

FIELD PRACTICUM MANUAL

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

MISSISSIPPI STATE, MISSISSIPPI 39762

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FIELD PRACTICUM MANUAL

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Select forms (Appendices) were adapted from the College of St. Catherine and University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN social work program. Permission to adapt these forms was given by Professor Barbara Shank, Chair, Social Work Department.

PREFACE

The 2015 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) underscore the importance of the field practicum by designating the field component as the “signature pedagogy” of social work education.

Students of Mississippi State University complete a significant portion of their total academic social work hours in the field practicum. It is clear that the field component is a necessary and vital part of the total curriculum of baccalaureate social work students. This reinforces the importance of and need for quality field instructors.

The purpose of this manual is twofold: 1) to give field students and field instructors an overview of the field practicum as an orientation guide and 2) to serve as an on-going resource guide throughout the student’s field practicum.

Any comments/inquiries regarding information in this manual should be directed to:

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Mississippi State University
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FIELD PRACTICUM MANUAL

I. INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The field practicum is the area of student learning that provides the student with opportunities to apply theories learned in the classroom to the agency setting through a structured and educationally directed environment. For the field practicum, all social work majors are required to complete a minimum of 450 field practicum hours including field activity through an agency setting and an embedded seminar course. The field practicum is the equivalent of 12 semester hours and is represented in the curriculum as SW4916 Social Work Field Practicum/Seminar I and SW4926 Social Work Field Practicum/Seminar II.

STUDENT INSTRUCTION

The student, the agency-based field instructor, and the field coordinator—along with any faculty field liaisons—are viewed as collaborative partners for the educational experience of the student. The field instructor has a major responsibility and opportunity in guiding the student in their orientation, assigning meaningful and stimulating cases and learning experiences, helping in their professional role development within the agency, and modeling generalist social work practice. By creating and maintaining an atmosphere for learning, the field instructor will continue to grow as a professional social worker by keeping abreast of the changes in social work practice. Specific learning responsibilities of the student, field instructor, and field coordinator can be found under the LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES section of this manual.

FIELD PRACTICUM CRITERIA

Criteria for Eligibility of Students for the Field Practicum

Students eligible to complete the field practicum have completed all coursework in the social work program curriculum excluding SW4916 and SW4926 and must meet the criteria for remaining in the social work program which include:

1. Maintain an overall GPA of 2.0, with a 2.5 GPA for all social work courses.
2. Must earn a minimum of a "C" in each social work course.
3. Continue to demonstrate an aptitude for a social work career.
4. Adhere to all academic expectations of the university and the social work program.
5. Adhere to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Criteria for Field Instructors

In keeping with the requirements of the Council on Social Work Education accreditation standards, as well as Mississippi State University's mission statement in providing strong generalist social work practitioners, the field instructor must be willing to provide students on-going instruction and supervision and be willing to participate in training for field instructors. The field instructor must be well versed in agency policies and procedures.

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Additionally, field instructors must be qualified by at least one of the following criteria:

- master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-social work degree practice experience in social work; or
- baccalaureate's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 3 years post-social work degree practice experience in social work.

Any exception for which a field instructor does not meet the aforementioned criteria, the following conditions must be met: (1) The field coordinator must document justification of the exception and agreement of all parties (field coordinator, student, and field instructor); and (2) the field coordinator must routinely collaborate (face-to-face, by phone, by virtual web platform, and/or by email) with the field instructor and student to ensure the social work perspective is reinforced appropriately throughout the placement experience, and document efforts accordingly. Typically this reinforcement is actualized through weekly alternate supervision by a representative that does meet the aforementioned qualifications.

It is also strongly recommended the field instructor be in their current position for a minimum of one year, and the field instructor is licensed in the applicable state(s) to practice social work.

If the field instructor and the student have had a pre-existing professional or social relationship, this information must be shared with the field coordinator so the appropriateness of the placement can be determined.

Criteria for Agency Setting

It is necessary that the agency has a well-developed professional role for social work practitioners. This is particularly important in those agencies where social workers are not the primary service providers (e.g. hospitals, health departments, schools, etc.). The agency should make adjustment of the field instructor's assignments to allow adequate time for the development and implementation of field practicum instruction with regular access to the field instructor.

The agency is also selected due to its involvement with the social work program in making recommendations in selection of field instructors based upon their commitment to the social work profession, demonstrated competency in practice, and willingness to learn effective teaching strategies for beginning level generalist practice social work students. The agency must be an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The social work program welcomes the interest of community agencies in becoming approved field sites for social work students. We particularly welcome agencies that serve diverse populations and promote cultural responsiveness. Agencies should provide students with dimensional learning opportunities in the development of their social work values, ethics, knowledge, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. Potential settings are assessed by the

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Field Coordinator, the Social Work Program Director, or other social work faculty to determine if the agency is appropriate.

The following criteria are considered in the determination of agency appropriateness:

- Agency must be related in their purpose to the mission, goals and objectives of the Social Work Program;
- Agency administration supports the philosophy of professional education and is willing to grant staff time to supervise and direct student instruction;
- Agency is conducive to learning;
- Agency's philosophy of service must be compatible with the philosophy, values, and ethics of the social work profession;
- Agency must be clear about their programs and methods;
- Agency must offer learning environment for the student to demonstrate social work competencies with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations;"
- Agency must have qualified field instructor(s);
- Agency must not depend on students to fulfill basic staffing needs;
- Agency must be located within the state of Mississippi or be affirmed through the out-of-state placement request process.
- Agency maintains and observes policies of non-discrimination and anti-harassment in relation to clients, staff, students, and faculty; and
- Agency must make reasonable arrangements for students with regard to space and equipment.

II. MISSION STATEMENTS

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Mississippi State University is a public research, land-grant university with a mission to provide access and opportunity to all sectors of Mississippi's diverse population, as well as other states and countries, and to offer excellent programs of teaching, research, and service.

Mississippi State University offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across many disciplines.

The university embraces its role as a major contributor to the economic development of the state and beyond through targeted research and the transfer of ideas and technology to the public, supported by faculty, staff, student, and alumni relationships with industry, community organizations, and government entities.

Mississippi State University is committed to its tradition of instilling among its community ideals of diversity, citizenship, leadership, and service.

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Building on its land-grant tradition, Mississippi State University strategically extends its resources and expertise for the benefit of Mississippi's citizens, the nation, and the world by offering access for working and place-bound learners through its on- and off-campus education and research sites, Extension, and distance education programs.

For more information, access to the mission statement is available at <https://www.president.msstate.edu/communications/vision-mission/>

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

The College of Arts & Sciences is committed to promoting a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment enriched by the knowledge and skills of our faculty, staff, and students. Society marginalizes many groups, based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, socioeconomic standing, religion, and age.

Faculty, staff, and students across A&S bring both depth and scope to research, teaching, and service that address these inequities, approaching them from an interdisciplinary lens that helps us facilitate meaningful and sustainable change. The College strives to be inclusive of all groups, challenge systemic inequality, and promote policies and programs that celebrate diversity.

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, group affiliation, or veteran status.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

The mission of the Mississippi State University Department of Sociology is to integrate our research, service and teaching into a holistic educational experience, as suited to the land-grant mission of a research-intensive university. We provide a high quality undergraduate education to students majoring in criminology, social work, and sociology within the liberal arts education mission of the College of Arts & Sciences. Our graduate programs train sociology students at the master's and doctoral levels, integrating students into academic research. We foster an intellectual environment for professional growth and development that prepares students to be critical thinkers with strong communication skills for use in the global environment, preparing them for careers and/or graduate studies.

For more information about the Department of Sociology, please go to <https://www.sociology.msstate.edu/>

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The mission of the Social Work Program is to educate undergraduate students for generalist social work practice framed by an understanding of the history, purposes, and philosophy of

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the profession. The curriculum is grounded in the liberal arts perspective and embraces social work knowledge, skills, and values.

For more information about the social work program, please go to <https://www.sociology.msstate.edu/> and access “Undergraduate Programs” or go directly to <https://www.sociology.msstate.edu/undergraduate/social-work/>

III. SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

PROGRAM’S GOALS

The Social Work Program’s Goals are:

- To provide a positive educational environment that models social work values, ethics, and ideals, as well as encourages the development of critical thinking skills.
- To provide a curriculum that promotes competent baccalaureate generalist social work practice and is responsive to the changing political, social, cultural, economic and global influences based on current research data and evidence-based practice information.
- To prepare competent entry-level social work practitioners for generalist practice with diverse client systems of various sizes and types of groups marginalized by social and economic injustice.

These program goals contribute to the University’s priorities and goals, which include:

- Foster Teaching and Learning
- Promote Research and Creativity
- Expand Outreach and Engagement
- Encourage Diverse and Global Perspective
- Enhance Institutional Infrastructure, Culture, and Environment

ADVISORY BOARD

The Social Work Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from the state and local community, including social workers and concerned citizens. The Board seeks to:

- Provide information to the program regarding current community activities, needs, and goals.
- Review programmatic assessment data and give feedback about the program's activities, curriculum, and instructional services.
- Advocate for the program and the profession.
- Serve as engaged role models for students.

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COMMITMENT TO NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT

Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution. Discrimination in university employment, programs, or activities based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, disability, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status protected by applicable law is prohibited. Questions about equal opportunity programs or compliance should be directed to the Office of Compliance and Integrity, 56 Morgan Avenue, P.O. Box 6044, Mississippi State, MS, (662) 325-5839

The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion is another necessary resource of MSU and should be utilized as needed in the protection of our field students. University policy is to comply fully with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as well as other applicable laws and their implementing regulations. Specific policies related to the University's commitment to non-discrimination and anti-harassment, addressing of sexual misconduct issues, and specifying ways to optimize the learning environment of all students may be found at: <https://www.policies.msstate.edu/>

- University Statement on Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination (OP 3.02)
- Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (OP 3.03)
- Sexual Misconduct (OP 03.04)
- Students with Disabilities (OP 91.122)

EXPECTED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

Expected educational outcomes of the social work program are consistent with the competency-based standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education. Students are afforded the opportunity to achieve mastery of the related component behaviors throughout the curriculum, but particularly through the field practicum experience.

Outcomes/Competencies (*see bold*) with related component behaviors are as follows:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- A. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context
- B. Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations
- C. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication
- D. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes
- E. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

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- A. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels
- B. Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences
- C. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

- A. Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels
- B. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

- A. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research
- B. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings
- C. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

- A. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services
- B. Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services
- C. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- A. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies
- B. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- A. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies

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- B. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies
- C. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies
- D. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- A. Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies
- B. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies
- C. Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes
- D. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies
- E. Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- A. Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes
- B. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes
- C. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes
- D. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

IV. FIELD PRACTICUM LEARNING EXPERIENCE

FIELD PRACTICUM COURSE INFORMATION

Description:

SW4916 and SW4926. Social Work Field Practicum/Seminar I and II. (12 hours) (Prerequisites: Completion of all required courses including SW 4713). These courses provide students opportunities to apply generalist social work practice methods by completing a minimum of

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450 field hours in an agency setting. All students entering field should have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 and a social work grade point average of 2.5, as well as meet all other criteria for being in the Social Work Program as outlined in the Social Work Program Handbook.

Course Objectives:

Course objectives are specifically linked to all 9 competencies and all 31 component behaviors (see pp. 9-12 of this manual) essential to social work practice as determined by the Council on Social Work Education. Due to the comprehensive nature of the field experience, upon completion of these courses, students should be able to:

1. Accomplish a supervised learning experience in an agency setting in order to apply and integrate theoretical learning with practice experience. *This objective supports CSWE Competency 2: Component Behavior 2B, Competency 3: Component Behavior 3A, Competency 6: Component Behavior 6A, Competency 8: Component Behavior 8B.*
2. Analyze the structure and function of resource and delivery systems within the agency and community. *This objective supports CSWE Competency 1: Component Behavior 1D, Competency 5: Component Behavior 5A, Competency 7: Component Behavior 7B.*
3. Develop the ability to utilize professional social work supervision as a mechanism to improve one's own practice. *This objective supports CSWE Competency 1: Component Behavior 1E, Competency 7: Component Behavior 7D, Competency 8: Component Behavior 8C, Competency 9: Component Behavior 9D.*
4. Understand one's own values and ethics and how these affect working with different client systems. *This objective supports CSWE Competency 1: Component Behaviors 1A & 1B, Competency 9: Component Behavior 9C.*
5. Develop and implement a plan for improving the well being of people based on the program assessment and exploration of obtainable goals and options. *This objective supports CSWE Competency 3: Component Behavior 3B, Competency 5: Component Behavior 5B, Competency 7: Component Behavior 7C, Competency 8: Component Behaviors 8A & 8E.*
6. Apply knowledge, values, and skills with diverse populations including people of color, women, children, aged, physically and mentally challenged, socially and culturally diverse groups, the oppressed and populations at risk. *This objective supports CSWE Competency 2: Component Behaviors 2A & 2C, Competency 6: Component Behavior 6B.*
7. Apply research methods in evaluating one's own practice and client service delivery. *This objective supports CSWE Competency 4: Component Behaviors 4A, 4B, & 4C, Competency 7: Component Behavior 7A, Competency 9: Component Behavior 9B.*
8. Nurture completion of a practicum experience that affords social work students with the opportunity to demonstrate the integration of critical thinking skills with various other social work skills essential for graduating from an accredited social work program. *This objective supports CSWE Competency 1: Component Behavior 1C, Competency 5: Component Behavior 5C, Competency 8: Component Behavior 8D, Competency 9: Component Behavior 9A.*

Learning Dimensions:

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Dimensional learning deepens the achievement and mastery by students of the social work program's identified learning outcomes/component behaviors. Specifically the social work program supports the learning dimensions highlighted by the Council on Social Work Education that include: skills, knowledge, values, and cognitive/affective processes. The field practicum is unique in its opportunity to afford students multiple learning dimensions for all 9 competencies and all 31 component behaviors, first, through its generalist practice opportunities with the agency, and again, through a variety of field-based assignments that serve to enrich the practicum experience involving research and reflective writing, as well as oral presentations as part of SW4916 and SW4926.

Degree Requirements:

A complete guide to the social work curriculum for program completion and degree attainment is accessible at www.sociology.msstate.edu/undergraduate/social-work/academics/ and a complete listing and description of all social work courses is accessible through the online course catalog at: <https://www.registrar.msstate.edu/course-catalog/>

LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES

The field placement is a partnership of learning. This learning experience links the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes learned in the classroom setting to the field practice setting. In order for the most positive outcomes of the field placement to occur there must be an understanding of each person's role in this process. The key people involved are: the student, the field instructor, and the field coordinator. Therefore, it is very important that each person understands their respective roles and responsibilities, as well as the role of the other individuals.

Learning Responsibilities for Students:

- Participate in planning their field practicum experience; completion of necessary forms at least three months prior to their placement, particularly the Social Work Field Application (Form A) and the Out-of-State Placement Request (Form I), as applicable.
- Development and use of self as a beginning-level social work practitioner in all aspects of the field practicum.
- Offer Orientation Checklist (Form B) as guide for orientation process and participate in agency based orientation practices.
- Be willing to complete and assume expense of various agency compliance requirements, including but not limited to tests, examinations, vaccinations, background checks, and/or drug screenings– or cooperate freely with alternate placement considerations.
- Follow the policies and procedures of the field placement agency including, but not limited to, observing agency hours, dress codes, confidentiality standards, and safety protocols.
- Initiate the Learning Contract (Form C) with the field instructor and field coordinator, as well as coordinating time to discuss.

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- Participate in the weekly supervision sessions with field instructor.
- Participate in the field seminars held on campus. The mandatory first seminar is required before a student is allowed to begin at the practicum agency.
- Complete course requirements for the field practicum and field seminar, including a variety of field-based assignments that serve to enrich the practicum experience involving research and reflective writing, as well as oral presentations.
- Complete registration and payment of fees prior to beginning field practicum, at beginning of semester to include graduation fees.
- Inform field coordinator immediately of any practices that are in violation of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.
- Maintain confidentiality of agency records and client system.
- Consult with the agency about ways to enhance student safety and decrease liability.
- Complete the Student Evaluation of the Learning Experience through an accessible survey link and other requested assessment information to aid in evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness.
- Complete and document 450 practicum hours in an ethical manner using the appropriate time sheet (Form F).
- Provide written evidence of professional liability (malpractice liability) insurance coverage throughout the practicum experience. The minimum amount of coverage per individual shall be \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate.
- Notify the Field Coordinator if weekly supervision with the Field Instructor—at a minimum of one hour each week—does not occur, in order to determine a plan of action.
- Be intentional about connecting the theoretical and conceptional contributions of the classroom and field settings.
- Meet all professional development expectations outlined in the *Professional Development* section of this manual.

Learning Responsibilities for Field Instructors:

- Complete necessary forms for field placement agencies prior to acceptance of any field placement student(s).
- Inform field coordinator and/or student about agency compliance requirements needed to initiate and maintain the placement's learning experience, including but not limited to tests, examinations, vaccinations, background checks, and/or drug screenings by the student.
- Attend field orientation and training opportunities provided by the social work program.
- Interpret the role of the field practicum student to the agency staff.
- Provide student with a thorough orientation to the agency, including, but not limited to the agency's policies and procedures, confidentiality standards, and safety protocols.
- Schedule time to allow for weekly supervision of the student—at a minimum of one hour each week—in order to give feedback and an evaluation of progress.
- Provide input to the student's learning contract and monitor target task completion.

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- Complete mid-term and final evaluation of student(s) in a timely manner to aid in evaluating student learning. Assessment survey links are provided by the field coordinator.
- Review time sheet form weekly and provide verification of review and accuracy by signing the respective form.
- Select and monitor cases, 3 minimally, that will serve to incorporate classroom learning with practice through the various systems (e.g. individual, family, small groups, community, and organizations) and levels of practice.
- Contact field coordinator concerning any significant barriers in students' ability to effectively work with client system.
- Model professional, safe, and ethical behavior for the student(s).
- Comply with the University's commitment to non-discrimination and anti-harassment.
- Report any professional, safety, or ethical concerns regarding the student to the field coordinator.
- Safeguard confidentiality of records and information pertaining to the field student(s).
- Be intentional about helping the student(s) connect the theoretical and conceptional contributions of the classroom and field settings.

Learning Responsibilities for the Field Coordinator:

- Assist in orientation of field instructors regarding the social work program's mission and educational purposes of a generalist social work field practicum.
- Provide students with opportunities for input in selecting agencies that are congruent with generalist social work practice and area(s) of interest.
- Facilitate placement of students in approved agencies for their field practicum experiences following guidelines outlined in the Field Practicum Application (Form A).
- Clarify for both students and field instructors the course objectives, required assignments, and expected educational outcomes of the field practicum.
- Serve as a consultant and resource to the field instructor.
- Participate in the Learning Contract (Form C) with the field instructor and the student.
- Facilitate training to field instructors using the Field Instructor Checklist (Form D), when applicable.
- Negotiate field practicum affiliation agreements in consultation with appropriate University and agency representatives. The Field Practicum Agreement Template (Form E) has been developed with assistance and approval from MSU Legal Counsel.
- Assume responsibility for ensuring the social work perspective is reinforced appropriately throughout each placement experience. For a placement in which the field instructor requires an exception to the outlined criteria, efforts to reinforce the social work perspective and agreement of all parties to the exception should be documented by the field coordinator using the Exception Form (Form G).
- Verify agencies and field instructors meet and maintain eligibility criteria outlined in this manual through an intentional monitoring process using the Field Placement Affiliation Record (Form H).
- Plan and make provisions for integrative field practicum seminars.

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- Maintain documentation of each student's involvement and participation in the field practicum for a period of time consistent with university policy regarding record keeping and disposal of documents.
- Meet with the field instructor and the student during each semester.
- Serve as a mediator if problems arise between student and field instructor in the teaching/learning relationship.
- Provide professional advising to the field students, as scheduled during seminar, as well as when identified as needed for the field student by the field coordinator, field instructor, program director, academic coordinator, and/or student.
- Provide oversight and supervision, as needed, throughout the practicum experience.
- Assess safety practices of students during field practicum.
- Be intentional about helping the student(s) connect the theoretical and conceptional contributions of the classroom and field settings.
- Evaluate student learning through determined assessment protocols and help facilitate the completion of various evaluations by field instructors and students.
- Evaluate field setting effectiveness through active collaboration and visits with the agencies and by reviewing the completed report of the Student Evaluation of the Learning Experience, which includes an appraisal by the students of the field settings.

IV. FIELD PRACTICUM PROCESS

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the field placement is twofold:

1. to give students practice opportunities to apply social work theories and methods learned in academic classes to actual social work situations and
2. to share these experiences with social work students through planned seminars on campus (Please note: this sharing must be done in accordance with standard 1.07(u) of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students are expected to:

(General)

- attend weekly supervision sessions with the Field Instructor and planned seminars with the Field Coordinator for feedback on improving delivery of services
- demonstrate the ability to plan and organize workload effectively
- work collaboratively within and external of the agency to facilitate the problem-solving method with clients
- demonstrate the ability to write and communicate effectively one's own learning goals and objectives

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- demonstrate the ability in weekly supervision sessions with the Field Instructor and planned seminars with the Field Coordinator to think critically in analyzing a particular context of social work intervention
- demonstrate professionalism in social work values and ethics, confidentiality, supervision and accountability to clients, agency and social work program
- manage current life stressors through the use of self-care and other appropriate interventions
- comply with the agency's policies and procedures including, but not limited to, confidentiality standards and safety protocols
- comply with the MSU Social Work Program Student Handbook including, but not limited to content involving student grievances, dismissal policy, and program retention guidelines
- comply with any contract and/or agreement authorized by the agency and university
- comply with MSU policies and procedures including, but not limited to, safety protocols and student conduct.

(Knowledge)

- demonstrate the ability to relate the practice of social work to theories learned in classroom
- utilize community resources on behalf of client systems
- demonstrate an understanding of the role of the social work agency to clients and within the community
- demonstrate an understanding of the mission, goals, purpose of the agency, and its relationship to other agencies and organizations within the community

(Skills)

- demonstrate an ability to utilize the stages of the social work process with assigned cases to include: engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations.
- demonstrate an ability to clearly and concisely document case records, case assignments, and other professional correspondence
- demonstrate an ability to interview client system effectively
- demonstrate an ability to plan, initiate, and implement organizing resources for and with the client system, as well as modeling/teaching these methods to client
- demonstrate an ability to effectively work with the following client systems: women, minorities of color, various ethnic and cultural groups
- demonstrate an ability to evaluate self in the helping process and to evaluate practitioner roles within the agency setting

(Values)

- demonstrate an understanding of individual worth and human dignity
- demonstrate an understanding of individual's right to self-determination

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- demonstrate an understanding of the social worker's responsibility to promote social justice in making social institutions more responsive and humane to individual needs
- demonstrate a respect for the unique characteristics of diverse populations
- demonstrate an understanding of the individual responsibility that social workers have for their own ethical conduct, for the quality of their practice, and for maintaining continuous growth in the knowledge and skills of their profession

(Cognitive and Affective Processes)

- demonstrate critical thinking skills
- demonstrate appropriate affective responses to clients, colleagues, and constituents
- demonstrate reflective thinking
- demonstrate appropriate exercise of judgement

ORIENTATION AND GETTING STARTED

It is well documented that changes in role and uncertainty of role expectation(s) increase stress and anxiety. The anxiety that students initially experience can be decreased by having a formal orientation to the agency. See Orientation Checklist (Form B) for specific tasks. The student's first few cases should be very task-oriented. The reason for the client's involvement with the agency should be clear and specific. Case assignments should be typical of tasks performed by staff that have a B.S.W. degree. Over the course of the semester, tasks should be completed in an increasingly independent and competent manner.

LEARNING CONTRACT

Although each student will have successfully completed the required social work courses, prior to entering the agency, there is a wide range among students' experiences and learning styles. Therefore, just as assessment is key to effective intervention with clients, so is the assessment of students an integral component of a successful field practicum.

The Learning Contract is the initial step in evaluating where the student is, as well as agency expectations. It is important that the student understand from the very beginning of the placement specific duties and responsibilities are expected from the student. This is particularly important prior to the completion of the field practicum Learning Contract.

Reflective of the Council on Social Work Education's Competencies and emphasis on competency-based education, the Learning Contract is developed with particular emphasis on the related component behaviors. Essentially, during the field practicum experience, the student should be afforded the opportunity to demonstrate the various component behaviors and document associated plans for completion through the Learning Contract. The learning contract should reflect learning objectives relative to the unique and individualized experience

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possible through each field practicum placement. Please refer to the Learning Contract (Form C) for more specific information.

SUPERVISION SESSIONS

The field instructor's role is most important in facilitating an educationally directed field practicum. The supervision sessions play an integral role in shaping the educational experience and ensuring the student's exposure to an opportunity to achieve mastery of the various component behaviors targeted.

The field instructor and student are required to complete at least one hour each week for a supervision session. This is in addition to on-going interactions between the field instructor and student during the week. This time is set aside for feedback and on-going assessment, including an exchange of ideas and plan(s) of action related to navigating the learning contract, promoting safety, and integrating theories and concepts."

VI. GENERAL INFORMATION

FIELD PRACTICUM REQUIREMENT

Each student is required to complete field practicum. Although the program recognizes the importance of practice wisdom, NO exceptions are made based on prior work experience. A social worker must possess a conceptualization of practice that is theoretically grounded and must also possess the knowledge to effectively evaluate one's own practice. This results from the successful completion of the curriculum, including the field practicum component.

Students may only complete field practicum in selected (approved) agency settings, which includes placement and monitoring by the Field Coordinator. Placement process guidelines including a student choice list are embedded within the Field Practicum Application (Form A).

If the student is currently working in a social service agency, it is strongly encouraged that said student complete his/her field practicum in another field practicum agency. It is required that the field practicum agency be approved by the Field Coordinator. If in the rare case the student must remain employed in the agency, there must be clearly written objectives and the student must complete field practicum hours in a different unit and with a different supervisor than the supervisor responsible for the student's paid employment. No academic credit is given for life experience or previous work experience.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All records, interviews, and any other identifying information will be remain in the strictest confidence by the student. Journaling efforts, group seminars, and any required papers relating to the agency must not include names of clients or contain any information that could identify the client system. The field coordinator should be notified by the student immediately in the

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event that the student is subpoenaed for an issue related to the practicum experience. Some agencies require additional training regarding confidentiality. Students must comply with completing such requirements as indicated by the agency.

REGISTRATION

Each student is responsible for completing the MSU registration process and applying for graduation.

FIELD PRACTICUM TIME SHEET

The Time Sheet (Form F) will assist in documenting both the number of hours spent in the field practicum and coding activities conducted during the field practicum. The SW4916 and SW4926 syllabus contains detailed instructions for time sheet completion and submission. After accurately completing a Time Sheet and obtaining a review and signature from the field instructor, the student should submit it to the field instructor in electronic format by scan or fax. The student's last time sheet with signatures evidencing completion of the required number of field hours must be submitted to the field coordinator before grades for SW4916 and SW4926 will be assigned.

PAID FIELD PRACTICUM

There should be no expectation of a paid field practicum. The field practicum is a learning experience and is preparation for entry-level social work practice. However, there are some placements that carry a student stipend. See the Field Coordinator for information.

HOLIDAYS

It is understood by the social work program and the student that the student's first responsibility is to the client system. The social work program further recognizes that the social work student is in a student, not an employee role; therefore, the social work program will not require students to complete field hours during university holidays. It will be understood that the agency may request that the student complete field hours during university holidays and the student will work if the nature of the placement is such that the responsibility to the client system requires this.

TRANSPORTATION

Each student is responsible for transportation to and from the field practicum agency. In the vast majority of field placement settings, students are required to have personal transportation. In these cases the social work program requires that the student maintain a current driver's license. Adequate insurance should be maintained by the student.

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The Social Work Program does not provide automobile liability coverage to students. Students assume risk associated with travel for field placement responsibilities. Use expectations of personal automobiles need to be clarified prior to placement. Students should not be required to transport clients in personal automobiles.

LEAVE

On any occasion that the student will be absent from the agency, the student should notify the agency field instructor, first, then the field coordinator. When absence from the practicum is essential, the student should provide satisfactory documentation of the impending absence. The notification of the absence to the field instructor and field coordinator should occur prior to the occurrence of the absence. The student is responsible for negotiating missed hours with the field instructor. Please refer to the University policy 12.09 regarding attendance at <http://www.policies.msstate.edu>

HEALTH LIABILITY

The Social Work Program or placement agency is not responsible for health or injury of the student.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

Students enrolled in SW4916/4926 will be required to provide written evidence of professional liability (malpractice liability) insurance coverage. The minimum amount of coverage per individual shall be \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate. Upon request, a copy of the certificate of insurance should be provided by the student to the field coordinator or the field instructor.

REMOVAL

The Social Work Program has an obligation to protect the program and the profession, and thus reserves the right to remove a student from a field practicum agency. The Field Coordinator may remove a student from an agency due to failure of a student to meet academic, emotional, or professional standards. Such standards may include but are not limited to those outlined in this manual (see for example: *Learning Responsibilities for Students* and *Professional Development* expectations), designated in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, and/or deemed by the field coordinator or the field instructor as unbecoming to a developing social worker. With removal there is no expectation of the student being placed in another agency and the removal may prompt the additional action of dismissal of the student from the Social Work Program. An appeal of the removal may be made to the Social Work Program Director. For any additional appeal actions, the student should comply with reporting channels acknowledged by the university as appropriate.

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SAFETY

Supporting student safety is best promoted through appropriate safety training provided through course curriculum content, prior to field (SW4713) and on-going throughout the field seminars (SW4916 and SW4926). Students are expected to review and comply with safety protocols maintained by the field practicum agency and University. Field instructors and the field coordinator should model appropriate behavior in compliance with safety protocols. Field students placed in agencies that provide special safety training are expected to satisfactorily complete the training(s) as part of the orientation process. Any pre-placement and placement-maintenance requirements related to safety, should be completed in a timely manner by students. In evaluating fields setting effectiveness, safety compliance should be considered as a necessary criteria for selected agency settings. Resources related to student safety include:

NASW Guidelines for Social Worker Safety in the Workplace

<https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Social-Work-Safety/Social-Work-Safety-NASW-Resources>

Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

MSU Environmental Health and Safety

<https://www.ehs.msstate.edu/>

MSU Health and Safety related to Covid-19

<https://www.msstate.edu/covid19>

CRISIS/DISASTER

Navigating students through any crisis/disaster in the midst of their academic pursuits involves regular monitoring of their needs and concerns. The field coordinator will maintain open channels of communication with both field instructors and field students during any crisis/disaster situation. Due to the changing nature and complexities associated with any crisis/disaster, the field coordinator will recurrently seek out guidance and direction from relevant: (1) social work leadership, such as the Council of Social Work Education and the National Association of Social Workers; (2) governance, such as University, local, state, and national authorities; and (3) crisis/disaster-based intervening institutions, such as the Center of Disease Prevention and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

SYLLABUS

The syllabus for SW4916/SW4926 and this manual serve to complement each other. One cannot be used without the other. Students are advised to review both this manual and the course syllabus thoroughly and address any concerns/questions with the field coordinator.

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GRADE SUBMISSION:

The following forms must be completed and received by the field coordinator prior to the submission of the final grade for SW4916 and SW4926:

- Learning Contract
- Mid-term and Final Evaluations of Student
- Final Time Sheet

Students must achieve competency (“C” or higher) in both sections of the field practicum, SW4916 and SW4926. In the event a student earns “D” or “F” in either SW4916 or SW4926, the instructor of the courses will apply the same below competency grade to the other course.

FORM ACCESS

The forms acknowledged for use in this manual are:

- Form A: Field Practicum Application
- Form B: Orientation Checklist
- Form C: Learning Contract
- Form D: Field Instructor Checklist
- Form E: Affiliation Agreement Template
- Form F: Time Sheet (Option 1 and Option 2)
- Form G: Field Instructor Exception Form
- Form H: Field Placement Affiliation Record
- Form I: Out-of-State Placement Request Form

The Social Work Field Practicum Application (Form A) is disseminated to students of SW4713 (taken in semester immediately prior to SW4916 and SW4926) in order to allow adequate time for the application and placement process to occur. Forms B, C, and F of this manual are accessible to enrolled students of SW4916/SW4926 at the beginning of the semester using **Canvas**. Field Coordinator utilizes or administers Forms D, E, G, H, and I in collaboration with the student and/or field instructor, as applicable.

REQUIRED READINGS

- NASW Code of Ethics
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
- *Mississippi State Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists - - Rules and Regulations
https://www.swmft.ms.gov/sites/swmft2/files/2020%20new%20rules_0.pdf
*Or review current rules and regulations for social workers of applicable state, if affirmed to complete field practicum outside the state of Mississippi.
- Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards
<https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS/2015EPASandGlossary.pdf>

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By signing below, I acknowledge having read the Field Practicum Manual of the Mississippi State University Social Work Program and agree to comply with the content therein:

Date	Printed Name	Signature