



# SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD MANUAL

School of Social Work  
RADFORD UNIVERSITY



## Table of Contents

<b>Field Education .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Welcome.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>The Field Program.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<b>Field Policies and Procedures .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Admission to Field Instruction Program .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Placement Process.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Student Field Placement Interview Policy.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Stipends .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Criminal Background Policy.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Transportation.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Distance Placements.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Dress Code .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Documentation.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Certification of Hours.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Assigning Grades/Attending Seminars.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Grading Policy.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Communication .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Field Placement Disruption.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Safety in the Agency .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Calendar .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Field Hours.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Internship and Related Travel.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Student Confidentiality Waiver .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Liability Insurance.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Block Placements.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Changing Placements .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Field Instruction with Current or Former Employer .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Process to complete employment based proposal.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Expectation of Students:.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>Field Agencies.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Selection .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Criteria.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>MSW Supervision.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Roles and expectations.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Field Orientation.....</i>	<i>15</i>

<i>Student</i> .....	15
<i>Faculty Field Liaison/Seminar Instructor</i> .....	16
<i>Field Instructor</i> .....	16
<i>Task Supervisor (if applicable)</i> .....	17
<i>Agency</i> .....	17
<b>Generalist Practicum (SOWK 641/642)</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Specialization Practicum (SOWK 791/792)</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>The Learning Agreement</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<i>Process</i> .....	19
<i>Roles (in preparing the learning agreement)</i> .....	19
<i>Student:</i> .....	19
<i>Field Instructor/Task Supervisor</i> .....	19
<i>Faculty Field Liaison:</i> .....	19
<i>Completion</i> .....	19
<i>Copies</i> .....	19
<i>Revisions</i> .....	20
<b>Evaluation Process</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<i>Midterm and Final evaluation</i> .....	20
<i>MSW Student (self) Evaluation and Field Instructor Evaluation</i> .....	20
<i>Expectations of Agency:</i> .....	20

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# FIELD EDUCATION

## Welcome

On behalf of Radford University and the School of Social Work, I welcome you to the field education component of our program. The Council on Social Work Education has declared field as the signature pedagogy of social work education, underscoring the importance of university-community partnerships that allow students to reinforce and apply the knowledge they have learned in the classroom. The Field Education Manual serves as a guide for students, field educators, agencies and faculty as they endeavor to provide a sound educational foundation for the field experience. This edition of the manual has been developed to reflect the most current policies and procedures of the School of Social Work.

Since 1974 Radford University has been a leading force in preparing students for careers as professional social work practitioners and we have developed professional relationships that connects faculty, students and practitioners. We wish to acknowledge and thank all of the agencies, field instructors, task supervisors, faculty and students whose contributions, sacrifices and personal commitments to social work continue to make social work field education at Radford University a success.

I welcome suggestions on ways to enhance the field education program.

In advance I thank each of you for your collaborative spirit and look forward to a positive and productive academic year.

Diana Joyce, MSW  
Field Coordinator

# The Field Program

The field education process makes classroom learning "come alive" by providing students with opportunities to apply theories and processes discussed in class to real life situations. It is a central and pivotal component of the MSW curriculum. Through the practicum students apply and integrate the knowledge and skills imparted in classes. A range of learning opportunities facilitates students in applying theories and skills within a supervised environment.

**The Goals and Objectives of the MSW program are essential to the field education component. Final evaluation is based on these program goals, found in Part A of the *MSW Student Handbook*.**

## FIELD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Admission to Field Instruction Program

Students must meet all of the following requirements in order to be admitted to the field instruction program.

1. Completion of **all** prerequisite courses in accordance with academic performance requirements set forth in the *Graduate Catalog* and the *MSW Student Handbook*.
2. Concurrent enrollment in required practice courses.
3. Completion of field application and other required documents and interview with Field Coordinator.
4. Attendance at Field Internship Fair to talk with agencies about internship opportunities.
5. Successful interview with their potential Field Instructor to confirm their placement.
6. Secure professional liability insurance, in the amount of 1 million/3 million, prior to the beginning of field placement.
7. Attend all required field orientations and meetings.
8. Submission of **all** required field paperwork.
9. Continued demonstration of field readiness in accordance with academic and professional standards set forth in the Graduate Catalog, Waldron College Standards of Professional Practice Education, MSW Student Handbook, and NASW Code of Ethics.

### Placement Process

Field instruction allows students to build on their previous work experiences as well as on their classroom work. Placement for field experience is an individualized process, but includes certain necessary steps. Those steps are:

1. Student completes a Field Placement Application and uploads application to the D2L class that has been designated for the particular field cohort one semester prior to placement. Applications are found in the D2L class and on the School of Social Work's website (under Field Program). If a student plans to submit an employment-based proposal, the cover form available on D2L and the website, must be accompanied with the field application.  
<http://www.radford.edu/content/wchs/home/social-work/academic-programs/field-program.html>

**Fall placement – Due second Friday in February**

**Spring placement – Due first day of fall semester**

**Summer placement – Due first day of spring semester**

**For incoming students, please refer to due dates listed on D2L and on your instruction sheet**

2. The student is interviewed by the Field Coordinator to discuss the field placement process and required documents and forms. Discussion about internship sites available that will maximize the learning experience for the student.
3. Student applies for and purchases liability insurance in the amount of \$1 million/\$3 million.
4. An internship fair may be scheduled to provide the student with an opportunity to talk with agencies interested to host an intern, to determine learning experiences for the students. Once a match has been made, the student is contacted regarding the future process, (Additional interview, nothing additional, etc.) Should an interview be requested by the agency, upon receipt of contact information for the agency, the student is to make contact and schedule an interview within 3 business days. **At their discretion, some agencies may offer employment or paid internships while participating in the field fair. The only paperwork that is required by the School of Social Work is a letter of approval.**
5. Incoming full-time MSW students who will begin field placement in fall semester must be available to interview face-to-face with a field placement agency on or before July 30. If students are not available on or before July 30, students may not be eligible to begin a field placement in fall semester.
6. The student is interviewed by an agency representative and is selected. If the agency requests an additional interview, by the close of that business day following that interview, the student is to make contact with the Field Coordinator to indicate their interest in continuing to explore an internship

opportunity with the agency. (Agencies may reject a student if there is not a mutually agreeable fit.)

7. The student is assigned to an agency Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor, if applicable).
8. Incoming students should receive their assigned placement by the end of July for placements to begin at the end of August. Current students *should* receive their assigned placement by the end of the preceding semester. A confirmation letter regarding the placement will be sent to the student and the placement agency.
9. As soon as students receive the placement, the student will make contact with the prospective Field Instructor (or Task Supervisor) to coordinate schedules and discuss pre-placement requirements, including background checks.
10. Students must purchase LiveText membership.

### **Student Field Placement Interview Policy**

Every student will be offered the opportunity to interview with a field placement agency, initially at the Internship Fair and/or individually. If the Field Coordinator, in consultation with the field agency(ies), determines this interview is not successful, the student will be granted a second interview at a second agency. However, the Field Coordinator may refer the student for advising to develop a remediation plan before this second interview. If the second interview is determined unsuccessful by the Field Coordinator, in consultation with the field agency, then the student will be referred to the Field Committee. Failure to successfully interview a second time may result in a recommendation of dismissal from the BSW/MSW program and will be referred to the BSW/MSW Committee for further action.

If the student is offered a placement by the agency after the field interview, then the student must accept the placement. If the placement is deemed appropriate by the Field Coordinator and the student does not accept the placement then this is considered a disrupted placement. Refer to Field Placement Disruption policy.

### **Stipends**

A student must review the stipends available and may apply to only one stipend. If, during the interview process, the student realizes they are no longer interested in that stipend, the student needs to withdraw from the stipend process. Application to a stipend constitutes an agreement to accept that stipend if offered. If the student is awarded the stipend, the student must accept the stipend and placement. If the student does not accept the stipend and associated placement, this is considered a failed field placement.

### **Criminal Background Policy**

Field placement agencies may require students to obtain a criminal background check, DMV record check, credit report, drug screen and/or require certain medical screenings (e.g.; Tuberculosis). Students are responsible for obtaining and providing the documents to the

agency prior to starting the placement. Students are encouraged to be completely honest and open about this information with agencies from the beginning, starting at interviews. Any legal issues reported on your record may impact your ability to participate in an internship and is **not** the responsibility of the field office. The field office will make every effort to find you a placement, but we will not be held liable if a placement cannot be made due to a criminal background. A criminal history can also impact becoming licensed in the future. Radford University School of Social Work is not responsible for decisions made by the licensing board, neither can we predict what a licensing board will decide in regards to criminal history.

### **Transportation**

Each student is responsible for providing his/her own transportation to meet the requirements of an internship. Internships may be up to 90 miles from campus.

### **Distance Placements**

Field Placements are located within a 90-mile radius of a student's primary campus. Requests for placement outside of the 90-mile radius require the student find their own placement and submit a petition to the field committee one semester prior to the start of the field placement. This petition will be presented to the Field Committee that will make the final decision regarding the approval/disapproval of the petition. In addition to meeting requirements for field placement agencies, the agency field instructor must have access and willingness to use various forms of distance technology. Students are required to attend field seminar meetings face to face.

### **Dress Code**

Students must inquire and follow the agency dress code. As a representative of RU School of Social Work, it is important to present oneself professionally, especially in appearance and attire. Dress in a way that the attention is on the client and not on you.

### **Documentation**

The student is responsible for making copies, for their own use, of all field information submitted to the Faculty Field Liaison, the Field Coordinator and their LiveText account. Most documentation will be accessible to the student through the LiveText system. The School of Social Work will not provide copies of any documentation and student files are purged after 5 years of graduation. Student must submit all required original paperwork electronically and upload to their LiveText account.

### **Certification of Hours**

During the course of the internship, the student will log hours completed at their field placement into the LiveText system and the Field Instructor (or Task Supervisor, if applicable) will approve hours.

All forms related to the field practicum are available on the School of Social Work's website or word document versions are available on their D2L class for their field practicum.



## **Assigning Grades/Attending Seminars**

The Faculty Field Liaison teaching the field seminar will assign the grade. Seminar attendance and performance will enter into the grading process. Seminars must meet a 3-hour seminar six times a semester in face to face format. Case presentations will be incorporated into the seminar. Students are expected to attend all seminar sessions. Students must complete all of the hours required for field. These hours do not include time spent in seminar.

## **Grading Policy**

Grades are awarded by the Faculty Field Liaison as determined by course requirements and consideration of learning agreement and final evaluation at internship. In extreme situations, a grade of incomplete may be awarded at the sole discretion of the Faculty Field Liaison and will require documentation of the circumstances warranting the incomplete grade (see below).

After consultation with the Field Coordinator, the Faculty Field Liaison may submit an incomplete grade for the student. All requirements must be met and the incomplete grade changed to reflect requirements are met before the student may register for any other field seminar. The student is responsible for understanding and adhering to the Continuous Enrollment Policy of the Graduate College.

In order to successfully complete the field practicum and seminar course, the student must receive a grade of B- or better. If student earns a C, they will be required to repeat the field practicum and seminar course.

If internship hours are not completed over the semester, within 15 days before the end of the semester, the student will submit documentation to be reviewed by the field committee. This document should contain the following:

- reason(s) why the student was not able to complete the hours within the semester,
- if applicable, completed remediation plan (if student enrolled in SOWK 641 or SOWK 791).
- documented plan to complete all hours,
- how many hours the student will intern per week,
- what activities the student will work on while completing the hours and
- the date when hours will be completed.

Support of this plan will be obtained from the field instructor (and task supervisor if applicable) by their signature on this document prior to submission. If this plan is not submitted to the field committee for approval, any hours accrued past the semester will not be approved by the School of Social Work, which will result in a failing grade.

If the student receives a grade of incomplete for a semester and the Faculty Field Liaison is not available to continue to provide oversight to the student and field placement, the Field Coordinator will assume the role of Faculty Field Liaison.

## **Communication**

The relationship between the student, field instructor (and task supervisor, if applicable), and the faculty field liaison, is highly valued while the student is an intern. The assigned field instructor provides learning opportunities that are unique to the field in that particular agency setting. Should the relationship between the student and field instructor (or task supervisor, if applicable) become troublesome, it is the student's responsibility to follow the process outlined below.

1. Student should address their concern directly to the field instructor or task supervisor of concern as soon as possible.
2. If the student does not believe they can have a conversation to express their concern(s), the student is to contact the faculty field liaison immediately. One example of a situation where the student should not approach the field instructor (or task supervisor) directly would be if that person were sexually harassing the student.
3. If the situation cannot be resolved or there are concerns that need to be brought to the Field Coordinator, the faculty field liaison contacts the Field Coordinator. If the student does not believe their concerns have been addressed through the previous two steps, the student can contact the Field Coordinator to schedule a meeting.
4. The Field Coordinator, in consultation with the faculty field liaison and the School of Social Work Administrative Team or the Field Committee, determines a resolution to the identified concern(s).
5. The student must follow the steps outlined above. If at any point the resolution is not satisfactory, the student should initiate the next step in the above process. After all the above options have been exhausted, the student may contact the Director of Social Work if they believe the resolution to be unsatisfactory.

### **Field Placement Disruption**

A failed field placement is defined as being asked to leave a field placement or receiving a C or lower in field seminar. If a student is asked to leave a field placement or receives a grade of C or lower in field seminar, the student will meet with the Field Committee. The field committee may impose the following consequences: referral to the MSW Committee for recommendation of dismissal from the MSW program, granting of a second placement at a second agency at the next regular field scheduling cycle and/or referral of the student to his/her advisor to develop a remediation plan within 10 classroom days. A second failed field placement will result in a recommendation of dismissal from the MSW program and will be referred to the MSW Committee for further action.

### **Safety in the Agency**

The School of Social Work values student interns and our community agency internship partners. Of paramount concern, the School of Social Work believes that all students should be safe in their internship/internship community. We believe the perspective of students, agency personnel, and the School of Social Work, makes for a valuable and rich learning experience. If a student, agency representative, or representative of the School of Social Work feels a student's placement is unsafe, anyone can initiate the process to ascertain any safety issues/concerns about the agency.

Process:

1. Should a student not feel safe at their internship or while carrying out internship duties, the student is encouraged to voice safety concerns immediately to the Field Instructor, the Task Supervisor (if applicable), and to the Faculty Field Liaison. If the concern is sexual harassment by Field Instructor or Task Supervisor, the student should take their concerns directly to the Faculty Field Liaison and to the Radford University Title IX office.

2. The Student, the Field Instructor (unless Field Instructor/Task Supervisor is the issue), the Task Supervisor (if applicable), and Faculty Field Liaison discuss concerns with all parties, regardless of the source of the perceived safety issue.

3. If the problem cannot be resolved, the Faculty Field Liaison contacts the Field Coordinator, who conducts, or designates someone from the School of Social Work to conduct a formal investigation into the safety issues/concerns.

4. The Field Coordinator, in consultation with the Faculty Field Liaison and the School of Social Work Administrative Team and/or the Field Committee, determines whether the student is to be released from the placement. If the student is not released from the placement, the Faculty Field Liaison, the student, the Field Instructor and Task Supervisor (if applicable), are expected to continue problem-solving until the situation is resolved.

Should the issue be taken before the Field Committee, the student will need to attend the Field Committee meeting to provide details of safety issues/concerns. Prior to this meeting, the student may submit a written response outlining the safety issues/concerns. The Field Coordinator may request additional information from the agency.

At least five classroom days before a Field Committee Meeting, the Field Coordinator will inform the student, advisor, Field Committee members, and any other relevant parties of the date and time of the meeting. The Field Coordinator serves as Chair of this meeting. The student may elect to have present a faculty advisor, who may privately counsel the student but may not address the Committee or question witnesses. No party may be represented by legal counsel at these proceedings. Only individuals having direct knowledge of the alleged safety violation(s) may appear before the Committee. Members of the Committee must be present at the hearing in order to vote. A student will be released from the placement if a majority of voting members vote in favor of doing so.

5. If the student is released from the placement, the Field Coordinator notifies the Field Instructor and any other agency personnel. The Field Coordinator discusses other options with the student. Issues are documented in the agency record. The School of Social Work Field Office will not place another student at that agency location until reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the safety issue/concern.

6. The Field Office and the student will work together to begin the process of securing placement at a second agency. The student may be able to resume accruing field hours.

**\*\*In all circumstances, the Field Coordinator should be advised of any issues or problems in field.**

## **Calendar**

Students are expected to follow the University calendar relative to holidays and recesses. However, students must complete all field hours and negotiate any time off (school holidays, sick days, etc.) with the Field Instructor and if applicable, the Task Supervisor. Due to professional expectations in clinical placements, each student must negotiate with the Field Instructor in order to determine how these professional responsibilities will be fulfilled during

University holidays and recesses. Students who fall behind in required number of field work hours for a given semester are required to complete the hours before beginning the next semester and may do so during the holiday breaks (if the agency is able to accommodate the student and the field committee has reviewed the required documentation as stated in the above Grading Policy). Other exceptions must be negotiated with the agency Field Instructor, if applicable, the Task Supervisor, the student, and the Faculty Field Liaison. If the Faculty Field Liaison is not available to continue to provide oversight to the student and field placement, the Field Coordinator will assume the role of Faculty Field Liaison.

## **Field Hours**

MSW students are expected to begin accruing field hours, which can include orientations, meetings, establishing their internship schedule at the start of the semester in which they are enrolled in SOWK 641/642, SOWK 791/792 (field seminar course). If they have not accrued hours in the first 10 days, students are encouraged to drop the field seminar course and the corresponding practice course by the add/drop deadline.

The required field hours must be completed over the course of the 15-week semester (11-week Summer III semester). Typically, field hours will be accrued during the normal business hours of 8-5. Students may not begin their internship early, students must begin at the start of the semester. Should orientation to the agency be required prior to the start of the semester, the student must receive approval from the field office. Any accrual of field hours prior to the start of the semester must be approved by the field office. Students must intern at their placement for the duration of the semester even if this results in accruing more hours than required for the internship. With approval from the agency, the field instructor and the field office, students may minimally complete hours during 13 weeks of a 15-week semester or 10 weeks of an 11-week semester. If the agency or student requires any variation to this procedure, the student and field instructor must discuss this necessary change with the faculty field liaison and it must be approved beforehand. The learning agreement should reflect any approved change. All paperwork must be completed and the student must have attended an orientation prior to beginning the internship. Daily field Hours will be completed and approved electronically in the LiveText system. Students must select a category (QMHP-A, QMHP-C, or other) when recording hours in LiveText.

## **Internship and Related Travel**

In consultation with the field instructor/task supervisor and field liaison, any non-routine travel related to the internship can be counted as field hours, up to 8 hours per semester.

## **Student Confidentiality Waiver**

The School of Social Work has adopted a student confidentiality waiver for the purposes of the field education component. The field placement is a vital component of your education as a professional, and every effort possible must be made to mindfully balance the needs of each student with the needs of the community agency and their clients. In order to provide each student with informed consent about the necessarily collaborative nature of this partnership, we ask that you read the waiver and sign it prior to beginning the placement. The form is available in the D2L class to apply for field and on the School of Social Work website.

## Liability Insurance

All students enrolled in the field education program at Radford University are required to carry personal liability insurance in the amount of \$1 million/\$3 million. **Students will not be placed in an internship if liability insurance is not secured.** For liability insurance resources, please visit the School of Social Work website, (under Field Program). Students are responsible to submit a copy of individual liability coverage to the field office by the second Friday in November (Spring), the first Friday in April (Summer) and the first Friday in July (fall). If an employment-based practicum has been approved for the student, while in the role of a student at the agency, the student **MUST** have individual liability insurance in their name. Students cannot be a part of group coverage.

## Block Placements

A block placement, a full-time one semester placement, must be supported by the School of Social Work and approved by the academic advisor, Field Coordinator and the MSW Coordinator. Field and field seminar must be taken concurrently. For more information about this option please contact the Field Coordinator at least 18 months before a planned block placement.

An exception to the existing policy for SOWK 791/792 is available as a block placement option. This option is available to the student who is able to coordinate this effort and secure the required signatures and submit for approval. This block placement can be completed during 16 weeks that will include 15 weeks of fall or spring semester. The student must complete SOWK 783 and 784 prior to registering for SOWK 791/792.

### Process:

- Student consults with the Field Coordinator and his/her faculty advisor to complete a block placement for SOWK 791/792 by March 1 of the year prior to beginning field. Proper signatures must be obtained by March 1 and the form must be forwarded by the student to their advisor, Field Coordinator and MSW Coordinator. If this deadline is not met, the student cannot complete a block placement.
- The student must locate a Field Liaison slated to teach SOWK 792 by March 1 of the year prior to beginning field. (Faculty field liaisons must voluntarily agree to provide an additional 6 seminars for the student and complete any needed documentation required by the field office.) The student should locate an alternate field liaison to provide coverage during the additional two weeks outside of the fall or spring semester.
- Once required signatures are obtained, the block placement request is reviewed by the field committee for approval. The student is notified by the Field Coordinator of the field committee decision.

## Changing Placements

Field instruction placements continue throughout the two-semester sequence within the same agency. This is an important professional commitment to the agency and its clients/consumers. Changes are not made as a matter of course and are a potential violation of professional integrity. Should issues arise in the field placement, the following procedures are to be followed: **Depending on the nature of the change the student may have to restart the required hours in the new agency.**

**Process:**

1. Student is encouraged to voice their concerns immediately to the Field Instructor, if applicable, the Task Supervisor, and to the Faculty Field Liaison.
2. Student, Field Instructor, if applicable, the Task Supervisor, and Faculty Field Liaison discuss concerns with all parties, regardless of the source of the perceived or identified problem.
3. If the problem cannot be resolved, the Faculty Field Liaison contacts the Field Coordinator.
4. The Field Coordinator determines, in consultation with the Faculty Field Liaison and the School of Social Work Administrative Team/Field Committee, whether the student is to be released from the placement. If the student is not released from the placement, the Faculty Field Liaison, the student, the Field Instructor and Task Supervisor, if applicable are expected to continue problem-solving until the situation is resolved.
5. If the student is released from the placement, the Field Coordinator discusses other options with the student. The Faculty Field Liaison will then complete the Field Placement Change Request form which is located on the School of Social Work website. The student, Faculty Field Liaison, Field Instructor and if applicable, the Task Supervisor, Advisor and Field Coordinator sign the document and then it is entered into the student's academic file. The Field Coordinator will consult with the MSW Coordinator, in determining the final result (whether a different placement or other resolution).
6. The Field Coordinator will make at least one further attempt to place the student in a field agency.
7. If a field placement cannot be secured, the matter is referred to the MSW Coordinator and Director for disposition. The decision regarding the student's continuation in field is made by the Director.

**\*\*In all circumstances, the Field Coordinator should be advised of any issues or problems in field.**

**Field Instruction with Current or Former Employer**

It is the preference of the School of Social Work that students complete field practicum in new settings; however, not required. Students have the option to have an employment-based field practicum, if available. The practicum must be educationally focused, and must meet the educational objectives of the MSW curriculum. The intended goal of an employment-based practicum is to allow the student to continue employment while completing an educationally appropriate field practicum supervised by a MSW practitioner.

**Process to complete employment based proposal**

If a student plans to submit an employment-based proposal to the field committee for review, the student must complete and attach the cover sheet to their field application. The *Cover Form for Field Application*, is available on the website,

<http://www.radford.edu/content/wchs/home/social-work/academic-programs/field-program.html>

The student must contact his/her advisor to initiate the process and to review required paperwork. At this meeting, the student will be given information as to the specific paperwork that is required, such as the proposal checklist. Prior to submitting the proposal, the proposal must be reviewed by their advisor. Once the advisor determines the proposal is complete and ready to be submitted, the advisor signs the proposal checklist.

Exclusions from Employment-Based Placement include:

- Agencies that are very small or are highly-specialized private practice settings;
- Agencies owned and/or operated by student’s relatives (marriage or birth);
- Students who are in a position of authority (CEO, Director, Owner, Co-owner, etc.) or are self-employed;
- Agencies that have existed for less than 1 year and/or have not yet developed or implemented formal operating policies and procedures; and
- Agencies under investigation or that have been sanctioned for fraudulent or unethical activities.

### Expectation of Students:

**Process:** *(Students must submit written documentation that explicitly addresses the agency expectations)*

1. Student must meet with their advisor to discuss the proposal and submit a completed proposal packet to the field office (**Semester before field begins**). Cover form must be accompanied with field application, <http://www.radford.edu/content/wchs/home/social-work/academic-programs/field-program.html>

BSW (SOWK 489) spring placement	First Friday in October
BSW (SOWK 489) summer placement	Third Friday of Spring Semester
MSW Generalist (SOWK 641) fall placement	First Friday in March
MSW Generalist (SOWK 641) spring placement	First Friday in October
MSW Generalist (SOWK 641) summer placement	Third Friday of Spring Semester
MSW Specialization (SOWK 791) fall placement	First Friday in March
MSW Specialization (SOWK 791) spring placement	First Friday in October

Newly admitted MSW students must submit the proposal within 30 days of submitting their intent to enroll form. It is the student’s responsibility to forward the completed, and signed proposal to the Field Coordinator. Due to the amount of mail received during the admissions process, it is advised that all students submitting employment-based proposal contact the Field Coordinator to ensure proper receipt of the proposal.

**Please note:** It is extremely important to follow deadlines. This is an important part of professionalism. If deadline dates are not followed a remediation plan will be put in place to

address continued participation in the social work program. As outlined on the Cover Sheet for Employment Based Proposal, the proposal must be completed at each stage in order to move on to the next stage in the process.

Proposal should contain:

- a. Justification and description of the proposed placement with the learning objectives. Students must provide a description of the proposed field placement responsibilities and how they demonstrate the achievement of the learning objectives.
- b. Provide a current job description and the name of the current supervisor.
- c. Provide field placement job description and the name of approved Field Instructor
- d. Letter of approval from an agency executive responsible for human resource decisions. Should contain the following:
  - i. Agency executive in charge of human resource decisions and the
  - ii. Current supervisor must provide the field office with written documentation approving the employment-based field placement.

Field Committee will review the proposal and provide the student with a written decision within 30 days.

**The process to coordinate and approve an employment-based practicum is lengthy. Please allow time to complete the forms and submit them to the Field Coordinator in a timely manner.**

## **FIELD AGENCIES**

### **Selection**

Students in the field practicum program are placed in human service agencies under public or private auspices. Either an agency or the Radford University School of Social Work may initiate the procedures designating an agency as a field instruction site. The Field Coordinator and the agency executive negotiate a working agreement based on the criteria stated below. If the Field Coordinator and the agency executive successfully negotiate a working relationship, a written statement of this agreement is sent to the appropriate agency representative. The agreement is signed by the Field Coordinator, the appropriate agency representative (or his/her designated representative), the Director of the School of Social Work and Radford University's Director of Procurement and Contracts.

Field Placements are located within 90 miles of their primary RU campus, Roanoke or Radford. Students are required to attend field seminar class face to face. Requests for placements outside of the 90-mile radius, including specialized placements, can be made to the Field Committee in the form of a petition one semester prior to the start of the field placement. This petition will be presented to the Field Committee that will make the final decision regarding the approval/disapproval of the petition. In addition to meeting requirements for field placement agencies, the agency field instructor must have access and willingness to use various forms of distance technology. Students are required to attend field seminar class face to face



## Criteria

1. The agency's philosophy, goals, programs, and policies are compatible with professional social work standards.
2. The agency board, administrator, and staff are committed to the field instruction program, its goals and objectives, and due process protection of students as a significant function and responsibility of the agency. The agency agrees to support the academic mission of field placements. This includes providing the student with a qualified Field Instructor (or Task Supervisor).
3. The agency administrator and staff are willing to cooperate with the university in planning for supervision and evaluation of placed students. The agency Field Instructor (or Task Supervisor), is expected to attend field orientations and at least one field academy per academic year.
4. The agency is in good standing in the community. It qualifies for membership in those standard-setting bodies - national, state and local - appropriate to its field of practice.
5. The agency's staff is large enough to maintain and develop its basic program without reliance on students.
6. The agency should provide the student with amenities to fulfill their duties as an intern, according to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Waldron College Standards of Professional Practice.

## MSW Supervision

A Field Instructor should be regularly accessible within the agency where the student is placed. If the immediate agency supervisor does not hold a social work degree, then another person with social work credentials will be asked to provide social work supervision. Supervisory conferences should last at least one hour and be scheduled on a weekly basis. Learning is enhanced when supervision is frequent and consistent. During the field orientation prior to the field placement, the student will receive information on the supervisory process. This will include: getting the most out of supervision requires that you know what supervision is, how to use the supervisory relationship, and what specific actions on your part facilitate effective supervision.

Approval of the proposed Field Instructor rests with the School of Social Work. The minimum requirements for serving as a Field instructor for a generalist year graduate student is to hold a MSW degree from an accredited institution and two years of post-MSW practice experience. The minimum requirements for serving as a Field instructor for a specialization year graduate student is to hold an MSW degree from an accredited institution and three years of post-MSW direct practice clinical experience or be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

If a qualified Field Instructor is not available in the agency, a Task Supervisor is identified to work with the student in the agency and the School of Social Work, in collaboration with the agency and the student, appoints a qualified Field Instructor to provide the weekly educational supervision.

MSW generalist year and nonclinical MSW specialization year students may participate in weekly social work group supervision but weekly individual social work supervision must be provided a minimum of two times per semester. Clinical specialization MSW students are minimally required to have weekly individual social work supervision.

## Roles and expectations

### Field Orientation

A mandatory orientation for all MSW students, Field Instructors, Task Supervisors, and Faculty Field Liaisons is scheduled prior to the start of the semester or at the start of the semester. The purpose of this orientation is to educate the student and agency on the policy and procedures of the field education program. Roles and responsibilities, along with policy guidelines and ethical decision making will also be discussed to better assimilate the student to the culture of the social work profession.

### Student

A LiveText membership is required of students enrolled in a field practicum and corresponding seminar class as part of the professional education curriculum of the social work program. The field internship experience requires the use of LiveText for submitting evaluations and other documentation. The learning agreement and signed midterm evaluations should be uploaded to the LiveText account. If a student will be interning in an approved employment-based internship, the proposal and job descriptions should also be uploaded to the LiveText account.

It is the responsibility of the Faculty of the School of Social Work to communicate and monitor standards of professional and ethical behavior. Students will, at all times, be familiar with and adhere to the Waldron College Standards of Professional Practice Education, the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics and the policies of Radford University and the School of Social Work. Failure to adhere to these standards will result in a student being denied entry into the field component of the MSW program or in dismissal from the MSW program, as described under "Retention in the MSW Program" in the *MSW Student Handbook*.

While the Field Coordinator, the Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor, if applicable) and the Faculty Field Liaison work to provide a quality field instruction experience for students, the student is expected to fulfill a number of responsibilities. In addition to the requirements described above under "Placement Process", these responsibilities also include responsibilities related to the agency experience.

Once the student begins the field placement, the student

1. Reviews any policies and procedures related to personal work while accruing internship hours. Students must receive permission from field instructor/task supervisor anytime the student will engage in personal work (academic work, social media, etc.).
2. Has agency expectations made clear, is prepared for and receives supervision on a regular basis, is actively involved in the social work tasks of the field setting, and participates in the evaluation process;
3. Acts as a mature, professional person at the assigned agency. The NASW Code of Ethics is used as one criterion for determining professional conduct;
4. Maintains confidentiality on matters pertaining to clients;
5. Arranges for transportation to and from the agency and, when necessary, arranges for off-campus living accommodations;
6. Negotiates with the agency Field Instructor and Task Supervisor (if applicable), a learning agreement at the beginning of the placement;

7. Notifies the agency Field Instructor or designee if the student must be absent from the field placement;
8. Completes all written assignments satisfactorily;
9. Participates in the field placement seminars held at the University;
10. Prepares for and constructively uses supervisory conferences; and
11. Arranges with the agency field instructor for the termination or orderly transfer of cases or projects before leaving the agency.

### Faculty Field Liaison/Seminar Instructor

1. Attend field orientations and trainings;
2. Monitor and assess agencies, Field Instructors, Task Supervisors and students' learning experiences including the review and approval of the student's learning agreement;
3. Assist students with the integration of course work and practicum;
4. Assist Field Instructors with developing teaching skills and providing them with course outlines and other materials;
5. Assist in resolving problems between students and Field Instructors or other agency issues;
6. Meet with the student and the Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor, a minimum of three times during the academic semester (two meetings are required to be in-person, face to face, recommend one visit be in the beginning with the learning agreement and the second visit be at the final evaluation) (For block placement, a total of 3 agency visits, - 2 visits completed in SOWK 641 and 1 visit completed in SOWK 642 for 3 total visits an academic year) – *based on an assessment of the placement and in consultation with the Field Coordinator, it may be determined that only one of the three contacts the second semester needs to be on-site and face-to-face;*
7. Assign the student a grade at the end of the semester;
8. Coordinate and facilitating the field placement seminar;
9. Facilitate the completion of learning agreements, midterm and final evaluations;
10. Complete field administrative paperwork in a timely fashion; and
11. Ensure communication between the Task Supervisor and the Field Instructor if a Task Supervisor is utilized.

### Field Instructor

1. Abide by NASW Code of Ethics and support the Waldron College Standards of Professional Practice and the Radford University Standards of Student Conduct.
2. Cannot be a current student in the School of Social Work of Radford University.
3. Serve as a Field Instructor for any given student a maximum of one placement.
4. Monitor the student's learning experience, ensuring that the experience is educational in nature,
5. Participate in carrying out the educational objectives of the field instruction curriculum,
6. Assist in the development of the learning agreement.
7. Provide a range of appropriate practice experiences aimed at the student's professional growth,

8. Provide a minimum of one hour of one-to-one or group supervision per week,
9. Consult with the Faculty Field Liaison a minimum of three times per semester,
10. Engage in telephone consultation when necessary,
11. Provide an orientation for field students,
12. Attend field instruction seminars at the University (CEU's offered)
13. Provide input into the ongoing development of the School's curriculum and program,
14. Complete required paperwork in a timely manner.

### Task Supervisor (if applicable)

1. Abide by NASW Code of Ethics and support the Waldron College Standards of Professional Practice and the Radford University Standards of Student Conduct.
2. Cannot be a current student in the School of Social Work of Radford University.
3. In consultation with Field Instructor, monitor the student's learning experience, ensuring that the experience is educational in nature,
4. Participate in carrying out the educational objectives of the field instruction curriculum,
5. Consult in the development of the learning agreement.
6. In consultation with field instructor, provide a range of appropriate practice experiences aimed at the student's professional growth,
7. In consultation with Field Instructor, consult with the Faculty Field Liaison a minimum of three times per semester,
8. Engage in telephone consultation when necessary,
9. Provide an orientation for field students,
10. Attend field instruction seminars at the University (CEU's offered)
11. Provide input into the ongoing development of the School's curriculum and program,
12. Complete required paperwork in a timely manner.

### Agency

1. Interview a prospective field student and accepts or rejects a student.
2. Consider the student for placement without respect to race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual preference, age, religion, disability (unless student is not able to function in the agency setting with accommodations), or political belief.
3. Designate a qualified Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor, who has the major responsibility for structuring the student's learning experiences.
4. Provide the Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor with adequate time to carry out responsibilities to the student.
5. Advise the Faculty Field Liaison and/or Field Coordinator of policy and service changes in the agency.
6. Provide necessary space and facilities (such as telephone, clerical services, and access to client records) for each student.
7. Provide the student with transportation or mileage reimbursement for field assignments that take the student outside of the agency. If agency policies do not permit this, the student is informed of this before the field assignment is accepted.

## **GENERALIST PRACTICUM (SOWK 641/642)**

**205 hours in the field + 18 hours seminar = 223 hours per semester or 410 hours in the field + 36 hours seminar = 446 total**

**Students are required to intern in the respective agency at least two days per week.**

The two-semester generalist field practicum and supporting seminar provides a forum in which students apply the knowledge, skills, and values acquired from the generalist curriculum to direct and macro practice. The concepts and theories of the generalist perspective are applied. An emphasis is placed on assessment and practice grounded in theory. The ecological and person-in-environment theoretical frameworks provide a basis for entering into practice. Social construction and empowerment theories help focus client interaction toward the use of practice methods which respect "client" decision making. Practice is based on ethical decision making, valuing and respecting diversity, working toward the dismantling of oppression, and establishing social and economic justice.

The focus is placed on assessment/analysis of client needs, client-worker relationships, professional values and ethics, service delivery issues, agency/organizational dynamics, and social work supervision. Practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels are incorporated and the application of the multiple practice methods introduced in SOWK 631 & 632 is encouraged. This is a practicum experience that utilizes a face-to-face seminar as the method of instruction.

## **SPECIALIZATION PRACTICUM (SOWK 791/792)**

**300 hours in the field + 18 hours seminar = 318 hours per semester or 600 hours in the field + 36 hours seminar = 636 hours total**

**Students are required to intern in the respective agency at least three days per week.**

The two-semester specialization practicum and supporting seminar provides a forum in which the knowledge, skills, and values acquired from the specialization curriculum are applied. The concepts and theories of clinical social work are applied. The skills and knowledge taught in SOWK 783 and 784 are applied through multiple environments and across the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Service delivery issues, agency/organizational dynamics, and practice skills are emphasized. This is a practicum experience that utilizes a face-to-face seminar as the method of instruction. The knowledge and skills for direct and macro practice with diverse populations are developed and applied, emphasizing the dismantling of oppression and applying methods which work toward social and economic justice for populations at risk. The seminar supports the exploration of ethical decision making.

## **THE LEARNING AGREEMENT**

The learning agreement is a written plan that describes an individualized learning experience that is consistent with student interests and needs, school objectives, and agency resources. The learning agreement structures the student time in the agency and outlines responsibilities in the practicum. It is a three-way agreement that involves the student, the Field Instructor and if applicable, the Task Supervisor (who suggests opportunities), and the Faculty Field Liaison (who approves the quality and quantity of objectives and opportunities). When writing the learning agreement, the student should consider together the skills that may develop, interventions,

and/or populations to learn more about, and experiences that complement the classroom learning or research interest. At the bottom of the learning agreement, the student should indicate the days and hours they will be at their internship.

As part of the learning agreement, the student will be expected to complete an additional plan related to safety in the agency.

## **Process**

The learning agreement template can be found on the School of Social Work website (under Field Program). The following information should be considered as you complete the learning agreement template.

- A. The first column of the template is a list of the practice behaviors. These correspond to the evaluation and cannot be modified.
- B. The middle column should include a description of the tasks and assignments that the student will do in carrying out the educational objectives.
- C. The last column should identify methods to be used for evaluation of student's performance, which is either discuss with supervisor or other (e.g. process recording, video/audio tapes, analysis of student documents, direct observation, client feedback, co-worker evaluations).

**All field placements must provide opportunities for students to work with diverse client populations**

## **Roles (in preparing the learning agreement)**

**Student:** Does a self-assessment/awareness activity to identify areas of interest and existing strengths, and those areas in which new knowledge and skills can be developed; identifies the course educational objectives; assesses the agency, and the community for opportunities to accomplish the educational objectives. The student now has the needed information to write the learning agreement.

**Field Instructor/Task Supervisor:** provides an orientation to the agency and community and serves as a resource for identifying possible activities or strategies the student could use to accomplish the learning objectives.

**Faculty Field Liaison:** also serves as a resource person for opportunities to accomplish the learning objectives, and ensures that the tasks, workload, and hours are consistent with School objectives for field education, and if necessary, facilitates negotiation to determine areas of mutual agreement.

## **Completion**

The Faculty Field Liaison will provide the due date of the learning agreement.

## **Copies**

The student will upload the final, signed copy of the learning agreement to their LiveText account and provide a signed copy of the learning agreement to the Faculty Field Liaison as due in seminar. The student will retain a copy, provide their Field Instructor with a copy of the

learning agreement and upload to their LiveText account, the final signed copy of the learning agreement.

## **Revisions**

The agreement should be reviewed on an on-going basis and revised if necessary. A new learning agreement is required at the beginning of each semester.

## **EVALUATION PROCESS**

Evaluations are an integral part of student learning. Ongoing evaluation of a student's progress in field is essential to analytical development and self-growth. It is encouraged that each student undergoes continuous evaluation of his or her own professional skills and educational integration of course work into the field setting. Therefore, a formal midterm and final evaluation process is to be conducted during each field seminar (Generalist and Specialization). Both the student and the agency Field Instructor/Task Supervisor complete midterm and final evaluations during each semester. This is an opportunity for the student and Field Instructor/Task Supervisor to engage in further dialogue as to the student's adjustment to the practicum setting, their emerging strengths, and any limitations or concerns regarding student's performance.

### **Midterm and Final evaluation**

#### **MSW Student (self) Evaluation and Field Instructor Evaluation**

The student is expected to provide the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor with directions to complete both midterm evaluation and final evaluation. In addition, the student must complete midterm and final self- evaluations by the dates agreed upon by the student, the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor and the Faculty Field Liaison. The student and Field Instructor/Task Supervisor should review both the self-evaluation and the Field Instructor's evaluation prior to the meeting with the Faculty Field Liaison. Completed, signed midterm evaluations are uploaded to the student LiveText account. Final evaluation rubrics are in the LiveText system and are conducted at the end of each semester. This allows both the student and the Field Instructor to evaluate the student's level of competency within their practicum, utilizing the Radford University School of Social Work Goals and Objectives. By the end of the placement, the student is also asked to evaluate not only themselves but also the field agency and Field Instructor, and the Faculty Field Liaison.

#### **Expectations of Agency:**

- A.** The agency must offer sufficiently diverse educational experiences that will enhance the student's knowledge base and degree of expertise.
- B.** Documentation that the student is not a probationary employee (or that probation has been waived by the agency) or is an employee in good standing.
- C.** The agency administrator must agree that the student complete their required field practicum hours and have time to attend classes and field seminars. It is expected that the student discusses and negotiates the required time with their employer.

- D.** Radford University School of Social Work requires all students to purchase individual liability insurance coverage in the amount of 1 million/3million. If the employment-based practicum is approved the student must submit proof of student liability insurance distinct from their agency coverage.
- E.** The agency must be affiliated formally with the School of Social Work and agree to provide the student with a Radford University approved agency Field Instructor. The Field Instructor for a generalist year graduate student is to hold a MSW degree from an accredited institution and two years of post-MSW practice experience. A Field instructor for a specialization year graduate student is to hold a MSW degree from an accredited institution and three years of post-MSW direct practice clinical experience or be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. The assigned Field Instructor is expected to attend all orientation and scheduled field academy seminars.
- F.** The proposed Field Instructor is not the student's job supervisor and meets the above stated requirements for MSW students or a BSW degree plus two years' experience for BSW students. If an approved Field Instructor is not available, in consultation with the Field Coordinator the agency will designate an onsite Task Supervisor and appoint an external Field Instructor to conduct the weekly educational supervision.
- G.** Field assignments in the agency must have an educational focus, must differ significantly from the student's current or past job assignments, and must be in a different (i.e. separate) program area.

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