



M.S.S.W.

Field Practice

Manual

2020-2021

This manual can be found at:

<http://www.csw.utk.edu>

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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. The Field Education faculty have been working to reimagine field education during a pandemic. We want you to know that we are committed to providing a substantive and meaningful field experience for all students, including a plan to address all required competencies and hours.

As the University returns to in-person classes on campus this fall, many social work students will begin in-person placements at field organizations. Students have been surveyed regarding their individual needs related to field, and we will be providing fully remote placements for students who need to work from home. Many agencies have shifted client services to telepractice/telehealth, so we are now allowing students to complete fully remote field placements.

This public health emergency has also brought a number of new opportunities for student learning. We are developing new placements in collaboration with public health departments and programs. We have developed plans for assignments, projects, seminars, and simulation experiences to enable students to have a positive and substantive field experience regardless of what happens with the course of the pandemic. The Council on Social Work Education has allowed new flexibility for students completing employment-based placements. The College has reduced the number of required hours for field this year.

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.

1.0 MSSW Program Mission, Goals, and Curriculum

1.01 Program Mission and Goals

The mission of the MSSW Program is to educate students for culturally relevant and ethically sound social work practice within a changing global context affecting social work practice. Sensitivity to the personal, social, economic and political needs of vulnerable, high-risk populations is emphasized within a person in environment perspective. In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics, importance is placed on client empowerment, individual and political advocacy for greater social and economic justice, and challenging the oppression of diverse and vulnerable populations. Both the creation and dissemination of evidence based knowledge are held to be essential. Critical thinking skills and the ability to evaluate social work knowledge to guide practice as well as the ability to evaluate one's own social work practice are emphasized. Student development of a positive professional identification and appreciation of the professional role is fostered to effectively engage, assess and intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and societies.

The MSSW program goals are as follows:

1. Graduates will apply advanced critical thinking skills in collaboration with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and societies
2. Graduates will practice in accordance with social work values and ethics.
3. Graduates will practice in a culturally affirming manner that promotes social and economic justice with diverse populations as expressed through age, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, relational status, national origin, race, religion and sexual orientation.
4. Graduates will evaluate, synthesize and apply the best available research, knowledge, and skills for practice in collaboration with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and societies.

1.02 Commitment to 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 U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement), "the dimensions of

diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including” age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, regionality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. “A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim” (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement). The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

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

1.03 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 practica. 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 them 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
- Other behaviors determined to be unprofessional conduct towards colleagues, faculty, staff and/or clients

1.04 Programs of Study

Students are admitted to the full-time, extended study, or advanced standing program of study. The admissions and degree requirements are the same for full-time and extended study students.

Advanced Standing Program.

Advanced standing students complete the MSSW program (37 semester hours) on a full-time or part-time basis beginning in the summer term. Full-time advanced standing students complete the program in 3 semesters. Part-time advanced standing students generally complete the program in 5 to 6 semesters.

Full-time Program.

The full-time program of study begins in the fall semester. Students complete the full-time program (60 semester hours) in two years, or four (4) semesters of full-time study. They complete the generalist curriculum during the first year and the concentration curriculum in the second year.

Extended Study Program.

The extended study program (60 semester hours) allows students to complete the MSSW degree in three or four years depending on individual needs. The program begins in the fall semester. Students generally take two years to complete the generalist coursework and field and one or two years to complete the concentration coursework and field. The generalist coursework and field must be completed before beginning the concentration coursework and field.

Locations

All three programs of study are offered on the Knoxville and Nashville campuses and through the Online MSSW Program. The online program is designed to accommodate students who work and/or have obligations that prohibit attendance of courses through a traditional, face-to-face program. Field sites are secured within the student's geographical location.

1.05 Curriculum Overview

All students are expected to develop their plan of study with their major professors.

This will ensure that the recommended sequence of courses is followed, that adequate field practice plans are made, and that, to the extent possible, the course of study takes into account the student's interests and career plans.

Generalist Curriculum

The generalist curriculum for full-time and extended study students consists of 24 credit hours of course work and 6 credit hours of field instruction. It is completed by full-time students during the first year of study and by extended study students during the first two years of study.

The generalist curriculum contributes to the process of professional identification and provides a comprehensive base of theory, knowledge, and skills for students entering either concentration area so that they may operate in the future as practitioners, supervisors, managers, planners, and program developers.

The MSSW generalist curriculum is comprised of the following courses:

- SW 510** Social Welfare Policies & Programs (3)
- SW 512** Introduction to Macro Social Work Practice (2)
- SW 513** Lifespan & Neurophysiologic Development in a Cultural, Ecological,
& Transactional Framework (4)
- SW 519** Generalist Research (3)
- SW 522** Introduction to Direct Social Work Practice (4)
- SW 537** Introduction to Psychopathology and Social Work Practice (3)
- SW 538** Culturally Relevant Practice with Diverse Populations (3)
- SW 539** Leadership Skills and Knowledge for Advanced Social Work
Practice (2)
- SW 541, 542, 543, 544** Generalist Field Practice and Seminar (6 total credit hours)
- Total30 credit hrs.**

Concentration Curriculum

Students must select a concentration in Evidence- Based Interpersonal Practice or Organizational Leadership The concentration curriculum consists of 12 credit hours of field instruction and a minimum of 18 credit hours of course work.

The **Evidence-Based Interpersonal Practice** concentration prepares students for

advanced direct social work practice with individuals, groups, and families representing diverse populations. Students develop competencies in advanced assessment, relationship building and enhancement, application of goal-oriented and evidence-based interventions, evaluation of practice, and life-long professional development. Potential areas of practice include mental health, child welfare, substance abuse, health care, and other settings providing services to populations at risk.

The course requirements are as follows:

SW 560 Evidence-based Interpersonal Practice with Groups (3 credit hours)

SW 562 Evidence-based Interpersonal Practice with Adult Individuals (3)

SW 563 Systematic Planning & Evaluation for Interpersonal Practice (3)

SW 584 or 586 Concentration Field (total of 12 credit hours)

SW Electives (6)

Each student selects one from the following selective courses:

SW 570 Evidence-based Practice with Families (3)

SW 571 Evidence-based Practice with Children and Adolescents (3)

SW 572 Evidence-based Practice with Older Adults (3)

Total**30 credit hrs.**

The **Organizational Leadership** concentration is based on the underlying principles of social, economic and environmental justice. The students graduating from this concentration will be prepared to work in a variety of settings including varieties of human service agencies, schools, health care facilities, governmental entities, quasi-governmental entities, generalists, funding and membership nonprofits, and policy analysis and advocacy positions.

The goal of the concentration is to produce social workers who are critical thinkers in ethically-sound, systemic, skill-based, evidence-based practice. The social workers who graduate with this concentration will be equipped to be involved in activities such as, but not limited to, leading and managing programs and organizations, planning, asset and financial management, use of information technology, grant writing and management, coordinating, developing and evaluating direct and indirect activities for targeted at-risk populations, clients and client systems. Students will also graduate understanding advanced policy analysis and advocacy strategies.

The course requirements are as follows:

- SW 545** Resource Development and Management (3)
- SW 547** Advanced Organizational Theory and Practice (3)
- SW 548** Advanced Change Management & Policy Practice (3)
- SW 549** Program Development & Continuous Improvement (3)
- SW 584 or 586** Concentration Field (total of 12 credit hours)
- SW Electives** (6)

Total30 credit hrs.

Electives

Elective courses complete the professional curriculum course work. The available elective courses may vary among campuses. All courses are not offered every semester or year. Therefore, students should check the current schedule for the availability of a particular course.

1.06 Certificate Programs

Students may elect to complete a certificate program as a part of their MSSW course of study. Certificate programs are optional and represent the opportunity for a student to focus on services to a specific population or within a specific field of practice. The certificates that are currently offered include: Gerontology, Treatment of Trauma, Forensic Social Work, and Veterinary Social Work. Students residing in Tennessee may also pursue a Tennessee licensure in school social work by taking the school social work elective and completing a school-based field placement. Each certificate program has an application process and includes specific requirements for coursework and field placement.

Students must follow the procedure below in order to assure that their field placement will meet certificate requirements.

- 1. Familiarize yourself with the field-related requirements of the particular certificate program you plan to complete.**

Certificate specific requirements are below:

- **Trauma Certificate (must be the student’s concentration placement)**
 TTGC students are required to elect a concentration field placement in which the student will spend the majority of field time working with and/or on behalf of

populations who have experienced trauma. The student's field learning plan must include trauma-specific learning goals.

The placement organization must meet the following requirements

1. Serve a population affected by trauma;
 2. Be able to provide a Field Instructor with experience working with the population;
 3. Both the organization and Field Instructor must support the student's trauma-specific learning goals and allow the student to apply knowledge of trauma to placement activities.
- **Veterinary Social Work Certificate (must be the student's concentration placement)**
 1. The placement organization must be willing to allow the student to implement a VSW-related intervention within the agency.
 2. The student must include in the field learning plan activities from the *Veterinary Social Work Seminar Competencies and Rubrics*.
 3. The Field Instructor must be informed of and supportive of these requirements.
 4. The student must attend the VSW face-to-face retreats. The student may request that the field instructor approve them counting retreat time as field time. If the field instructor does not approve, the student is required to attend the retreats in addition to completing field hours.
 5. The student must participate in the 1 hour online VSW group supervision every other Wednesday at noon eastern time.
 - **Gerontology Certificate (may be the student's generalist or concentration placement)**

The student is expected to spend a majority of field time working with or behalf of older adults.
 - **Forensic Certificate (must be the student's concentration placement)**

Forensic social work students must complete a field placement that focuses on work with and/or on behalf of populations impacted by the

legal system (i.e., a placement in which more than half of the student's time is spent working within forensic related systems).

The field learning plan will include learning goals specific to the arena of forensic social work.

- 2. Notify your Field Coordinator by email of your intention to complete a specific certificate program.**
- 3. Schedule a meeting with your Field Coordinator to identify and discuss field placement options that meet certificate program requirements.**
- 4. During field placement interviews, inform each prospective field instructor of your participation in the certificate program and discuss if/how you will be able to complete the field requirements for the certificate.**

You must receive a competency rating of at least 3 on each of the Practice Behaviors related to your certificate program in order to satisfactorily complete field requirements for your certificate program.

Some important questions to ask during a field placement interview could include:

- Who is the population being served by the agency?
- What types of evidence-based interventions are provided by the agency?

Trauma Certificate specific questions:

- What percentage of clients has a history of trauma? What types of trauma have they experienced?
- What type of trauma-informed interventions is the agency using?
- What type of trauma-informed interventions would be taught to the student during the duration of the field placement?
- Is there a field instructor available in the agency who has experience working with clients affected by trauma?

Veterinary Social Work Certificate specific questions:

- Does the agency currently use any animal-assisted interventions?
- Is the human-animal bond reflected in client assessment and intervention?
- Does the agency work with the link between violence toward animals and violence toward humans?
- Would the student be permitted to integrate learning activities and/or projects related to veterinary social work into the field learning plan?

Gerontology Certificate specific question:

- Are at least 51% of the agency's clients senior adults?

Forensic Certificate specific question:

- How does your agency serve clients who have been impacted by the legal system?

5. **When you meet with your Field Instructor to complete the *Confirmation of Field Placement* form, identify certificate-specific learning goals for your placement and record these on the *Certificate Program Field Plan*.**
6. **Submit your completed *Confirmation of Field Placement* and *Certificate Program Field Plan* to your Field Coordinator for approval and signature.**
7. **Your Field Coordinator will notify you by email regarding approval of your *Certificate Program Field Plan*.**
8. **When you develop your field Learning Plan in IPT with your Field Instructor at the beginning of the semester, you must translate the learning goals on your *Certificate Program Field Plan* into specific learning activities.**
(Students in the VSW Certificate Program must refer to the VSW Rubric to identify learning activities for their field Learning Plans.)
9. **Document completion of certificate learning activities in the column titled *Evidence of Plan Completion*.**

2.0 Field Education

2.01 Educational Philosophy

The Council on Social Work Education has identified field as the signature pedagogy of social work 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 educational philosophy underlying field practice 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 will test out theory, develop skills and demonstrate competencies, learn to evaluate their own performance, and prepare for autonomous practice. The student will also learn how to contribute to the provision of humane and equitable social services, to the development of professional knowledge, and to the creation of a more just society.

The college considers the field placement agency both as the arena in which practice is carried out and as a valuable source of learning for the student. Through interaction with agency staff, service to clients, and exposure to the structure and policies of a segment of the social welfare system, 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 enabling the student to apply and integrate knowledge.

The college is able to provide a wide variety of field experiences for students throughout the state, nationally, and internationally. Field sites are available in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Opportunities to work with diverse populations are abundant. The College works closely with field placement agencies and field instructors to give each student a quality field experience. For the commuting and online student, every effort is made to locate or develop field sites in the community/state where the student resides and plans to practice upon graduation.

In summary, the field practicum provides an arena for students to apply and integrate the knowledge, values, and skills learned in the classroom to a real agency setting. It enables students to develop a greater respect for diversity, apply theoretical knowledge to their practice with populations at risk, use critical thinking skills as they struggle with complex

practice and ethical problems, and demonstrate the use of self in the professional role. This structured and supervised practice setting allows students to develop the competencies needed for generalist and specialized advanced practice.

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.

2.02 Generalist Practicum

The generalist practicum consists of a field placement and a seminar. The focus of generalist seminar is the development and demonstration of professionalism. The field seminar meets in face-to-face and/or online formats for the duration of both semesters and focuses on skills, competencies and knowledge for functioning within an agency. The seminar includes topics such as professionalism and professional relationships, safety in social work, making the most of supervision, legal and ethical issues, cultural awareness, and self-care. The seminar provides a safe arena where students can share their concerns, impressions, and experiences with each other. This process facilitates students' adjustment to field and normalizes some of the feelings that occur when new experiences are undertaken.

The generalist practicum is generally scheduled for two days each week during the fall and spring semesters. Field seminar begins in the summer for extended study students and at the beginning of the fall semester for full-time students. Generalist students will start their agency placement on or soon after September 8. Generalist students are required to complete a minimum total of 300 placement hours for the generalist year. During the fall semester, students in generalist field must complete a minimum of 125 placement hours along with all requirements for the field seminar. Students may complete up to 185 placement hours prior to the start of the spring semester, including hours completed during the semester and during the semester break. Students return to their generalist field agency placement at the start of the spring semester. Students should expect to complete 115 to 175 hours in the spring, depending on the number of hours that they completed in the fall. In addition to the hours requirement, students must also complete assignments to address all competencies and practice behaviors

Generalist field placements are selected through a joint process involving the student, the field coordinator, and personnel from potential internship sites. These first placements are designed to provide students with supervised generalist practice experience, which is consistent with the generalist knowledge and skill development education experience they receive in the classroom.

2.03 Concentration Practicum

Full-time Students

Full-time students in the two-year program of study begin the concentration practicum in the fall after completion of all generalist course work, including generalist field. Full-time advanced standing students begin the concentration practicum in the fall after completion of required summer coursework.

Full-time students are in concentration field practice for two semesters, fall and spring. Students must complete a total of 12 credit hours and 600 clock hours in concentration field or 300 clock hours per semester. On occasion, full-time students may request the option to extend field over three semesters. Students who are requesting to extend field over three semesters must seek the approval of the field coordinator. One or more of the following criteria are used in evaluating a full-time student request to extend field practice over more than 2 semesters:

- The student has a circumstance that makes completing the number of hours in two semesters very difficult.
- A field placement is available that enables the student to meet the learning competencies of the concentration practicum and that can accommodate the specific scheduling needs of the student. The field instructor must be willing to allow the student to extend the placement over three semesters.
- There are sufficient resources to provide liaison services over the additional semester.
- The agency or field instructor strongly prefers the student to extend the placement over three semesters given the nature of the field assignments.

Extended Study and Part-time Advanced Standing

Extended Study and part-time advanced standing students must also must complete a total of 12 credit hours and 600 clock hours in concentration field and must develop a plan for completion of the concentration field practicum with their field coordinator. Extended study students often elect to extend concentration field over three semesters, generally beginning in the summer after completion of all generalist coursework and field. Part-time advanced standing students complete field according to their program of study and may extend their placement over three semesters.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities in Field Education

To promote a quality field practicum, it is essential that key persons involved in the practicum understand the complexity of their roles and work in cooperation with one another. The following section delineates the roles and responsibilities of those key persons.

3.01 Director of Field and International Education

The Director of Field and International Education is responsible for oversight of domestic and international field education in all College of Social Work programs.

The responsibilities for this position are to:

1. Assure congruence between the College of Social Work MSSW 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 coordinators.
5. Provide oversight of the 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 databases.
7. Develop and provide oversight of strategies for recruitment, development, and training of field instructors.
8. Connect social work students to international host institutions currently under a memorandum of agreement with the University and/or College of Social Work.
9. Establish new international agreements with host institutions and/or

organizations with an international mission.

10. Support initiatives relating to study abroad and international field experiences ensuring compliance with the university and college policies and procedure.
11. Assist students in locating study abroad/ international funds to offset costs of travel and experience.

3.02 Field Coordinator

The field coordinator is administratively responsible for the oversight of the field practicum for the students enrolled in the campus or program to which they are assigned. This includes 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 effective 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 when a grade of "No Credit" is 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 certification training program 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 generalist students.
12. Assign student grades upon review of student competency evaluations and with recommendation from the field liaison.

3.03 Field 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. Maintain ongoing contacts with assigned field instructors and students via telephone and internet.
2. Meet with each assigned student and field instructor at least once per semester. 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.
3. Complete and submit field liaison report forms within two weeks of a meeting.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Provide the field instructor with current knowledge about the academic curriculum and any necessary assistance in relating it to field practice assignments.

7. Review, approve, and sign the student learning plan, evaluations, and time sheet.
8. Report to the field coordinator each semester on the progress of the student in placement and any problems encountered.
9. Contribute ideas for innovation and upgrading of the field practicum and for expansion into new agencies and practice fields.
10. 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.

3.04 Field Instructor

The field instructor has the primary responsibility for the student's education in the field practicum. The field instructor is an educator and a role model 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 the educational competencies for the practicum and that take into consideration as much as possible the student's past experience, learning styles, career goals, and unique learning needs.
2. Provides an orientation to the agency.
3. Informs relevant agency staff about the MSSW program and the student's role in the agency.
4. Develops the student's learning plan after receiving input from the student and field liaison, as needed.
5. Meets at least one hour each week with the student for an educationally focused conference and supervision.

6. Reviews and signs student field practicum timesheet.
7. Contacts the field liaison, if consultation or assistance is needed, and participates in regularly held semester meetings with the liaison and student.
8. Assesses the student's progress on a regular basis and completes all evaluation instruments in a timely manner.
9. Participates in field instructor certification training and in other opportunities for college-agency exchange.
10. Contributes knowledge and suggestions to the college for updating the field practicum and/or master's curriculum.

3.05 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 may provide direct daily supervision of the student's learning activities. The task instructor does not replace the field instructor but is expected to be well informed of the college's educational plan and understand their role in the student's learning. The field instructor helps the student integrate the task instructor's contribution into the overall educational experience.

3.06 Student

The student is expected to be an active adult learner with a commitment to and investment in preparation for a career in the profession of social work. The expectations for the knowledge, values, and skills that students must acquire in field practice are specified in detail in the College's educational competencies for each practicum. Students are expected to:

1. Prepare for placement interviews and present in a professional manner. Interview preparation includes review of the agency website and developing some questions to ask at interview. Professional presentation includes manner of dress and all forms of communication in scheduling and completing the interview.
2. Participate with the field instructor in examining the educational competencies and practice behaviors and developing learning assignments

for the field practicum.

3. Demonstrate the professional use of supervision by preparing for the weekly supervisory meeting, taking initiative to raise questions for discussion and demonstrating application of theory to practice.
4. Demonstrate professional behavior at all agency meetings and functions and in all interactions with agency staff.
5. Engage actively in the evaluation process by seeking ongoing feedback from the field instructor and participating in all formal evaluations.
6. Use the NASW Code of Ethics as a guide in all practicum activities.
7. Treat all information about agency clients in a confidential matter.
8. Abide by agency policies regarding practice activities, dress codes, working hours, inclement weather, and attendance. Some agencies may have policies and norms that prohibit piercings, visible tattoos and specific clothing or shoes.
9. Maintain an accurate record of time on the field practicum timesheet.
10. Report absences to the field instructor in advance when possible and make arrangements with the field instructor to make up any lost hours in a timely manner.
11. Communicate with the field instructor regarding any concerns with the field experience and engage constructively in finding solutions. If these concerns cannot be resolved with the field instructor, contact the field liaison to request consultation and assistance.
12. Meet with the field liaison during each semester meeting to review progress and discuss any concerns or problems in the placement experience.
13. Transport self to and from the field practice agency.
14. Pay annual premium for professional liability insurance. Students are

typically billed for their liability insurance by the bursar's office as a part of their semester fees. It must be paid before the field practicum starting date.

15. Complete the form, Student Evaluation of Field Practice, at the end of the placement.

16. Submit all required forms according to the designated schedule.

17. Read the field manual and abide by all field policies and procedures.

18. Read and abide by the College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct.

3.07 Major Professor/Advisor

Each entering student is assigned a major professor or advisor who is responsible for overseeing the student's progress. The major professor helps the student plan a course of study and is available to the student if problems arise.

The major professor may be notified by the field coordinator when the student is doing less than satisfactory work in field. Students who experience problems in field practice may seek consultation from their major professor as well as from the field liaison. It is usually appropriate for both to be aware of problems in the field, which may or may not be related to other difficulties the student is having in academics or life situations.

4.0 Selection of Field Agencies

Each field coordinator is administratively responsible for identifying, developing, approving and maintaining field practice settings for the MSSW 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 MSSW 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.

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.

4.01 Procedures for the 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 or teleconference and also collects information regarding the agency through the agency information form, the website and community contacts to determine whether the organization meets the specified criteria. Finally, an affiliation or memorandum of agreement specifying mutual obligations of the field organization and the MSSW Program must be agreed-upon and signed by the agency administrator and the university Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration or The Dean of the College. These agreements are on file in the college. A signed copy is also provided for the agency file.

Agencies are selected to become generalist and/or concentration field sites depending upon the kinds of educational experiences that are available and the qualifications of available field instructors.

This determination is made in the selection process after thoughtful consideration of:

1. The congruence of the agency's mission and scope of services with generalist and/or concentration field competencies.

2. The field instructor's qualifications, specialized training, and preference for providing supervision for the generalist or one of the concentrations.
3. The availability of learning experiences that fit the learning needs of students and address the competencies of the respective practicums.
4. Information from other sources, e.g., students, faculty, and community practitioners, regarding the stability, reputation, and quality of services at this agency.

4.02 Criteria for Approval as a Field Agency

The following criteria are used for field agency selection:

1. The agency's mission is consistent with the values and ethics of the social work profession.
2. Learning experiences available to students are consistent with the required competencies and practice behaviors of the generalist and/or concentration field courses.
3. A variety of learning experiences appropriate for MSSW students is available.
4. The agency is able to provide a field instructor who holds an MSSW Degree from a CSWE-accredited program with two years of post-master's social work practice experience.
5. The agency is able to provide the student with the necessary physical resources for the learning experiences, e.g., work space and supplies, etc.

5.0 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.

5.01 Criteria for Selection of Field Instructors

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

1. The field instructor has an MSSW from a CSWE-accredited program and two years post master's social work practice experience. Supervisory and/or teaching experience is preferred.
2. The field instructor must be committed to master's level 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 field instructor orientation and training.

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

If an MSSW staff person is not available within the agency, the agency may locate an MSSW practitioner 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 instructor should be

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

5.02 Field Instructor Orientation

Prospective field instructors receive an overview of the field practicum, information about the field instructor training, and the 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.

5.03 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 think and act as educators as well as practitioners and supervisors. The college provides a field instructor training program to enhance the knowledge and skills of field instructors in their role as educators. The training includes content in the following areas: MSSW curriculum, student orientation to field, adult learning and teaching strategies, evaluating students, legal and ethical issues, dealing with challenging student situations, risk management, evidence-based practice and integration of theory and practice.

Field instructor training is offered at least one time per year on each campus. This training is also available in an online format. Each year one or more additional training sessions are offered to field instructors. Topics have included ethics, diversity, neuroscience, and evidence-based practice. Field instructors receive contact hours for the training. The field coordinators also make themselves available to conduct orientation and training at the field site when necessary or requested by a particular agency.

6.0 Placement Selection Process

6.01 Admission to Field

Students are admitted to the full-time, extended study, or advanced standing program of study. Application for admission to the MSSW program is completed through the UT graduate school and College of Social Work admissions process. All students admitted to the MSSW program are eligible for field. Students who have not been admitted to the MSSW program, are non-degree seeking students, or are not enrolled in required co-requisite course work are not allowed to enroll in generalist field. Students who are currently enrolled in the MSSW program but have not completed the generalist coursework and field are not permitted to enroll in concentration field.

Full-time students are admitted to generalist field in the fall semester of their first year of study. Extended study students are admitted to generalist field seminar in the summer after their first year and commence their placement in the fall semester of their second year of study. Full-time students must complete Generalist Field I (SW 542) before progressing to Generalist Field II (SW 544). Extended study students commence their field practicum with SW 541, a 1 credit hour seminar in the summer session and then continue with SW 542 in the fall and SW 543 in the spring. Students who are completing international or block placements as a part of their generalist field experience are required to complete the SW 542 seminar before entering a block or international placement (SW536).

Students completing the regular 2-year program on a full-time or extended study basis must complete generalist field before they are admitted to concentration field (SW 584 or 586). In addition, they must have completed all generalist academic courses (SW 510, 512, 513, 519, 522, 537, 538, 539). Students who are admitted to the full-time advanced standing program are admitted to concentration field (SW 586) in the fall semester after completion of SW 520, 537, 539, and 593 in the summer session. Students in the part-time advanced standing program are eligible for admission to concentration field in the fall semester of their first year but generally delay field until the second year according to their program of study.

6.02 Planning and Interviewing for Placement

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 permission from the field coordinator. Online students who live in other states may be asked to provide information about agencies in their communities who may provide placement. Generalist and concentration field placements are selected through a joint process involving the student, the field coordinator, and personnel

from potential placement sites. Generalist students generally interview at only one site, while concentration students may interview at up to three sites.

The planning process is as follows:

- Each student completes a *Field Placement Application* for the generalist and/or concentration practicum, identifying practice interests, experiences, and needs and submits it to the field coordinator by the due date. This information is used by the field coordinator to identify prospective placements for each student.
- The field coordinator communicates with each student by a combination of email, telephone, other technology, and/or in-person interviews to identify the practicum sites that fit the student's interest and educational needs.
- 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.
- Students and prospective field instructors are expected to contact the field coordinator to report on the outcome of interviews. Field instructors notify the field coordinator as to whether the student has been offered a placement. Students are required to contact their field coordinator to report on the outcome of interviews and to submit to the field coordinator a completed *Confirmation of Field Placement* for approval. Students are expected to submit the completed and signed *Confirmation of Field Placement* by the due date established by the student's field coordinator. The final decision regarding each student's placement assignment is made by the field coordinator for the student's program or campus.

Students are expected to comply with all due dates and timelines for the placement planning process. These dates are set by the field coordinator for the program in which the student is enrolled and are communicated to students primarily through email. This expectation of professional timeliness includes submission of the application by the due date and timely responses to all communication from the field coordinator regarding placement.

After the student has submitted the completed field application, most communication from the field coordinator will be by email. Students must check and respond to their email messages daily during this process. Each field coordinator is communicating with and coordinating interviews for many students and agencies. If a student fails to respond quickly to a message regarding an interview, the student may lose the opportunity to interview at a desired placement site. Students are to contact agencies to schedule interviews within 2

business days of receiving instructions to do so from the field coordinator. Failure to schedule an interview in a timely manner often results in a negative impression of the student by the field instructor and may result in loss of opportunity to interview at the agency. If a student does not follow the instructions from the field coordinator regarding scheduling interviews, 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.

If a student submits the completed field application after the due date, the student may not be able to be placed for the planned semester. This could result in a change in the student's program plan and delay of graduation. Even if the field coordinator is able to place a student whose application is late, the student's options for field may be severely limited, and the student may not be able to secure a placement within their area of interest.

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. Therefore, 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 by presenting in a professional manner at the interview. The 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 MSSW 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 major professor 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 and at field seminar. Students are responsible for adhering to professional standards, including, but not limited to, attire, timeliness, preparation, and conduct.

The field coordinator will assist the generalist student in securing one interview and the concentration student in securing up to three interviews. If the student is unable to secure a field placement after interviewing with three agencies, the field coordinator will seek feedback from the agency representatives regarding the results of the student's interviews. The field coordinator will meet with the student to discuss the outcome of the interviews and to provide the student with feedback. Based on the feedback from the agencies, the field coordinator may 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 Career Services for additional training and consultation. If the student was interviewing for very competitive placements and no concerns were identified at interview, the field coordinator will work with the student to identify other placement options. 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 MSSW program.

If after completing all scheduled interviews, a student declines all offered placements, the field coordinator will finish facilitating placement interviews for all other students and then contact the student to discuss alternatives.

6.03 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 MSSW 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 MSSW 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 work 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.

6.04 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 Academic Year 2020-2021, 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.

6.05 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://sds.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 field coordinator will make every effort to identify a placement that meets the College of Social Work requirements and addresses the student's learning needs.

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.

6.06 International Placements

The College of Social Work encourages students to explore the option of practicum in an international setting. The College actively seeks relationships with Universities and NGOs in other countries and can assist students in exploring funding options. The University temporarily suspended all study and field abroad during COVID-19. Students will not be able to apply for or participate in a study or field abroad experience until this suspension is lifted.

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 Director of Field and International Education to determine the appropriate semester, location and time frame of an international placement. This process includes taking into consideration any required courses and electives that may or may not be available in the host country as well as exploring the possibility of completing courses through the Online MSSW Program while abroad. The student's Major Professor will be included in the discussion of course substitutions and graduation requirements.

Students completing a field placement in another country will need to register with the Center for International 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 Director of Field and International 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. It is important to keep in mind that the value of this type of experience can greatly enhance the student's educational experience and career opportunities and is generally well worth any additional time, effort and cost.

6.07 Block Placements

A student who has special circumstances or needs may request to complete a placement on a block basis. This may mean that the student is completing an entire practicum in one semester

or that the student needs to complete more than the usual number of placement and credit hours in one semester. This plan is an exception to the curriculum structure and requires prior approval by the field coordinator. The Major Professor/Advisor may also need to be included in the planning if the plan requires a change to the student's program of study. Students are advised to contact their Field Coordinators as soon as they become aware of any personal situation that would require a change in field plans.

6.08 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 graduate 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. Student stipends may be given as lump sums, paid on an hourly basis, or provided as reimbursement for mileage. If a student is completing a placement within their employment agency, the student may receive salaried compensation for field activities upon agency approval.

Students who are interested in stipend-funded placements should consult with their field coordinator to determine which agencies may be offering stipends in the relevant academic year. Students are advised that stipend-funded placements are generally very competitive. The student's performance in the placement interview may determine whether the stipend will be offered to them. Students are advised to take the time to prepare well for these interviews.

7.0 Pre-placement Requirements

7.01 Screening procedure requirements

Most organizations require students to undergo additional 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. Having this information easily accessible will avoid delays in the start of field placement.

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 and drug screens. Field coordinators 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 MSSW program who are placed in Tennessee are presumed to enter the school social work licensure program if they select a field placement in a school setting. All students placed in school settings in Tennessee 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. Other states may have different requirements for school social work placements. Students must meet the requirements of the state in which they reside and are placed.

7.02 Professional Liability Coverage

Students in field practicum can be sued for malpractice. Therefore, participation in a group plan for professional liability coverage is required by the University of all students enrolled in field practicum courses. Student Professional Liability Insurance covers liability of students and/or faculty members for the actions of the students while they are engaged in a University of Tennessee directed educational activity relating to their professional field. The malpractice fee is paid each year before beginning the practicum experience. The cost of this insurance varies according to the current agreement with the University's insurance carrier. An effort is

made to obtain the most economical coverage possible. Students are generally billed annually for this coverage by the University Bursar. Students are not allowed to begin field practicum without paying this fee. This policy provides \$1,000,000 per claim and \$6,000,000 per annual aggregate per student.

7.03 Personal Safety Training

All generalist students must participate in the personal safety training provided during seminar. The training includes content on: anger management skills, infectious disease control, sexual harassment, and practical advice to minimize risks to safety at the agency, in the community, and when making home visits. If students are involved in an incident that jeopardizes their personal safety, they must complete the *Personal Safety Incident Report* form. Before students begin field practicum they must sign the document *Acknowledgment of Risk in the Field Practicum*. Both forms are available on the College of Social Work website. Concentration students are presumed to have completed safety training during the generalist year. Safety guidelines are reviewed with advanced standing students during orientation and through materials provided on Blackboard.

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. There is currently no vaccine to prevent 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 developing severe 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 then touching 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.

7.04 Required Pre-Placement Documents

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

8.0 Procedures During Field Placement

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

Daily Self-Screening Requirements for students in person at Field Agencies:

All students who are placed in field agency settings will be required to complete the UT online Self-Screening questionnaire at selfscreen.utk.edu before reporting to field. *If the answer to any of the self-screening questions is yes, the student should contact their field instructor and inform them that they will not report to field that day.* A yes response to any questions will result in a red X and instructions not to report to campus for that day. This also means that students should not report to a field placement.

A “yes” response will also direct the student to complete the online Self-Isolation Form at: <https://veoci.com/veoci/p/form/ywn6tdat855m#tab=entryForm>. This form will link the student to the UT Contact Tracing Program. The student will be contacted by a UT Contact Tracer who will direct the student to contact their health care provider or local health department. 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>

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.

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

Any student who is required to quarantine or self-isolate is to complete the following steps.

1. Immediately notify their Field Instructor and Field Coordinator;
2. Complete any reporting requirements of the field placement agency.

Students who have been exposed may be expected to quarantine for 14 days. If the student is completing field in person at the agency, the student will need to notify their Field Instructor that they will not be able to report to the agency during the quarantine period. Students and Field Instructors should make a plan for how the student may continue with client services remotely, if possible, or address other field-related activities. It is critically important that the student communicate clearly and completely with the Field Instructor regarding the status of any assignments or client services to avoid disruption.

If a student is feeling ill and unable to engage in field activities, the student should care for their own health and then resume field activities after recovery. The Field Instructor and/or Field Coordinator will assist the student in developing a plan for completion of all hours.

8.02 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 (<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 HIPPA apply within agency settings. Some agencies may require special training in specific policy areas. See HIPAA at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hippa/>

8.03 Orientation to Field Practicum

The field coordinator provides an orientation to the field practicum for all incoming first year students in the fall semester seminar. 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.

8.04 Managing and Recording Time in Field

Students are expected to confirm their placement schedules with their field instructors. This schedule must conform to MSSW Program requirements and must be documented on the *Confirmation of Field Placement* form and approved by the field coordinator. Students are expected to follow the agreed-upon schedule except in unusual circumstances, such as illness or inclement weather.

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 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.

Classroom work should not be completed during field practicum and conversely students should not be asked to fulfill field obligations during class time. Field practicum does not take precedence over scheduled class times.

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 entitled to holidays listed on the college calendar which fall on field practicum days. However, these holidays do not count as field time and should not be recorded on the student's time sheet as field time. Also, it is critical for students to inform their field instructors well in advance of the university holiday schedule to make sure that this can be accommodated by the agency without disruption of the student's educational experience or client services. A student and field instructor may agree that the student will attend field on a university holiday and take that holiday time off on a day when the agency is closed for a different holiday.

Each student is responsible for completing the required number of hours for practicum. The hour requirement for each field course is listed on the course syllabus. Students who take university or agency holidays or sick leave or miss field days due to inclement weather are required to make up the hours. Students should not record field hours on their time sheets for any days that they were off for holidays, illness, or inclement weather. It is prudent for students and field instructors to discuss and plan for these types of agency closures and, if possible, to develop some competency-related activities on the learning plan that can be completed by the student at another location if the agency is closed for a holiday or inclement weather. These hours may be recorded on the student's time sheet upon approval by the field instructor when the student has provided sufficient evidence and information regarding activities completed away from the agency.

8.05 Additional Field Hours Within and Between Semesters

Each field course requires a specific minimum number of placement hours to be completed over the course of the semester. Students are to consult their course syllabi to confirm the required number of hours for their field course. Students may complete additional hours within the semester, beyond the required minimum, upon approval of the field instructor. Students may also complete additional hours between semesters upon approval of the field instructor and field coordinator. Additional hours may be used during the following

semester in case of illness, personal or family needs, or preparation for the comprehensive exam.

Students in generalist field may complete up to 185 hours ***before the start of the spring semester***. This maximum of 185 is the total of hours completed within the fall semester and between fall and spring semesters.

Students in concentration field may complete up to 80 additional hours to be applied to the total required hours for concentration field. This maximum of 80 is the total of additional hours completed within and between semesters.

Although students are generally expected to be able to take their semester breaks, many agencies require students to continue in placement between semesters in order to fulfill professional responsibilities. Students may apply the additional hours required by the agency to field hours requirements up to the total maximum additional hours allowed for generalist and concentration field.

The following procedure applies to field hours between semesters:

- Students who wish to complete additional hours between semesters must submit a completed *Request to Complete Field Hours Between Semesters* form to the field coordinator by the date specified. This form is available on the CSW website. This form must be approved and signed by the student's field instructor. 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 complete hours should be completed in collaboration with the field instructor.
- The field coordinator will determine whether the request is approved and will notify the student by email.
- Students will not be allowed to finish field placement any earlier than April 1 in spring or November 1 in fall. Any plan to complete a field placement prior to the end of the semester must be approved by the field instructor and the field coordinator.

8.06 The Learning Plan

The graduate 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 tentative plans for assignments. The college requires a written learning plan for each semester. Students are responsible for maintaining awareness of due dates for learning plans

and evaluations and giving timely reminders to their field instructor. The plan is completed and signed online and may be revised as needed by mutual agreement of the student and field instructor. The completed learning plan is reviewed by the field liaison and field coordinator.

8.07 Health Insurance

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

8.08 Transportation and Vehicle Insurance

All students must provide their own transportation to and from the agency. Use of a car 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 practicum. If transportation is a problem, this should be communicated to the field coordinator. Field coordinators 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. Many agencies will pay mileage for travel required to perform agency work. Students should ask their field instructor about mileage reimbursement if they are required to travel as part of their 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, current driver's license and is confident that their personal vehicle insurance will cover the costs of any accident that may occur.

8.09 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.

9.0 Evaluations and Grading Procedures

9.01 Evaluation of Student Competency

An evaluation of each student's progress in field practicum is completed by the field instructor at midterm and at the end of each academic semester. (The only exception to this is for generalist field students in the fall semester. Given the short duration of fall generalist field practice, there is no midterm evaluation.) Due dates of evaluations can be found in the annual calendar distributed by each campus and on IPT at the beginning of the academic year.

Field Instructors rate student performance on each practice behavior using the scale below. The rating is based on the evidence the student has entered on the learning plan and also on the field and task instructors' observations of the student's performance.

4 = Advanced Competence - Student consistently demonstrates effective integration of knowledge, values, and skills at a more advanced level than would be expected for a student at this point in the MSSW program. Student consistently exceeds performance expectations. Student goes "above and beyond" on assignments and consistently seeks and integrates feedback to enhance competency.

3 = Competence – Student demonstrates consistent integration of knowledge, values, and skills at the expected level of performance for a student at this point in the MSSW program. Student is meeting expectations on all assignments and integrates feedback to enhance competency.

2 = Emerging Competence – Student demonstrates beginning capacity to integrate knowledge, values, and skills. Student is using feedback to build competency, but performance is not yet at the expected level for where the student is in the MSSW program. In the first semester of placement, a student often receives a rating of 2 on one or more practice behaviors due to insufficient opportunity to practice the skill.

Please note: Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate competence and receive a rating of at least 3 on all practice behaviors by the end of the placement. A rating of 2 should not be assigned to a student on the end of semester evaluation for the final semester of placement unless there are concerns about the student's readiness for graduation and performance as a new professional social worker.

If a student earns multiple ratings of 2 on an evaluation, the student and Field Instructor should discuss and document what is needed for the student to achieve competence and forward the documentation to the field coordinator.

1 = Insufficient Competence – Student does not demonstrate essential knowledge, values, and/or skills. Student is not completing assignments adequately and is not responding appropriately to feedback. This student may receive a grade of No Credit for field.

Each student should read and sign the evaluation. Signing the evaluation indicates the student

has read it, not that they agree entirely with its contents. The student has the right to submit a written statement to the college setting forth aspects of the evaluation with which there is disagreement.

9.02 Field Practicum Grading Policy

The field coordinator is the course instructor for field courses and is responsible for assigning the final grade. The field coordinator assigns the final grade after review of learning plan evidence and final evaluations, field liaison report forms, and, if applicable, seminar grades. Field practicum is graded “Satisfactory” or “No Credit”. If a student receives a grade of “No Credit” for field, the student is not allowed to repeat the course or complete the master’s program. If a student wants to appeal this grade, they should refer to the “Student Appeal Process” listed in the MSSW Student Handbook.

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 instructor, 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).

9.03 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 through Qualtrics and are also used to promote program improvement.

10.0 Problems in Field

10.01 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 so that a problem-solving meeting between the student, the field instructor, and the field liaison can be convened.
3. If concerns continue following a meeting with the field liaison, then 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.

10.02 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.

10.03 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. 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.
2. 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.

3. Request a copy of the agency's sexual harassment policy
4. 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.

10.04 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 on the 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. If the placement is terminated, the field instructor should contact the field coordinator to request that a Dismissal from Placement form be loaded on the student's page in IPT. The field instructor is to complete the form. 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 grade of NC (No Credit) will be assigned. A grade of No Credit in field terminates a student from the program.

10.05 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 10.03).

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 grade of No Credit 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 No Credit for the course at the end of the semester. If the student elects to appeal the grade of NC, the student is to follow the grade appeals procedure in the MSSW 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 major professor, 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 major professor is to schedule a committee meeting within 15 days of receiving the student's written request.
- The major professor 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 major professor 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.

10.06 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 will or 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. Is repeatedly absent from field, repeatedly absent without notification, or absent for a period of two weeks for any reason not approved by the field coordinator.
3. Has personal or legal hardships that negatively impact their performance in the field practicum.
4. 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.
5. Consistently performs in a manner that does not meet agency and/or CSW Expectations.
6. Violates the NASW Code of Ethics (depending on nature and severity of the infraction).
7. Fails to maintain confidentiality as mandated by the field agency policy, the NASW Code of Ethics, or HIPAA.
8. Fails to comply with agency policies, procedures, or standards of conduct.

10.07 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 MSSW 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.

10.08 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. Each field course is listed in the graduate catalog with the following registration permission: Must have Instructor Permission to register if student previously withdrew from the course. If a student who has previously withdrawn from the course registers without the instructor's permission, the student will be removed from the course.

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 the MSSW Student Handbook and Hilltopics.

If the Academic Committee has approved the student's eligibility to return to field after withdrawal, the student is to notify the appropriate 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 Major Professor/Advisor for approval by the Academic Committee.

10.09 Eligibility for Field Placement While Appealing Program Dismissal

A student who receives a grade of D or F in any required social work course will be dismissed from the MSSW program. If the student elects to appeal the grade and dismissal, the student will not be permitted to commence or return to field while pursuing the appeal. If the student wins the appeal and the dismissal is rescinded, the student may commence or return to field. If the student has missed the

fall generalist field course, the student must wait until the following fall to begin the generalist field placement as the pre-placement seminar is only offered in the fall semester. Students in concentration field may begin or return to their placement the semester following approval of their appeal, as long as the field agency approves the plan.

Students who are placed in field agencies take on responsibility for direct services to vulnerable clients and/or projects that may have critical timelines. When the College places a student in a field setting, there is a good faith understanding that the student is expected to complete the placement and not expose clients to abrupt disruption of services or the agency to the consequences of unfinished projects. Many of the agency affiliation agreements for student placement stipulate that the student must have satisfactorily completed the required didactic portion of the school's curriculum. A student who has failed a required course would not meet this requirement. Consequently, it is neither ethical nor congruent with binding affiliation agreements for the College to allow a student to return to field while appealing dismissal from the MSSW program.

The following sections of the NASW Code of Ethics are referenced in support of this policy:

- Section 1.01- Commitment to Clients

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

- Section 1.17b- Termination

Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

NOTES:

