of efforts by agencies to provide student stipends. Agencies that provide stipends are sometimes able to do so because they have written student stipends into grant proposals. Students are advised that stipend-funded placements are very rare and are generally very competitive.

7. Pre-Placement Requirements

7.1. Screening Procedure Requirements

Most organizations require students to undergo screening procedures or provide specific health records or legal documents as a condition of placement. The specific background checks, screening procedures, and records requirements are stipulated by the agencies. Criminal background checks may include fingerprints, online records checks, or local law enforcement background checks. Medical records may include immunization records, physical exams, and results of TB skin tests and drug screens.

Students are usually required to incur the costs of such procedures. The College of Social Work has a vendor that provides for online registration and payment for background checks, drug screens, and medical records review. Field coordinators and/or agency personnel will share the requirements and costs of screening procedures with students as a part of the placement planning process.

The results of criminal background checks and drug screens may exclude students from specific field placements. Students are encouraged to share with the field coordinator any concerns that they may have regarding these requirements during the placement planning process. If, for any reason, a student does not elect to undergo a background check or provide medical records required by a specific placement, the field coordinator will work with the student to identify other placement sites that do not have these requirements.

However, the College cannot guarantee placement if the results of background checks and other screening procedures exclude students from placement.

Tennessee state law requires all students entering a professional licensure program to work in school settings to complete a fingerprint background check upon admission to the licensure program. Students in the BSSW program are presumed to enter the school social work licensure program when they select a field placement in a school setting. All students placed in school settings must adhere to this requirement. The law also states that the applicant is required to pay the cost of the background check. Students arrange for this through the School-based Experiences Office in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. Local school systems may require additional background checks. Field Coordinators provide information to students regarding what is required and how to arrange for background checks.

7.2 Professional Liability Coverage

Students in field practice can be sued for malpractice. Therefore, participation in a group plan for professional liability insurance is required by the University of all students enrolled in field practice courses.

The insurance fee is paid annually before beginning the practicum experience. The policy term is June 1 to May 31. The cost of this insurance is set annually by the vendor selected by the University Risk Management Office. This fee will be included on the VOLXpress Statement. Students are not allowed to begin field practice without paying this fee. This policy provides \$1,000,000 per claim and \$6,000,000 per annual aggregation per student.

Students must be registered as a student (enrolled) in order to be eligible to purchase UT

professional liability insurance. If a student has a grade of Incomplete for field, they do not have to pay for the field course again in the following semester, but the student must maintain current professional liability insurance coverage.

In order to be eligible for the required liability insurance coverage, the student may a) register for an additional social work course or b) register and pay for 1 credit hour of SW 502- Use of Facilities and pay the insurance fee.

7.3 Personal Safety Training

All students must participate in the personal safety training provided as they begin their juniorfield experience. The training includes content on risks from clients, infectious disease control,sexual harassment and practical advice to minimize risks to safety at the agency, in the community, and when making home visits. Any student who is involved in an incident that jeopardizes their personal safety, must complete and submit to the field coordinator the *Personal Safety Incident Report*. Before students begin field practice, they sign the document,*Acknowledgment of Risk in the Field Practicum*. The Acknowledgment of Risk form is signed online in IPT.

Specific Information Regarding COVID-19

COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, is a highly contagious disease that causes symptoms that can range from mild (or no) symptoms to severe illness. COVID-19 can cause severe and lasting health complications, including death. Everyone is at risk of COVID-19.

Although anyone who contracts COVID-19 may experience severe complications, the CDC has found that individuals with certain underlying health conditions are at higher risk of developingsevere complications from COVID-19. These medical conditions include: chronic lung disease, asthma, conditions that cause a person to be immunocompromised, obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease and liver disease.

COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily by coming into close contact with a person who has COVID-19 and may also spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and thentouching one's mouth, nose or eyes.

Much remains unknown about COVID-19. Further research may reveal additional information regarding the disease, including how it spreads and what health complications, including long-term complications, can result from contracting it.

Participating in field practicum experiences in the community, even when wearing

recommended PPE, may increase the risk of contracting COVID-19, and these risks cannot be eliminated.

Students must accept responsibility to follow all UTCSW and field agency instructions and take all available precautions so that the risk of exposure is minimized

7.4 Required Pre-Placement Documents

Each student is required to review and sign in IPT the *Student Field Placement Contract*, the *Acknowledgment of Risk in the Field Practicum* prior to beginning the agency placement, and complete the Student Detail page in IPT.

8.0 Procedures during Agency Placement

8.1. Self-Screening and Reporting Procedures for COVID-19

Students are responsible for reading and complying with all requirements listed on the Student Guidelines for Field Placement. These guidelines are posted in Canvas and on the CSW website and will be sent to students upon request.

8.01 Self-Screening and Reporting Procedures for COVID-19

Guidelines for Students Completing Field Activities:

- Students are encouraged to complete daily self-screening (info below) and follow all CDC guidelines for infection control in the workplace. Carefully review and implement all guidelines at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
- Students who are fully vaccinated are not required to wear a mask or practice social distancing, indoors or out (exceptions include health care facilities and public transportation). Being fully vaccinated is defined as being two weeks past your final dose of a two-dose vaccine or one dose of a single-dose vaccine. However, agencies may still require that fully vaccinated students wear masks.
- Students who are not fully vaccinated who experience an exposure to COVID-19 or positive test for COVID-19 should follow the reporting procedures listed below.
- Fully vaccinated students do not need to quarantine, isolate, or be tested if they are exposed to COVID-19 and have no symptoms. Engage in self-care from day one of the practicum. Resources to support your self-care are available at the following link: <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/Coronavirus/Self-Care-During-the-Coronavirus-Pandemic>

- If anything changes in the placement setting (e.g., safety concerns increase, expectations for your activities change, supervision changes, etc.), *please contact your Field Coordinator immediately so that we can assist you in resolving the issue. If you are feeling distressed or have significant health issues that may interfere with your ability to complete your placement, contact your Field Coordinator.*

Self-Screening Questions:

- 1) Have you been told to quarantine/isolate by a medical provider or the health department?
- 2) In the last 14 days, have you had face-to-face contact for 10 minutes or more with someone who has or is suspected of having COVID-19?
- 3) Are you experiencing a new cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing?
- 4) In the last 48 hours, have you had at least two of the following new symptoms: Fever, Chills, Repeated shaking chills, Muscle pain, Headache, Sore throat, Vomiting, Diarrhea or Loss of taste or smell?
- 5) Was your temperature 100.4 or above this morning?

If the student does not feel ill and wishes to continue to complete field activities remotely at home, the student may work on approved field assignments at home.

- Students who are required to self-isolate need to complete the UT Self-Isolation Form at <https://covidform.utk.edu>
- Information about when to self-isolate is also available on the UT Coronavirus website at <https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/guides/when-to-self-isolate>

In-Person Field Student Reporting Requirements in case of Self-Isolation, Exposure or Positive Test for COVID-19

If you are completing field in person and are required to self-isolate or quarantine, do not report in- person to your field placement until you have been cleared to do so by a health care provider or a contact tracing team. Absences from field will be accommodated only if you have followed the university's policy on self-isolation and all steps in the *UTCSW Student COVID-19 Guidelines for Field*.

Required minimum field hours must still be completed in order to earn a passing field grade. If a student is unable to complete field hours during the semester due to Covid-19, the student should notify the Field Coordinator to determine if they are eligible to receive a temporary grade of *Incomplete* until all field assignments and minimum hours are completed. If you need to self-isolate or quarantine, you must follow these steps:

- 1) Complete the UTK self-isolation form: <https://covidform.utk.edu>
- 2) Immediately notify your Field Instructor, Task Instructor (if applicable), and Field Coordinator;
- 3) Complete any Covid-19 reporting requirements of the agency;

- 4) If you do not feel ill and wish to continue to complete field activities remotely at home, you may work on Field Instructor-approved field assignments at home;
- 5) Do not report in-person to your field placement until you have been cleared to do so by a health care provider or a contact tracing team.

8.2. Professional Conduct in Field

The student in the field practicum is expected to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner and to abide by the policies of the college, the university, and the field agency. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Meeting the requirements of the College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct.
2. Abiding by the NASW Code of Ethics at <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp> and as applicable by the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles. <http://www.ifsw.org/home>
3. Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all clients both in the field agency and the classroom setting.

Various laws and regulations such as HIPAA apply within agency settings. Some agencies may require special training in specific policy areas. See HIPAA at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hippa/>

8.3 Orientation to Field Practicum

The field coordinator provides an orientation to the field practicum for all junior students beginning field. This orientation provides a comprehensive overview of relevant policies and procedures and addresses field practice etiquette and the initial anxieties that many beginning students may feel. The orientation provides ample opportunity to ask questions and hear the questions of fellow students.

8.4 Managing and Recording Time in Field

BSSW students will be in field placement for a minimum total of **500** clock hours. Students are expected to confirm their placement schedules with their field instructors

during their orientation to the agency setting. Students are expected to follow the agreed-upon schedule except in unusual circumstances, such as illness or inclement weather. If a student wishes to take advantage of field learning opportunities outside of the placement schedule, the student must get permission from the field instructor to count this as field time. Any field absences must be made up by arrangement with the field instructor.

Students are to record their own placement hours as completed on the Field Practicum Time Sheet in IPT. This time sheet should not be used as a planner. Hours are to be documented only after completion. Students are to enter their hours daily, or at least weekly, so that they can be reviewed and approved by the field instructor. The field instructor's entry of supervision at the end of each week and the field instructor signature at the end of the semester signify approval of time documented by the student.

Homework should not be completed during field practicum, and students should not be asked to fulfill field obligations during class time. The one exception to this guideline is for BSSW Honors students who are required to complete a field-related research project. These students should be allowed time for data collection during regular field hours. Students should be allowed to complete and document learning plan assignments during field time.

A student who works overtime in field practicum for client emergencies or special projects may arrange with the field instructor to take compensatory time off from regularly scheduled field times. Also, some students with part-time jobs or child care responsibilities may request flexibility in scheduling for field practice. The college has no objection to any arrangement that provides the necessary learning experiences, meets the required number of field practice hours, is mutually satisfactory to the agency and student, and ensures good services to clients.

Students are not expected to be in field on University holidays or when classes are not held. Each student is responsible for completing the required number of hours for practicum. The Field Practicum Timesheet must be maintained by the student and signed off by the field instructor.

Students who fall behind in field hours:

There may be legitimate reasons for a student to fall behind in field hours. Examples include, but are not limited to, documented medical or family emergencies. In these cases, students are to complete the following procedure:

1. Consult with the field instructor and field liaison immediately to

discuss reason(s) for incomplete hours.

2. Develop a written plan to complete hours by the last day of the semester. The field instructor must approve of the plan.

Submit the written plan to the field liaison. The field liaison will review and submit the plan to the field coordinator for approval. Failure to comply with the approved written plan may result in a failing grade in the field course.

Students who do not complete field hours:

Failure to complete field hours by the end of the semester may result in a failing grade for the field course. **It is important for students to understand that field courses may not be repeated.**

In extraordinary circumstances, the field coordinator may assign a grade of Incomplete (I).

The criteria for an incomplete grade include the following:

- The student must have completed the majority of field hours, learning plan assignments, and seminar assignments
- The student's work is satisfactory in all areas.
- The student is unable to complete the hours and/or assignments due to extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control.

8.5 Use of Technology and Social Media in Field

Students routinely use technology in their academic, field, and personal experiences. The past few years have yielded exponential growth in the number and type of platforms for online communication. There is no doubt that effective use of technology can enhance communication, streamline workflow, and provide excellent opportunities for learning. Students use technology in the academic setting to collaborate with groups, engage in discussions, submit assignments, and conduct research. Students use technology in the field setting to manage client records, meet with colleagues, evaluate practice, and research interventions, to name only a few uses. Meanwhile, students are also actively engaging with technology for personal and social relationships, including use of Facebook, Twitter, personal blogs, etc.

Although the use of technology has the capacity to greatly enhance professional relationships, organizational function, and learning, students must be aware of the professional and ethical risks of using technology in the field setting. Students must consider the impact of technology on three critical areas: protection of client and agency privacy and confidentiality, development and maintenance of appropriate boundaries, and development and presentation of the professional self.

Perhaps the most obvious related ethical requirement is to maintain client privacy and confidentiality. This requirement extends to all forms of communication, including the internet. This means that students must be attuned to whether networks are secure when transmitting confidential information. This also means that students must be very careful about the use of personal phones, laptops, tablets, etc. to document or transmit confidential information. In addition to protecting the privacy of clients, students are expected to keep confidential information that they receive regarding the field organization and should refrain from sharing confidential agency information through any medium of communication.

One of the most confusing and difficult aspects of use of technology arises in the area of social media. Although most students originally engage with social media for personal use, they find that most field agencies are deeply engaged in use of social media for outreach, fundraising, public education, etc. Agencies now routinely use Facebook, Twitter, and other venues. This makes it very difficult for students to determine where the line is between personal and professional use of social media. This is a fairly recent area of challenge in developing and maintaining appropriate boundaries with agency clients and agency staff.

Most social work students are in the process of identifying, developing and presenting to clients and colleagues a "professional self." This is an essential part of joining and becoming socialized within a profession. In classes and in field, students are actively learning to identify behaviors that are considered appropriate in a professional context and those which should be expressed only in personal or social contexts. Students must be aware of the fact that they are communicating professionalism or lack of professionalism through their use of technology and social media. This means that students have to carefully consider what they post on social media sites and to whom it will be accessible. Students also must remember that information and photographs transmitted over the internet can never be fully recalled but may remain accessible indefinitely to current or future clients, colleagues, and prospective employers.

Consequently, students must consider not only the factual information they post online,

but also the values and attitudes which may or may not be consistent with professional standards and values.

Another area of challenge for most students is to determine when it is appropriate to use cell phones and/or other technology for personal use in the professional setting. Many students are accustomed to virtually constant access to and interaction with smart phones and other devices. Students are expected to demonstrate an attentive presence while in field. This is expected whether the student is working directly with clients or meeting with agency staff. Use of personal phones can, at the least, convey lack of focused attention and, at worst, convey disrespect and disregard for the client.

Given all of these challenges, students are encouraged to talk to their field instructors very early in placement to clarify agency policy and receive guidance on ethical and appropriate use of technology in the field setting.

Students are also advised to comply with the following guidelines for use of technology in field:

- Students should determine whether agency staff and/or students are allowed to use social media for personal use during agency hours and follow the agency policy. This includes use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Students should set their Facebook privacy settings at the highest level to prevent agency clients and staff from accessing the student's personal information.
- Students should never "friend" an agency client on Facebook and should, whenever possible, refrain from "friending" agency staff during the term of placement.
- Students should not post any information about clients or the agency on personal media sites, with one exception. Students may share links to info about agency outreach or development events.
- Students should refrain from use of personal phones during any client contact.
- Whenever possible, students should use only agency computers to manage documentation regarding client contacts and services. If students are expected to use personal laptops or tablets, the student must ensure that the network is secure and that the information cannot be accessed by anyone who is not authorized to access the information.

- When in doubt about the use of any technology or social media at field, the student should first consult with the field instructor.

8.6 The Learning Plan

The BSSW student is an adult learner who is involved from the beginning in planning for the field practicum. During the student's orientation to the agency, the field instructor and student review the educational competencies, the student's past experiences, career interests, and make plans for assignments. The college requires a written learning plan for each semester. The plan includes both required assignments and agency specific assignments developed by the field instructor and student. The plan is completed and signed online and may be revised as needed by mutual agreement of the student and field instructor. Any revisions can be made to the learning plan when necessary. The completed learning plan is reviewed by the field liaison and field coordinator.

8.7 Health Insurance

Students are responsible for their own health insurance and for paying all of their own medical expenses, including expenses for treatment of illness or injuries related to field. Many field placements require that students document current health insurance coverage. The professional liability insurance does not cover student illness or injuries. Students are not eligible for Workers' Compensation coverage for accidental injury at their agency placements.

8.8 Transportation and Vehicle Insurance

All students must provide their own transportation to and from the field agency. Use of a vehicle is essential in most placements due to the nature of student assignments and the limited availability of public transportation. Students who do not have access to a personal vehicle will have very limited options for field placement. If transportation is a problem, this should be communicated to the field coordinator and noted on the *Field Practice Planning Sheet*. The field coordinator will try to identify placements that can be accessed by public transportation, but the college cannot guarantee placement for a student who is relying on public transportation for field.

Some agencies may pay mileage for travel required to perform agency work. Students should ask their field instructors about mileage reimbursement if they are required to travel as a part of the practicum experience.

If a student is required to transport clients as a part of their placement, the student should contact their automobile insurance carrier to clarify whether this risk is covered by the student's policy. If this is not covered or would impose additional cost to the student, the student should take this expense into consideration when selecting a placement. A student should never transport a client unless the student has a valid driver's license and is confident that their personal vehicle insurance will cover any accident that may occur.

8.9 Field Hours outside of the Semester Schedule

Students are prohibited from starting field before the first day of the semester without permission from the field coordinator. This may be approved when students need to complete agency orientation or attend training that cannot be completed during the semester. Students are not to engage in client services before the start of the first semester of placement in an agency. Students must complete the Personal Safety Training before beginning their first placement (junior field).

Students are generally expected to be able to take their break between fall and spring semesters. However, students may be allowed to complete field hours between the fall and spring semesters in order to fulfill professional responsibilities, provide continuity of care, assist with an event that is scheduled between semesters, or to take advantage of special learning opportunities available during that time

Students who wish to count hours completed during the break toward spring semester must submit a completed *Request to Earn Field Hours Between Semesters* form to the field coordinator before the end of fall semester. This request must indicate the number of hours to be applied to the following semester and the schedule for those hours. The request must also indicate which competencies/ activities practice behaviors will be addressed while completing the hours. The proposal to earn hours should be completed in collaboration with the field instructor. This written request *The Request to Earn Field Hours Between Semesters* must be approved and signed by the agency student's field instructor.

The field coordinator will determine whether the request will be approved, including the number of hours approved for carryover to the following semester. Students will not be allowed to finish field any earlier than **two weeks** prior to the end of the spring semester.

9.0 Evaluation and Grading Procedures

9.1 Field Practicum Grading Policy

Field courses must be completed with a grade of **C** or higher and may not be repeated. The grade for each Field Practicum course will be based on the end-of-semester field evaluation of the student's performance in the field agency.

In order to earn an "A" in field practicum, student must demonstrate **Advanced Competence** (rating of a 4) on the majority of practice behaviors and all remaining ratings are 3's. Scale is listed on each field syllabus. Students have the right to appeal any final rating assigned by the field instructor. Please refer to policy *Evaluation of Student Competence*. The grade will be assigned by the Field Coordinator. Undergraduate grades are as follows:

A	94 – 100	A-	90 – 93.9
B+	86 – 89.9	B	83 – 85.9
B-	80 – 82.9	C+	76 – 79.9
C	73 – 75.9	C-	70 – 72.9
D	63 – 65.9	F	59.9 and below

Under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the field coordinator, the grade of incomplete (I) may be assigned to a student whose work is satisfactory but who has not completed the field practicum requirements. The terms for removal of the (I), including the time limit for removal of the (I), must be delineated in a written contract that is signed by the student and the field coordinator. A copy of the signed contract is given to the student and the original contract is placed in the student's file. A student receiving an incomplete (I) in any field course must remove the incomplete before enrollment in a subsequent field course.

Students must be registered as a student (enrolled) in order to be eligible to purchase UT professional liability insurance. If a student has a grade of Incomplete for field, they do not have to pay for the field course again in the following semester, but the student must maintain current professional liability insurance coverage.

In order to be eligible for the required liability insurance coverage, the student may a) register for an additional social work course or b) register and pay for 1 credit hour of SW

493, Independent Study and pay the insurance fee.

9.2 Evaluation of Student Competence

An evaluation of each student's progress in meeting the educational competencies for field practice is required at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Each evaluation is completed by the field instructor and reviewed with the student for the purpose of providing feedback to the student on their performance. It is imperative that students thoroughly document throughout the placement the *Evidence of Plan Completion* on the *Learning Plan*. The field instructor will refer to this evidence when assigning ratings for each practice behavior.

If the evidence is insufficient, the student may receive a lower rating. Students have the opportunity to provide comments on the mid-term and final field evaluation and are strongly encouraged to do so.

Students also have the right to appeal any rating assigned by the field instructor. The student must provide evidence that their practice skill or knowledge has been demonstrated at a higher level than reflected by the field instructor's rating. The student is to document the appeal and evidence under the *Student Feedback* section for the specific competency. The student should indicate what rating they believe is accurate and request that the field instructor reevaluate the rating based on the additional documented evidence. The student is to notify the field coordinator of the appeal.

9.3 Student Evaluation of Field Practicum

Students are required to evaluate their practicum experience during the spring semester. Using the Student Evaluation of Field Practicum form, students are encouraged to comment on various aspects of the field practicum and make any recommendations for change. This form is completed in IPT. The field coordinator reviews this information to evaluate the quality of the field agency, field instructor and field liaison services. If the student gives permission, the evaluation will be shared with the student's field instructor.

Students are also asked to complete anonymous evaluations of their field liaisons and field coordinators. These evaluations are completed online and are used to promote program improvement.

10.0 Problems in Field

10.1 Managing Problems in Field

Managing problems in field placement is considered to be a part of students' professional development. The expected problem solving steps are:

1. Student shares concerns directly with the field instructor to discuss how problems/concerns can be managed or resolved. A follow-up email from the student to the field instructor documenting discussions is recommended.
2. If the collaboration with the field instructor in Step 1 does not adequately manage the problem, the student should notify the assigned field liaison or field coordinator, if the liaison is unavailable, so that a problem-solving meeting between the student, the field instructor, and the field liaison can be convened.
3. If concerns continue following the initial meeting the field coordinator will meet with the student, field instructor, and field liaison for additional collaboration and solution finding.

Please note: If a student is uncertain about how to best begin addressing a problem/concern, the student may first request a consultation with the field liaison or field coordinator prior to Step 1. Following this preliminary consultation, the student is expected to engage in each of the steps outlined above as necessary to manage the problems/concerns.

If the student refuses to address placement concerns with the field instructor using the process described above, the field coordinator will request a meeting of the student's academic committee. Refusal to engage in the problem-solving process could result in dismissal from field.

10.2 Requests to Terminate a Placement

A student may request to terminate a placement if problems/concerns interfere with learning. However, the decision to terminate a placement is only made after all reasonable efforts to resolve the concerns have been exhausted. Students are not permitted to resign from a field placement without prior approval from the Field Coordinator.

Any student who wants to request termination of placement must first engage in the problem-solving process described in Section 10.01. Following that, a student may submit a written request for placement termination to the field coordinator. The request should include in detail the student's concerns about the placement experience and all efforts that have been made to resolve the issues. The field liaison and field instructor should be copied on the request for termination. The field coordinator will review the student's request and may consult with the field instructor and/or the field liaison. The decision to terminate a placement is made by the field coordinator.

Termination of a placement may result in a change in the student's program of study and/or graduation date. The field coordinator will review the hours and activities completed by the student in the initial placement to determine whether any of these hours may be carried over to a new placement. However, a new placement agency may require the student to complete the full term hours as a condition of placement. The student may need to complete additional hours at a new field placement so that adequate orientation and learning opportunities can be ensured.

10.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of students is a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 which prohibits sex discrimination in education. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when grades or educational progress are made contingent upon submission to such conduct, or when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Students should follow the procedure below if they experience sexual harassment in their field agency:

1. Contact the field coordinator as soon as possible to report this situation and to receive advice on how to proceed. The field coordinator will determine whether the student should return to the field setting while the issue is under review.
2. Complete the *Personal Safety Incident Report* form located on the College of Social Work website and submit the completed form to the field coordinator ASAP.

The Field Coordinator will:

1. Consult with the Title IX office to discuss next steps
2. Determine, with the student, whether they feel safe returning to the agency setting. If appropriate, a plan may be developed to assure the student's safety and comfort in the field setting.
3. Upon receiving such a complaint, notify the field liaison who will work with

the field instructor and/or agency administrator to further assess the situation and to decide on an intervention strategy.

4. As appropriate, confer with the Office of Equity and Diversity and the Program Director regarding the situation and the planned strategy for intervention.
5. Determine the status of the student's practicum in the agency after a thorough assessment.
6. Make referrals, if needed, to appropriate resources for assisting the student to cope with the situation.

10.4 Unsatisfactory Progress in Field

If a student does not demonstrate satisfactory progress toward competency in field, a field instructor has the right to terminate the student's placement at any time. If students have demonstrated some commitment to their own learning, field instructors may be willing to give students the opportunity to achieve satisfactory performance. The following process is followed when a student's performance or progress in field is unsatisfactory, and the field instructor is willing to continue to work with the student.

- The field instructor should first discuss the concern(s) with the student and give the student the opportunity to respond to feedback and improve performance. The field instructor is asked to document discussions with students regarding problems with performance or conduct. This documentation may be included in supervision notes or in a Field Concerns Report in IPT.
- If the student's performance does not improve, the College asks that field instructors contact their field liaison to discuss concerns regarding student performance. If the field liaison is not available or the situation warrants, field instructors are encouraged to contact the student's field coordinator. The field liaison and field coordinator will discuss the situation and make a decision about how to respond.
- If there are serious concerns that the student may not succeed in placement, the field coordinator and/or field liaison will arrange a conference with the field instructor and the student to discuss the concerns and to develop a written plan to address the issues regarding student performance. The field coordinator may also meet separately with the student in order to explore the student's perspective on the issue. A deadline will be set for demonstrating performance improvement. The

student will be informed that failure to meet performance standards may result in dismissal from the agency and/or a failing grade in the practicum course.

- The field instructor will document the plan on the Field Concerns Report in IPT. The plan will be signed in IPT by the student, field instructor, field liaison, and field coordinator. If the student does not agree to the plan, the student's placement at the agency will be terminated.
- If the student has not demonstrated adequate progress by the designated date, the field instructor may decide to terminate the student's placement. The field instructor is asked to complete a *Dismissal Form* in IPT. (Forms will be uploaded on request). If the placement is terminated, the field coordinator may request a meeting of the student's academic committee to review the concerns and progress and recommend if any additional action should be taken.
- If the student does not achieve the competencies and performance standards of the field practicum, a failing grade will be assigned. A failing grade field results in termination from the BSSW program.

10.5 Dismissal from Placement and Appeal Procedure

Every field agency must sign an agreement for student placement with the University. The agreements stipulate that the Agency may dismiss from placement any student whose performance or conduct does not justify continuance in field placement at the Agency.

Consequently, any field agency that determines that a student's continuation in placement jeopardizes the quality of client services or agency reputation, or disrupts normal agency operations, may elect to immediately terminate the student's placement. Whenever possible, field instructors are asked to contact the field liaison and/or the field coordinator before making a decision to dismiss the student to proactively address any concerns about student performance that might lead to termination of placement (See Section 10.1).

Upon notification by the agency of a student's dismissal, the field coordinator will upload a Dismissal Form on the student's page in IPT. The field instructor is to complete the form detailing the reason(s) for dismissal. The field coordinator may contact the agency for additional information and will review all documentation of cause for dismissal. The field coordinator may also meet with the student to get the student's

perspective on the situation. The field coordinator will make a decision as to whether the student is eligible for placement in another setting.

If the field coordinator determines that the student is eligible for another placement, it is highly unlikely that the student will be able to begin placement at another agency before the start of the following semester. Consequently, the student will receive the grade of Incomplete, and the following procedure will be implemented:

- The student is to schedule a meeting with the field coordinator to initiate placement planning. The field coordinator will work with the student to evaluate appropriate options for placement.
- The field coordinator will request that the student sign a *Release of Information* form so that information about the student's prior field experience and learning needs can be shared with prospective field instructors.
- The field coordinator will facilitate at least one opportunity for the student to interview for another placement. The College cannot guarantee that the student will be accepted by an organization for another placement. It is the student's responsibility to secure the placement through a successful interview.

If a student's placement is terminated by the agency due to poor student performance, ethics violations, violation of agency policy, or professional misconduct, the field coordinator may determine that the student is not eligible for placement and will receive a failing grade for the course. The field coordinator may request a meeting of the student's academic committee to review the situation and provide consultation before the field coordinator makes a final decision. The field coordinator will notify the student of this decision in writing and may request a meeting with the student to discuss.

If the field coordinator determines that the student is *not eligible to interview for another placement or to receive the grade of Incomplete*, the student will receive a failing grade for the course at the end of the semester. If the student elects to appeal the grade, the student is to follow the grade appeals procedure in the Student Handbook.

The student may appeal *the decision by the field coordinator not to place the student in another setting by the following procedure.*

- The student must submit the appeal in writing to the field coordinator, detailing specific reasons the decision is being appealed. The written appeal must be submitted within 15 days of the student's written notification of ineligibility for placement. Students may appeal the field coordinator's decision only on the basis of one or more of the following allowable grounds: (1) A clearly unfair decision (such as lack of consideration of circumstances clearly beyond the control of the student, e.g., a death in the family, illness, or accident); (2) Unacceptable instruction/evaluation procedures (such as deviation from stated policies on required learning activities, supervision, field instructor evaluation, etc.).
- The field coordinator is to review the student's statement and provide a written reply within 15 days.
- If the field coordinator decides not to grant the student's request to be placed in another setting, the student may appeal this decision to the student's academic committee. The student must submit a request in writing to the student's program director, requesting committee review of the decision. The student must explain in the written request for review the grounds for appealing the field coordinator's decision. The student may also attach any relevant documentation.
- The program director is to schedule a committee meeting within 15 days of receiving the student's written request.
- The program director will request a copy of the field coordinator's written reply to the appeal. The field coordinator may also submit additional documentation relevant to the situation. The program director will disseminate all of the documents to the committee for review prior to the meeting.
- The academic committee will meet with the student and field coordinator to conduct a full review of the student's appeal.
- After the meeting, the committee will discuss the situation and make a determination as to whether the student's appeal to be eligible for placement will be granted. The committee will notify the student within 3 days as to the decision. The committee's decision will be binding.

10.6 Incompletes in Field

A grade of incomplete (I) is a temporary grade showing that the student has performed

satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all requirements. The field coordinator will determine whether a student is eligible for the grade of Incomplete. The field coordinator, in consultation with the student, decides the terms for the removal of the incomplete, including the time limit for removal. If the incomplete is not removed within one calendar year, the grade will be changed to No Credit (NC).

All students are required to have UT's professional liability insurance while in field, and students must be registered as a student (enrolled) in order to be eligible to purchase UT professional liability insurance. If a student has a grade of Incomplete for field, they do not have to pay for the field course again in the following semester, but the student must maintain current professional liability insurance coverage.

In order to be eligible for the required liability insurance coverage, the student may a) register for an additional social work course or b) register and pay for 1 credit hour of SW 493, Independent Study, and pay the insurance fee.

10.7 Student Removal from a Field Practicum

The field coordinator has the authority to withdraw a student from a placement based on concerns about the student's performance, the agency environment, quality and consistency of supervision, or the student's refusal to address concerns about the placement. If a student is removed from a placement by the field coordinator due to his or her performance, an academic committee meeting may be convened to explore the student's readiness for placement and to make recommendations to the field coordinator.

Circumstances in which a student may be removed from a placement include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. Attempts to harm themselves or any client or agency staff person.
2. Violates the NASW Code of Ethics
3. Violates the College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct
4. Has personal or legal hardships that negatively affect their performance in the field practicum.
5. Has a physical or mental health challenge, active substance abuse issues, or

undocumented disabilities that severely limit the student's effectiveness in the field practicum.

10.8 Professional Misconduct

Students must conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner toward clients, students, faculty, and agency colleagues. Because membership in a profession implies commitment to an encompassing set of values, professional conduct is expected at all times in any field-related activity. The college subscribes to the NASW Code of Ethics which is discussed in the classroom and in field placements. The college's policy on professional conduct is located in The BSSW Student Handbook. Each student is required to sign the *Student Field Placement Contract* before starting field. This contract stipulates the student's understanding of the expectation of professional conduct. Any incident of professional misconduct which is committed during field practicum should be documented by the student's field instructor and submitted to the field coordinator. Upon review of the documentation, the field coordinator will make a determination as to whether to make a report to the program director who may then call a meeting of the Professional Standards Committee.

10.9 Return to Field after Withdrawal from a Field Course

If a student withdraws from a field course, the student is required to apply to return to field in another semester. If a student withdraws from the field course after receiving a substandard evaluation or critical feedback regarding field performance, the Field Coordinator will request a meeting of the student's Academic Committee to consider the student's eligibility to return to field. The Academic Committee will review the circumstances leading to withdrawal and determine whether the student will be eligible to register for a field course in a later semester. The Academic Committee may stipulate specific conditions that must be met for the student to be eligible for field, including timeframes for completion. The Academic Committee will have access to documentation relevant to student performance in field. The Field Coordinator will attend the Academic Committee Meeting to provide information and consultation but will not be a voting member of the committee. The Academic Committee decision will be binding. The student may appeal the Academic Committee decision according to the appeals process detailed in Hill topics.

If the Academic Committee has approved the student's eligibility to return to field after withdrawal, the student is to notify Field Coordinator of their request to register for the field course and apply for a field practicum. In order to allow for processing and placement planning, the application and statement must be submitted to the Field Coordinator at least

3 months prior to the start of the semester in which the student intends to return to field.

The Field Coordinator will send the student the current Application for Field Practicum. In addition to the regular application, the student is to attach a statement detailing the circumstances under which they withdrew from field and how the circumstances have been addressed. If the student withdrew after receiving a substandard evaluation or critical feedback regarding field performance, the student should detail any actions taken to address performance concerns. If the Academic Committee stipulated any conditions that must be met for return to field, the student must submit evidence of completion of requirements to the Advisor for approval by the Academic Committee.