



# WKU<sup>®</sup>

Department of  
**Social Work**

## BSW Field Manual Fall 2025

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## **Welcome Students, Field Instructors (our faculty in the field), and Field Liaisons**

Greetings to all, and welcome to a very meaningful part of social work education. Since its inception, the profession of social work practicum experiences has been noted as one of the most important parts of social work education. It is during a field practicum experience that students get to demonstrate through learning that they are competent in the nine competencies, as outlined by the Counsel on Social Work Education (CSWE) and prepare themselves to work as social workers upon graduation. CSWE states in section 3.3 of the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, “Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline: to think, to perform, and to act intentionally, ethically, and with integrity” (*Commission on Education, Commission on Educational Policy*, 2022).

**Students-** This is an exciting time! You will have the opportunity to practice the skills, knowledge, and values acquired in the classroom out in the field. You will have a social worker who meets with you weekly to provide feedback and guidance on your learning experience. Field placement is the beginning of your identification as a professional social worker- something to be proud of!

Field Education is offered concurrently with academic study. Students are matched to a social service agency and complete an internship placement under the guidance and supervision of an experienced professional social worker, who will be your Field Instructor. This vital interaction is designed to reinforce our students’ academic study with real life experience. It permits testing theory in practice settings and provides students with field experience that is necessary for academic and professional development. Affiliated social service agencies all over Kentucky and surrounding areas are utilized for field instruction. These agencies provide a wide range of social service settings for generalist students’ Field Education.

**Field Instructors-** We are INCREDIBLY grateful for your time, knowledge, and commitment to the newest generation of social workers. You are our faculty in the field. Your guidance, mentorship, and modeling of skills are crucial to our students’ development and will have a lifelong impact on the students’ professional social work career. You are a crucial component to ensuring students graduating from our programs are competent, beginning level social workers.

As a department, we are committed to providing Field Instructors with ongoing training opportunities when hosting student interns at their agencies and ongoing support throughout the field learning process.

This manual provides policies and procedures to guide all aspects of the field experience. We wish you well in this field placement experience and encourage you to familiarize yourself with, and adhere to, the policies in this manual.

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## **Context of Practice**

Although social work education is built upon a common knowledge, values, and skills base, each social work program in the United States is unique, based upon its university affiliation, regional location, population needs, and practice focus. Western Kentucky University's social work program is informed by all of these.

## **Western Kentucky University (WKU)**

WKU is committed to ensuring value in a holistic learning experience through high standards for student achievement and conduct, a strong faculty, technological innovation, personalized attention, broad access, and public accountability for actions and outcomes.

WKU recognizes that its mission continues to evolve in response to regional, national, and global changes, and the need for lifelong learning.

### **Vision**

WKU - A Leading American University with International Reach

### **Mission**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) prepares students of all backgrounds to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible citizen-leaders of a global society. The University provides research, service and lifelong learning opportunities for its students, faculty, and other constituents. WKU enriches the quality of life for those within its reach.

## **College of Health and Human Services**

### **Vision**

To be an innovative leader in the student-centered, interprofessional preparation of health and human services professionals by providing students with an inclusive, community-engaged, and interdisciplinary academic experience.

### **Mission**

We prepare health and human services professionals who will work to improve the quality of life in their communities and beyond.

### **Core Values**

The College of Health and Human Services, values each of the following as they relate to teaching, research, and service:

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** - Foster and advocate for an inclusive environment in which all contributions are welcome.

- **Community-engagement** – Encourage students, faculty, and staff to involve the “community” in responding to issues that affect quality of life.
- **Interdisciplinary/interprofessional approaches**– Foster an environment in which faculty and students learn across disciplines to develop shared understanding.
- **Ethical practices and integrity** – Demonstrate ethical decision-making and behavior and teach the importance of ethical practices in our fields.
- **Collaboration**– Work together with key stakeholders to achieve common goals.
- **Student-centered** – Create an environment in which individual needs of the students are prioritized.
- **Innovation** – Foster an environment that supports the creation of new ideas.

### **Department of Social Work**

#### **Vision**

WKU Social Work strives to create and utilize evidence to foster optimal well-being, equal human rights, and a just society through valuing human relationships and honoring the diversity each person brings to our classrooms and communities.

#### **Mission**

The mission of the WKU Department of Social Work is to prepare competent, ethical, antioppressive social work professionals for generalist and specialized practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities thereby improving the quality of life in the region and beyond.

#### **Core Values**

- **Social Justice, Anti-Oppressive Practices, and Advocacy** – Promote social justice and antiracism as related to equality, inclusion, and human rights to open access to opportunities, resources, and freedom for all people.
- **Ethical Practice** – Promote culturally sensitive and self-aware professionals who adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics, values, and standards of the Social Work profession.
- **Student-Centered** – Promote holistic wellness and healthy self-care throughout an individualized educational process.
- **Community Engagement** – Create and promote a supportive environment to actively engage with surrounding populations through collaboration with a shared purpose.
- **Interprofessional** – Advance high-quality partnerships and collegiality across disciplines of the College for Health & Human Services and beyond.
- **Digital Literacy** – Promote knowledge and use of technology in social work practice with adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics.

## **BSW Program**

### **Mission**

Grounded in a robust liberal arts foundation and guided by the core values and ethics of the profession, the mission of Western Kentucky University's BSW Program is to prepare students to be competent, entry-level generalist practitioners who actively engage in anti-oppressive practices locally, nationally and globally.

### **Goals**

The goals of the BSW program at Western Kentucky University are:

- To prepare generalist social workers who are culturally competent and adept at integrating professional knowledge, values, and skills for practice with diverse populations and multigenerational client systems of various sizes.
- To foster a respect for diversity and a commitment to the common good through the advancement of social justice.
- To instill a sense of oneself as a citizen of the world who is committed to ongoing professional growth and development.

## **BSW Student Handbook**

In addition to this field manual, students also have a Student Handbook for the BSW program. A copy of the Handbook can be found on the WKU BSW program website. The Handbook contains helpful information about the program, including a listing of the program curriculum and sequence of courses, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and much more.

## **Accreditation**

The BSW program at Western Kentucky University is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The BSW and MSW programs make up the Department of Social Work located within the College of Health and Human Services. This Department, as a whole, has grown significantly over the past 20 years. Members of our faculty have an extensive range of educational, practice and teaching backgrounds.

To see the pictures and educational background of all staff and faculty, go to the following website: <https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/staff/>

## **Social Work Core Competencies and Behaviors**

Field education is the “signature pedagogy” of social work education; it is the pivotal transformative experience in progressing from “social work *student*” to “social work *professional*”. The core competencies are the learning outcomes for field courses. Upon successful completion of SWRK 480/481 (Social Work Field Practicum I/Social Work Field



Seminar I) and SWRK 482/483 (Social Work Field Practicum II/Social Work Field Seminar II), along with evidence drawn from previous social work coursework, students are expected to demonstrate achievement of the nine core competencies (left hand column below) as evidenced by the associated behaviors. Each competency is measured in terms of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. According to the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards issued by the CSWE, students completing a BSW Program curriculum should accomplish the following learning outcomes:

2022 EPAS Competencies	Behaviors
Competency 1: <b>Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models of ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.</li> </ul>
Competency 2: <b>Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.</li> </ul>
Competency 3: <b>Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate anti-racist and antioppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-</li> </ul>
	<p>awareness, and self- regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.</p>
Competency 4: <b>Engage in Practice- informed Research and Research- informed Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.</li> </ul>
Competency 5: <b>Engage in Policy Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use social justice, anti-racist, and antioppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services; and</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.</li> </ul>
Competency 6: <b>Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.</li> </ul>

Competency 7: <b>Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate respect for client selfdetermination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.</li> </ul>
Competency 8: <b>Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.</li> </ul>
Competency 9: <b>Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.</li> </ul>

**The goals of the field practicum and integrative seminar**

- To provide BSW students in their final two semesters the opportunity to consciously reflect upon and critically integrate course knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes learned in social work courses with real field experiences.

- To provide students with support and opportunities necessary to demonstrate their integration and application of the nine core competencies identified by the Council on Social Work Education.

Through practice of social work tasks identified in the students' learning plans, along with discussions, activities, and assignments in the integrative seminar, students will review concepts and practice integrative thinking/doing in their emerging professional work. In order for students to adequately demonstrate competence in each of the core areas, there will be an emphasis in seminar on students:

- Understanding each competency area and the discrete behaviors that together provide evidence of competent practice;
- Employing critical thinking and social work professionalism to approach field and seminar tasks
- Exploring what they do not know (or do not consider) and designing activities that will assist them in gaining required knowledge, skills, and values.
- Reflecting upon and evaluating their practice in relation to the NASW Code of Ethics
- Learning to skillfully and graciously give and receive feedback related to performance as beginning professional social workers.
- Becoming consultants and coaches for each other by asking questions that support critical thinking and principled actions in the field.

### **Approval Process for Field Placement Agencies**

The Field Director approves Field Instructors and Agency Task Supervisors for field placement. All placements, including work-site placements, must be in approved agencies and under the supervision of approved Field Instructors. All agencies, including worksite placement agencies, must go through the field procedure for approval prior to enrollment of students in field placement at that agency. The agency approval process for new agencies is as follows:

- An authorized agency representative completes and submits an Agency Application and Informational Sheet.
- The Field Director determines eligibility as a field site.
- Approved agencies will be asked to provide position descriptions.
- Approval is ongoing with the Field Director and instructors sharing the mutual responsibility for updating the Affiliation Agreement/ Agency Application/ Information Sheet as agency circumstances or personnel change.
- In the case an agency is denied approval, appeals may be made in writing to the Program Director. In consultation with the Department Head, the Program Director will then render a final decision of eligibility.

**During the above process, an agency is approved according to the following:**

- The Field Director or designee vets the prospective agency/staff.
- The Field Agency Application/Information Sheet indicates that one or more programs offer suitable placement practice opportunities for students. These opportunities are congruent with the goals and outcomes of the program and competencies set forth by the Council on Social Work Education.
- A BSW or MSW holding a degree from an accredited program who has two years of experience and is following state licensure laws is available to serve as a Field Instructor. (Note: In some instances, an agency board member or community partner, a community practitioner with a relationship with the agency, a contracted community practitioner, or a faculty member may serve as a Field Instructor if this is agreeable to all concerned parties. In this case, the agency and Field Director agrees on an agency-based task supervisor.)
- Following the state Social Work Licensure Board (may be licensed or exempt).
- Field Instructor is willing to submit a Field Instructor application, current vita or resume, and copies of their diploma and/or social work license to the university.
- Field Instructor is willing to attend WKU's Field Instructor orientation and training sessions.
- The agency and Field Instructor indicate a willingness to participate actively in the student's learning process and to abide by the agency policies and the policies contained in this Field Manual.

### **WKU BSW Field Student Placement Procedures**

The field process not only follows an orderly progression, but it also attempts to seek an appropriate "fit" between students and their field environments. Once the placement has been approved and finalized, the Field Director will send an Approval Letter giving further directions.

### **Steps to begin the Field Placement Process**

- Student completes field/practicum orientation provided by the Field Director. Field orientation will be provided to all BSW students who are in good academic standing in their Spring semester of their junior year. Students will receive an invitation to field orientation from the Field Director and the student will be contacted based on the program the student attends. Both online cohorts and campus cohorts will receive equal access to the same orientation materials. The orientation and all the pre-field forms and information will be made available through the BSW Practicum Orientation Black Board Organizational site.

- In the field orientation, the Field Director will provide students with an overview of what to expect in field practicum and what steps to take to secure a field placement. This is a time when students can ask questions, get advice, and begin to carefully plan what it will take to have a meaningful and successful field practicum experience. If a student fails to complete the modules in the Practicum Orientation's Organizational Blackboard by assigned due dates, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Field Director to discuss if there is still an opportunity to apply for field placement. Students may also need (or want) to schedule an appointment to discuss their field placement at any time during the process. The Field Director will be available by appointment via: phone, in the office, and/or zoom meeting room.

#### **Forms to be completed during orientation:**

- Field Application
  - Signed HIPPA statement.
  - Signed Field Manual Statement
  - Current Resume
  - Worksite Placement/Paid Internship form (if applicable)
- Field Application- The student will complete and submit (via the Organizational Blackboard) the field application once the orientation modules are completed. Field applications should be submitted a minimum of 12 weeks prior to the start of the semester enrolled in field. It is the student's responsibility to complete this paperwork promptly! Failure to do so can result in you not having a placement when your field semester begins.
- Placement Interviews- Students will need to maintain close attention to their WKU email as the Field Director will contact you via your WKU email address only. The Field Director will review your application and suggest an agency for you to contact. The Field Director will give each student the chance to meet with them prior to the interview to discuss placement options. Students are welcome to suggest new field settings, however, please do not contact an agency without the Field Director's permission and only contact one agency at a time.
- The Field Director will notify students about possible placement options available and the contact information. The student must set up an interview for placement. It is the student's responsibility to actively pursue the placement, and report to the Field Director if a problem arises. If the student fails to set up an interview, as requested by the Field Director, placement for the semester can be denied. Once the interview has occurred, the student will report to the Field Director about how the interview went and if they were offered/accepted a placement at that agency. If the student does not wish to accept the placement (with good reason, as determined by the Field Director), another agency option can be discussed. Failure to accept a placement without good reason, or failure to accept the second placement offered, may be grounds for termination from field.

## **Preparing for the Agency Interview**

Placements require a preliminary interview. The Field Director will inform the student of the agency placement contact information. The student takes the initiative to schedule the interview. If the contact person cannot be reached, the student finds out when that person will be available and calls back at that time. The student should also leave their name, a return number, and the best time to be reached by the contact person. When leaving phone messages, students should also mention they are WKU Social Work students and are calling to set up an interview for field placement. The student may also email the agency contact to set up an interview. All students must submit a resume to the agency at the time of application.

Once the agency contact person is reached, a date and time for the interview are set. Placement interviews should be handled like job interviews, which require appropriate professional attire, behavior, and background knowledge about the agency.

Before the interview, the student will find it helpful to review the agency's website and check with the Field Office to obtain more information about the agency. Additionally, the student should review the location of the agency and the location of the interview in the event that they are different.

## **The Interview**

During the interview, the student learns about the requirements of the particular placement and the educational opportunities available at the agency. The interview is a two-way process. Students should have clear goals and learning priorities and be prepared to ask specific questions about learning experiences available, clients served, skills that can be developed, type of setting (structured or unstructured), and methods of supervision, etc. Suggested questions are provided below:

### **Suggested Interview Questions**

1. What kind of activities and programs does this agency undertake?
2. What activities, tasks, and/or projects will I be able to undertake?
3. What specific skills will I be able to develop at this agency?
4. Does this agency have a particular theoretical approach to intervention?
5. What are general characteristics of clients and communities served by this agency?
6. What is the approach to and structure of supervision?
7. What amount of interaction does a student have with other students and with permanent staff?
8. What opportunities exist for inter-professional collaboration or cooperation?

9. What types of in-service training or workshops and conferences will be available to me?
10. What kinds of cases and/or projects do you anticipate assigning to me?
11. What kinds of skills to you hope a student will bring to the agency?
12. How much independence and initiative do you expect me to demonstrate?
13. How are students helped to handle issues of diversity regarding age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and mental and physical ability on both staff and client levels?

Students should be prepared to answer questions about their background, educational and career goals, and why they might desire that placement. At the interview, agency personnel assess the student's level of interest and suitability for the general type of assignments they have in mind. Typically, it is at this point that placement decisions are finalized. However, if there are well-founded reservations about the suitability of the match between the agency and the student, the Field Office should be informed at once by the student and/or the Field Instructor/Agency.

### **Failure to Place**

If the agency fails/refuses to offer a student an interview or placement based on the student's attitude, phone etiquette, appearance, maturity level, emotional state, reputation, or performance in the interview (or with other good reason, as determined by the Field Director), the student may be approved by the Field Director to set up an interview with another agency. If the second agency fails/refuses placement based on the student's performance in the interview (or with other good reason, as determined by the Field Director), this may be grounds for administrative withdrawal from field courses.

### **Timeline for Starting Field Placement**

Students are expected to start their placement within the first two weeks of the semester to not get behind on hours and seminar assignments. If a student has not secured a placement and started hours by the third week of the semester, this is grounds for being dismissed from both field and seminar (SWRK 480/481 in Semester 1 of field and SWRK 482/483 in Semester 2 of field).

### **Prior to Starting a Placement**

Field orientation, agency required background checks, agency orientation, as well as any agency pre-internship requirements must be completed prior to a student attending their first day of placement. This includes all pre-field forms such as proof



of liability insurance, signed field manual statement, etc. The student must have received an approval letter from the BSW Field Director prior to starting a placement.

### **Field Hours**

BSW students are required to spend a minimum of 400 hours (200 hours each semester) in a social service agency as part of the major degree requirements. Field hours represent a significant percentage of the student's academic credit hours. This credit reinforces the importance of field instruction as the laboratory of testing ground for Social Work majors. Pre-field hours will not count as field hours. Students may count to 16 hours of training each semester as field hours if the agency approves/sponsors the training/in-service.

Field hours begin the first week of class (each semester) and ends the week before finals. You cannot begin early or stop early. Finals week may be used to finish hours and final evaluations, if needed. Field hours must extend over the entire semester. The only exception to this rule is "mandatory orientation" of the agency that is only scheduled prior to placement date. Exceptions (military duty, maternity, etc.) must be approved by the Field Director.

Students may complete no more than 20 hours during the school breaks, between semesters to provide continuity of services to agency clients. These hours may be counted in semester two field hours. Students must talk with their Field Liaison and seek permission to accrue 20 hours between the semesters. Access to field supervision during this time is required. This is to provide continuity of services to the clients.

### **Field Standards- Expectations for the Student**

1. The student is expected to meet the course requirements for each level of field instruction and be in good standing.

SWRK 480-Social Work Field Practicum I Prerequisites: SWRK 378, 379, field director approval and senior standing. Co requisite: SWRK 481 – Social Work practice experience in a social service agency (Grading: Pass/Fail)

SWRK 481-Social Work Field Seminar I Prerequisites: SWRK, 378, 379, and admission to the field internship, and senior standing. Co requisite: SWRK 480: Integration of the knowledge, skills, values, and experiences gained in the internship. (Grading: Letter Grade)

SWRK 482-Social Work Field Practicum II Prerequisites: SWRK 480/481. Co-requisite: SWRK 483. Continued social work practice experience in a social service agency. (Grading: Pass/Fail)

SWRK 483-Social Work Field Seminar II Prerequisites: SWRK 480/481. Co-requisites: SWRK 482. Integrates the knowledge, skills, values, and experiences gained during the second semester of the internship. (Grading: Letter Grade)

SWRK 480/481 and SWRK 482/483 are capstone courses in the BSW program major. Students enrolled in the field practicum courses (SWRK480 and 482) simultaneously enroll in the accompanying integrative field seminars (SWRK 481 and 483). The seminars provide a setting where students discuss ideas, professional concerns, seek information from peers and Department faculty, provide a forum for class-field learning integration, and offer the opportunity to process the frustrations, questions, and challenges of daily practice. Assignments and expectations are outlined in the course syllabus.

2. The student will adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics*. The student is expected to read the *Code of Ethics* prior to their first week of field placement. Failure to follow these ethical standards may result in termination from the field practicum and/or the BSW Program.
3. Any student enrolled in the university assumes an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the university's function as an educational institution.
4. The student will engage in culturally competent practice, as defined by the *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*.
5. It is mandatory that the students maintain the confidentiality of agency records.
6. The student will not alter the program requirements or any other condition of his or her field placement without the permission of the Field Director and the Field Instructor.
7. The student will adhere to the Agency's schedule of holidays, closings, etc. Students must consult with their Field Instructor to negotiate time off during these breaks in the academic calendar. The student will adhere to the Agency's schedule of orientation and in-service training as a requirement of her/his practicum.
8. If a student misses field time, for any reason, the student must make up the time.
9. The student must keep a record of the number of hours they work in the field.
10. The student is expected to retain their Learning Plan/Evaluation, all journals/assignments, timesheets, and other related work products until they have completed the program. The fully completed Learning Plan/Evaluation will be turned in to the Field Office at the end of Semester 2 of Field.
11. The student will sign a statement that they have read and understand this Field Policy Manual during orientation and prior to starting their practicum.

## **Special Requirements for Field Placements**

### **Background Information**

A growing number of agencies serving as field sites require students to undergo a criminal background check, fingerprinting, a child welfare check, immunizations, as well as other additional requirements. Students desiring to complete placement in these organizations must comply with agency requirements for special screening. Although most agencies cover all or at least some portion of the costs for these special requirements, students will be expected to obtain all required screenings at their own expense if not covered by the agency.

*It is the responsibility of the student to be forthcoming regarding any issues (criminal or otherwise) that may affect his or her ability to perform effectively with clients or with other related field assignment.*

Having a criminal history including but not limited to a misdemeanor or felony related to alcohol/drugs (PI, DUI), threats/assault/restraining orders, destruction of property/theft (including shoplifting or bad checks), domestic violence or child abuse/neglect charges does not necessarily mean you will be rejected for a field placement. However, if a student does not disclose her/his criminal background on the application, and later a criminal history is discovered, this will be grounds for dismissal from the program. Students with such backgrounds must understand and assume the limitations of obtaining a placement as obtaining a professional license post-graduation. Each agency, state, and student's personal situation vary, and it is the student's responsibility to work within those requirements.

### **Obtaining Professional Liability Insurance**

All students must have verification of professional liability insurance prior to entering field, **NO EXCEPTIONS**. Links to sign up for professional liability insurance are available on the Field website and during Field Orientation. Students who hold professional liability insurance through their employers should verify coverage with their carriers and the Field Director. The Field Director will require a written statement from the carrier that coverage will extend to practicum activities. The Department requires a minimum individual coverage of \$1,000,000 occurrence/\$5,000,000 aggregate. Failure to apply for coverage early in the application process (30 days prior to the first week of class, in any semester) may cause a delay in the start date of field placement.

Students will NOT be allowed to enter field placement and/or have client contact without proof of professional liability insurance. There will be no exceptions. Failure to qualify for or obtain liability coverage by the beginning date of practicum will result in a student not being allowed to begin field placement and possibly being withdrawn from the field courses. If students do not provide proof of coverage within 10 days of the start

date of the semester, he/she will be withdrawn from field course and from the corresponding practice course.

### **Driver's License and Transporting Clients**

Students must have reliable transportation to and from field placement. If students will be driving as part of their field experience, they must possess a valid driver's license as well as auto insurance. If the agency requests, and if the student chooses to transport clients, as part of the field duties, an insurance rider on your personal policy is highly recommended. WKU is not responsible for any transportation issues, including accidents that may occur while driving for the agency.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits may be a routine responsibility of a student's field placement, depending on the agency and the program services. It is recommended that the students discuss each agency's policy for home visits prior to accepting a placement.

### **Safety**

Student safety is a priority for the Field Office and the Department of Social Work. Students must follow the agency's guidelines on Universal Precautions. All students must follow Center for Disease Control, state guidelines, and agency protocol regarding public health matters.

If a student has any safety concerns regarding their field agency, the concerns must be reported to the Faculty Field Liaison and to the Field Director immediately.

Agencies are expected to take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of each student. At a minimum, the same security and safety procedures provided to the agency staff must be provided to field practicum students. In certain circumstances students may need additional support and security.

Students are encouraged to have their own personal cell phone, if they are interning at an agency where they do not have access to a telephone when working with clients.

All personal safety incidents, (e.g. an accident during placement which may have resulted in student injury or a case of sexual harassment or stalking) must be reported immediately to the Field Director by either the student, Field Instructor or Faculty Field Liaison.

WKU maintains a record of student accidents/incidents and most agencies will require an incident report to be completed as well. The Field Director will provide the student

with a WKU incident report to be completed and filed in the student file and sent on to the WKU Environmental Health and Safety office for record.

## **Emergencies**

In the case of an emergency off campus (e.g. crime, injury, fire, etc.) call #911 and be prepared to report:

1. The nature of the emergency;
2. The exact location of the emergency;
3. Your name and call-back phone number in case further information is needed.

## **Employment**

Many students in the program are employed either on a part-time or full-time basis. Those students are expected to negotiate with their employers the required time necessary to be available for their practicum during the usual business hours of the field agency. Evening and weekend placements are difficult to find and are not guaranteed.

### **BSW Worksite Field Placements and Paid Internships**

When possible, students may complete their practicum at the place of their current employer, (worksite placement) and/or receive payment for their internship (paid internship). These requests will be supported when appropriate as a means of meeting the program's mission to prepare social workers to meet the needs within the WKU service area and beyond. To maintain quality education, such placements are carefully developed and supervised. The student, employment supervisor, agency administration, Field Instructor, Field Liaison and Field Director sign the Worksite Placement and Paid Internship form. Policies have been developed that are designed to ensure that students learning follow the field employment standards as outlined in the 2022 CSWE- EPAS. "If permitted, student assignments and employee tasks may qualify as field hours when directly linked to the nine social work competencies (and any additional competencies added by the program) and level of practice (generalist or specialized). Field education supervision may be provided by the same supervisor if field education supervision is distinct from employment supervision and the supervisor meets the requirements of Accreditation Standard 3.3.6". It should be noted that the program does not guarantee approval of worksite placement.

- The agency must be able to meet the educational outcomes of the program and requirements of CSWE. This includes the availability of a Field Instructor who holds a BSW or MSW from an accredited program and two years of post-BSW/MSW practice experience. WKU includes the additional criterion of compliance with state licensure laws.

- The Field Instructor must be willing to provide one hour of supervision weekly, distinct from employment supervision as documented on the student's weekly timesheets.
- The student must initiate the completion of and gather all signatures for the Worksite Placement and Paid Internship form.
- The Field Director will sign the completed Worksite Placement and Paid Internship form if the placement is approved.
- Once a worksite placement/paid internship is approved the student will document employment task and assignments directly linked to the nine social work competencies in their learning plan each semester.
- Weekly practicum hours including supervision will be documented weekly on the student's timesheet. A student is prohibited from completing all their required hours prior to the end of the semester, (the week before finals), unless they have extenuating circumstances allowing such. All extenuating circumstances must be approved by the Field Director and supported by the Field Liaison and Field Instructor.

One of the disadvantages of a worksite placement is the fact that field placement will be dependent on the student's employment status. If the student quits or loses her/his job for any reason, it will jeopardize field placement, which in turn can jeopardize completion of the program.

### **Conflict of Interest**

To ensure each student a fair and objective learning environment, including a sound evaluation of student performance in the field setting, students are expected to immediately notify the Field Director if a conflict exists. The Field Director can then assess the appropriateness of the placement.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides protection from discrimination for individuals based on disability. The ADA extends civil rights protection for people with disabilities to employment in the public and private sectors, transportation, public accommodations, services provided by state and local government, and telecommunications services. Besides physical access, the ADA mandates program access, which includes electronic media and web pages.

*If a student requires special accommodations, he/she must provide the Field Director with documentation from the WKU Student Accessibility Resource Center (phone number 270-745-5004) explaining the nature of the required accommodations prior to the placement process.*

## **Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Title IX Statement of Compliance**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to equal opportunity in its educational programs and employment. The University is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, marital status, age, uniform service, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions, or physical or mental disability. On request, WKU will provide reasonable accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services, necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs, activities, and employment.

The University has published policies and procedures for investigating and/or addressing discrimination or harassment in its educational programs and/or employment. If you believe you have experienced discrimination or harassment in such programs, activities, or employment, policies and procedures are included on the following website: <http://www.wku.edu/policies/> (WKU Policies), in addition to the WKU Student Handbook, and Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. These publications, including information about University procedures, are available on the University's website ([www.wku.edu](http://www.wku.edu)), at:

WKU Policies: <http://www.wku.edu/policies/>

WKU Student Handbook: <http://www.wku.edu/handbook/>

WKU Undergraduate Catalog: <https://catalog.wku.edu/undergraduate>

WKU Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate>

The following person has been designated to serve as the University's Institutional Equity Investigator:

Mr. Rodney Stewart, CIG  
Investigator  
Institutional Equity  
Western Kentucky University  
Wetherby Administration Building (across from Potter Hall), Suite 317  
1906 College Heights Blvd. #11009  
Bowling Green, KY 42101  
Phone: (270) 745-4515

The following person has been designated to serve as the University's Title IX Coordinator:

Ms. Ena Demir  
Executive Director and Title IX Coordinator

Office of Institutional Equity  
Wetherby Administration Building (across from Potter Hall), Suite 317  
1906 College Heights Blvd. #11001 Bowling  
Green, KY 42101-1001  
ena.demir@wku.edu  
(270) 745-6867

Information regarding WKU's Title IX compliance, policies, and procedures may be found on the following website: <https://www.wku.edu/titleix>

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

The misuse of drugs and alcohol by a field student is incompatible with the goals of the Social Work Program. Those in need of assistance in dealing with such problems are encouraged to seek the confidential services of the WKU Counseling Center, located in Potter Hall (phone number 270-745-3159) or the Student Health Center located in the WKU Health Services building (phone number 270-745-2273). *Misuse of drugs and/or alcohol will be grounds for termination of a student from the program. Substance misuse of any kind will impair a student's judgment and the ability to work effectively with clients in the field practicum setting.*

### **Drug Screens and Other Assessments**

Field students may be asked to provide drug screens/assessments (of any type, including mental health) as a part of the admission/continuation of field (at any time) by the Field Director, Program Director, or the field agency. Students refusing to provide requested assessments/test results or testing positive, must immediately notify the Field Director. Failure to do so will result in termination from the program.

### **Responsibilities Once in Field Placement**

#### **Learning Plan**

- Students must submit a Learning Plan within four weeks of the beginning of their field placement. Since faculty want students to have the best practice experience possible, some standardized learning tasks have been developed to enhance learning in the field. Students can make these tasks specific to their agency setting and focus. These tasks are designed to help students gain practice in the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes embedded in the CSWE competency areas.
- Students are required to develop one or more tasks, to add to this list, based on their specific agency situation and learning needs. These additional tasks must be



reviewed and approved by the Field Instructor and Field Liaison. If the student fails to complete the Plan within four weeks of the beginning of their placement, termination from field may be initiated. Students cannot earn field hours past the fourth week if the learning plan has not been approved.

- The student will submit the Learning Plan to the Field Instructor and Field Liaison for approval/signatures, but the student is responsible for maintaining the original document throughout the year. The same form is to be used for the student's evaluations at the midterm and final evaluation each semester. It is the student's responsibility to obtain all needed signatures and maintain the original documents. At the conclusion of the second semester of field, the original (final) learning plan evaluation is to be filed in the student's permanent file. At the end of the year, it is also the Field Liaison's responsibility to submit the original learning plan evaluation (with ALL completed evaluation scores and verification of field hours) to the Field Office for inclusion into the student's master file.
- The student should maintain a copy of their learning plan throughout field placement and once they graduate.

Remember the Learning Plans are to encompass both semesters, so tasks and timeframes may vary from one semester to another.

### **Field Seminar Assignments**

Students will have required assignments each semester in their field seminar class (SWRK 481/482 and 483/484). Below is a list of all field assignments. Be sure to review the syllabi each semester for a description and additional information regarding expectations for each assignment. Field Liaisons and Field Instructors have the latitude to require additional assignments to assist students in acquiring relevant knowledge and skills. Please see syllabi for SWRK 481/482 and SWRK 483.484 for complete assignment details.

### **Documentation of Completed Hours**

Students must submit a completed timesheet signed by their Field Instructor to your Field Liaison weekly, including documentation of the hour of supervision. At the end of each semester when the final evaluation is done, the Field Liaison will sign and attest that the student has completed the required hours. This also serves as the Documentation of Completed Hours. Hours must be completed prior to Field Liaison's signature. This is the official documentation that all required field hours have been completed.

### **Notification of Student Concerns**

**Step 1:** Field Instructors, Task Supervisors, Faculty Field Liaisons or any others involved in the student's field placement who have concerns regarding a student's field or classroom performance, professional conduct, an ethical violation/dilemma, emotional state/mental health, substance misuse or academic performance should express their concern first with the student, faculty, Field Liaison and/or the student's advisor.

**Step 2:** If the concern is field related, and cannot be resolved by the Liaison, the Liaison will submit the concern in writing (via email or use of the Professional Concerns form- See Appendix in BSW Student Handbook) to the Field Director.

**Step 3:** The Field Director will contact the student. The student may be asked to meet with the Field Director and/or Advisor regarding the concern.

**Step 4:** If successful resolution cannot be reached, either for practical or for policy related reasons, the Field Director will notify the Program Director to bring the issue before the BSW faculty. The student will be invited to attend a BSW program meeting or specially convened meeting with BSW faculty to discuss the concern.

**Step 5:** After the meeting, the student's advisor, or the Program Director, will notify the student in writing of the BSW faculty meeting resolution.

**Step 6:** if the student does not agree with the resolution, the student must send a written appeal to the Program Director within 5 working days.

This policy is written only to assist with communication and in no way intends to circumvent the "termination process", or the student grievance policy. At any point, the student is free to follow the grievance policy set forth in the BSW Student Handbook. Students are expected to adhere to this order of communication.

### **Reassignment/Termination Procedures**

There are numerous reasons that arise which may cause a need for reassignment or termination after the student is in placement. Each situation will be explored, and the outcome will depend upon the nature of the situation.

- Many situations may be resolved by the Field Director.
- Some situations may need to be resolved by engaging the Program Director and/or the BSW program faculty. The BSW program faculty will be convened as needed. The

student may request to appear before the BSW program faculty to discuss the situation personally.

- The Field or Program Director will inform the student in writing of the committee's decision. If the student does not concur with the decision of the committee, the student can appeal as specified in the BSW Student Handbook.

When a placement is disrupted/changed, potential transferability of hours accrued will be determined by the Field Director and/or BSW program faculty. However, the student's new agency must agree to accept a student for a reduced number of hours for the transfer of hours to be finalized. If the agency does not agree to reduced hours, the full semester hours (i.e. 200 hours) will be required. The student will be notified in writing of the outcome.

### **Agency Issues/No Fault of Student**

If the agency is unable to continue to offer educational opportunities and the student is doing acceptable work, the Field Director will consult with Field Liaison and make a reassignment as quickly as possible. In this case, all accrued hours may be transferable, pending agreement by the student's new placement agency.

### **Student Request**

If a student is requesting a change in placement, the request must be made in writing to the Field Director and only after serious consideration and consultation with their Field Liaison and Field Instructor. Any reassignment is contingent on the availability of an appropriate substitute placement and determination of a compelling reason for the change, by the Field Director. If the request is without a compelling reason, the Field Director may deny the request, or request consultation with BSW faculty during a BSW Program meeting. If the reason is compelling, the Field Director will find another placement for the student and inform interested parties. The student should understand that alternate placement options might be severely limited.

Transferability of hours is at the discretion of the Field Director and/or BSW Program faculty decision and the student's new placement agency.

### **Involuntary Agency Termination/Reassignment Process**

If the student is involuntarily terminated from an agency, the agency Field Instructor is requested to state in writing the reasons for the termination after discussion with the Faculty Field Liaison and/or Field Director. The agency's decision to terminate a student is final.

**Step 1:** If the student wishes to pursue a reassignment and continue in the program, he/she must submit in writing a request for reassignment and address the concerns of the terminating agency in writing, within five days from the termination notification, by the Field Director. The student may contact the Field Director to discuss the reason for termination prior to writing their appeal.

**Step 2:** The Field Director will either approve or deny the request for reassignment, based on the reason for termination. At the discretion of the Field Director, the Field Liaison may also be consulted. Alternatively, the Field Director may refer the student directly to the BSW Program faculty for review, based on the situation. If referred to the BSW Program faculty for review, the process goes directly to Step 4.

**Step 3:** The student may appeal the Field Director's decision and ask the BSW Program Director for a BSW Program faculty meeting to review and assess student's readiness for reassignment. The student must appeal to the BSW Program Director within five days of notification of the Field Director's decision, otherwise they are considered terminated from field.

**Step 4:** The BSW Program faculty will determine the appropriateness of possible reassignment or termination from field and/or consequently, from the Program. Policies governing termination from the Program may be found in the BSW Student Handbook.

If a student is involuntarily terminated from her/his Field placement a second time, during her/his social work program, the student will be terminated from Field without convening BSW Program faculty.

If a student is involuntarily terminated from an agency and is given the option to remain in the Program, hours previously completed are not counted toward the fulfillment of required hours and total hours for that semester must be completed after the date of reassignment. In practical terms, this means that a student who cannot complete the total number of hours in the weeks remaining in the semester, must wait until the following academic year to enroll in practicum and the corresponding seminar course.

### **WKU Administrative Removal of a Student from Field**

In rare instances, a student may be removed from a particular practicum site or from the field internship program. Reasons for such an administrative decision are congruent with the BSW Student Handbook. In the event that such an action is contemplated, the student will meet with her/his Field Liaison who will notify the Field Director and Program Director, who will convene a BSW Faculty meeting. After careful deliberation, the committee will reach a decision regarding possible removal of the student from field

courses. If the student does not concur with the committee's decision, she/he may follow the grievance procedures outlined in the BSW Student Handbook. Removal from field necessarily results in removal from the concurrent seminar class and/or possibly, from the Program.

### **Program Termination**

Students are subject to termination from the Program if removed from field courses for any reason; and, students are subject to termination or suspension from the Program during their participation in field under the same terms and conditions as outlined in the BSW Student Handbook.

### **Field Practicum Evaluation/Grading**

Students will be graded on a PASS/FAIL basis, for their agency field practicum (SWRK 480 and 482) work. Learning Plan Evaluations will be scored by Field Instructors and based on completion of field requirements as well as their professional skill development attained to meet the competencies. Letter grades will be earned in the Seminar classes (SWRK 481 and 483). Seminar grades will be based on Seminar Assignments. Letter grades will be assigned by Faculty Field Liaisons.

Students must demonstrate competency in each of the nine Competency Areas. Each competency area has specific behaviors that students are expected to successfully demonstrate in order to be competent in that particular standard. Instructions for rating the Learning Plan Evaluation can be found on the front page of the Learning Plan.

Students must pass (on a PASS/FAIL rating) SWRK 480/482 (Field Practicum Semester 1 and 2), and score at least a 7 on each competency journal (based on the rubric in the syllabus), to advance to semester two. Students must pass ("C" grade or higher) SWRK 481/483 (Field Seminar Semester 1 and 2) and score at least a 7 on each journal (based on the rubric in the syllabus) to graduate.

Planning for the final evaluation should begin at the start of the semester. All parties—the Field Instructor, student, and Field Liaison—should review the Core Competencies and behaviors to ensure that the criteria are met over the course of the semester. Each Liaison visit/contact will include a discussion of how the Core Competencies are being met and to brainstorm ways of meeting any that seem to be problematic. Any such difficulties should be addressed well in advance of the final evaluation.

Field Liaisons may use the University supported video conferencing software to conduct field visits with students and Field Instructors rather than driving to the agency. Check with the Field Office if there are questions as the University supported software may change. It is important to use the University software for FERPA purposes.

Students are evaluated at midterm and at the conclusion of each semester based on their performance on the (behavioral indicators) core competencies. Field Instructors and students are asked to complete evaluations using a copy of the Learning Plan independently, compare results, and reach an agreed-upon conclusion prior to the Field Liaison's visit. Spaces for commentary are provided related to each competency and at the end of the form. These should address strengths, areas for continued learning, and any other areas deemed noteworthy by any of the three parties. Again, it is anticipated that any concerns will have been addressed well in advance of the final evaluation.

Liaisons have the option of requesting that a copy of the evaluation be submitted 48 hours in advance of the final visit. Liaisons are responsible for officially assigning final grades for the seminar class.

Any student who believes that he/she has been unfairly graded must follow the University appeal procedures outlined in the BSW Student Handbook.

Students will get two separate grades for field work. One grade for seminar class (letter grade) and one grade for field work in the agency (rated as Pass/Fail).

### **Evaluation of Field Process**

Upon completion of the final semester of field, students, Field Instructors, and Field Liaisons will be asked to complete an evaluation of the field process and experience. This survey will be completed online. The Field Office will send a link for all parties to complete the evaluation. The information will be utilized by the Field Office to evaluate the overall placement experience including the field office and seminar processes as well as the appropriateness of agencies and Field Instructors to ensure quality placements for future students.

### **Sharing Evaluation Results**

A summary of the learning plan evaluation (competency scores) information will be shared in aggregate on the WKU BSW Program Webpage. All results will be compiled in summary format to protect student confidentiality.

### **Agency/University Relationships and Responsibilities**

The Agency and University share the responsibility for instruction of field students in a partnership relationship, each performing different functions in this relationship. Multiple individuals work together to make this partnership successful, including Field Instructors, the Field Director and Faculty Field Liaisons.

## **Expectations for the Agency**

- The agency's director should be committed to the agency's participation in professional social work education.
- An employee of the agency should be designated to serve as the contact person to work with the school.
- The agency and the School will enter into an agreement regarding the mutual expectations for affiliation prior to a student being accepted for placement.
- The agency will provide reasonable physical facilities necessary to accommodate the student and also provide a reasonable orientation to the agency.
- Agencies must be willing to participate in video conferencing or in person meetings as needed with the Field Director, Faculty Field Liaison, and other Field Staff. This may include the initial field site set up to provide a visual of agency, space for students to work during their field hours, etc. in order for the Field Office to determine appropriateness of site for student placement.
- The agency should consistently provide the variety, quality and quantity of learning experiences appropriate for the level of field education: Generalist year (BSW and 1<sup>st</sup> year MSW) and/or MSW Specialized year. This includes providing opportunities for students to have face to face client contact.
- The agency will be expected to assure the availability of case material and work activities for instructional use by students. This material would be subject to the guidelines of confidentiality.
- The agency should reimburse students for agency-related travel expenses from the agency to home visits, etc.
- The agency should provide the opportunity for students to attend staff meetings and participate in other collaborative and professional exchanges.
- In the case of working with a faith-based agency, the agency may provide the opportunity for students to attend and participate in spiritually-oriented activities; however they must respect the student's decision as to whether or not to participate.
- The agency should allow its Field Instructors adequate time for student supervision and for attendance at seminars and other meetings pertinent to this role.

- The agency should have formal safety policies and procedures. These procedures should be discussed with students in the beginning of placement.

Field Instructor Orientation and other trainings provided:

- WKU offers Multimedia as well as face to face training/information to instructors
- Free CEU credit offerings during each semester
- Orientation and Field Instructor training each year

## **Contracts**

Each agency will be required to sign a CHHS Affiliation Agreement or an approved agency contract prior to student placement. The Memorandum of Agreement between the agency and the Social Work Department is signed by the Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Services and an appropriate agency administrator/supervisor.

## **Orientation to the Agency**

Orientation to the specific agency and its clients is the responsibility of the agency Field Instructor. It is generally recognized that some form of planned orientation is beneficial to students. Essential to the orientation process is agency-based HIPAA training, if applicable. Also required are worker safety and emergency procedures for the agency. Agency Field Instructors are responsible for planning and implementing an agency orientation program that will enable the students to become familiar with agency policies, procedures and the student role. This should be done in the first two weeks of a student's placement hours.

## **Roles of Field Staff**

### **Role of the Agency Field Instructor**

Field Instructors, employed by community agencies, are selected by the agency on the basis of their practice competence and their positive approach to a generalist social work education. The social work students' whole practicum experience revolves around the Field Instructor. The agency Field Instructor must schedule at least one hour of formal supervisory conference with the individual student on a weekly basis. Although they do not have University appointments, the contributions they (and their agencies) make to Social Work education are incalculable. Their responsibilities include:

1. Arranging for student orientation at the beginning of field placement;
2. Consultation with the student and liaison in developing a Learning Plan;



3. Providing weekly supervision and evaluation sessions for the student. If at any time the student's level of performance is questionable, informing the student and faculty liaison;
4. Providing instruction in agency recording requirements and other agency procedures and policies;
5. Providing a stimulus for students to be involved in department planning, relevant community and professional events, and suggesting appropriate reading materials;
6. Providing practice experiences and relevant feedback, and assisting students in goal attainment;
7. Assisting in evaluation, both oral and written, at the mid-term and final meetings as well as engaging in final evaluation sessions with the students; and
8. Attending training seminars conducted by the Department of Social Work when able.

### **Role of the Task Supervisor**

In recognition of the fact that the students' experience in an agency can be enhanced by interaction with non-BSW/MSW social service professionals, some agency Field Instructors may assign some day-to-day supervisory responsibilities to a Task Supervisor. The Task Supervisor is selected by the agency Field Instructor or the Field Director based on the preceptor's experience or expertise in a particular area of service delivery. The Task Supervisor may be from professional disciplines other than social work such as marriage and family counseling, psychology, occupational and recreational therapy, etc.

*The involvement of a Task Supervisor is at the discretion of the agency Field Instructor, but a Task Supervisor does NOT replace the agency Field Instructor nor reduce or diminish any of the agency Field Instructor's responsibilities as listed above.*

Both the Task Supervisor and agency Field Instructor are encouraged to develop clear avenues of communication as it relates to the students' progress through the practicum. Ultimately, the agency Field Instructor remains solely responsible for the student's field training experience and holds vicarious liability for the student's field performance.

### **Role of the External Field Instructor**

Occasionally there is an excellent educational opportunity with an agency, however, that agency may not have a BSW or MSW staff person available as a Field Instructor to supervise the student. In this circumstance, an external qualified Field Instructor may be obtained to provide the BSW educational supervision for the student, while the agency employs a Task Supervisor who provides the student with daily assignments, tasks and

supervision. The external Field Instructor will have a BSW or MSW degree and a minimum of two years post degree social work experience.

The external Field Instructor is expected to work closely with the Task Supervisor in obtaining input regarding the student's practice tasks and performance. The external Field Instructor will fulfill all the expectations required of Field Instructors of the Social Work Department.

### **Role of the Field Liaison**

The Field Liaison serves as a bridge between the practice community and the school, and to ensure a valuable field learning experience for the student. The Field Liaison is responsible for:

1. Communicating and interpreting (if needed) the curriculum to the individual Field Instructor;
2. Where necessary, training Field Instructors in supervisory techniques;
3. Assuring that the educational focus of the placement is maintained;
4. Assuring that time expectations and practice assignments are appropriate, and, where not appropriate assisting the Field Instructor in developing additional assignments;
5. Participating in the development of student field tasks, and monitoring/revising educational learning plan as needed;
6. Evaluating student progress at mid-term and the end of each semester;
7. Assessing the communication between the student and Field Instructor, and, where problematic facilitating problem solving;
8. Responding to problems raised by the student, Field Instructor or identified by the Liaison;
9. Assessing the experience provided by the agency and transmitting that information to the Field Director via formal or informal mechanisms;
10. Reviewing and monitoring the student's field seminar assignments
11. Bringing to the attention of Field Director and Social Work faculty any student who is experiencing difficulty in field, and

## 12. Monitoring the final evaluations and assigning a grade for the seminar class.

These roles are implemented through telephone, e-mail, school, and agency visit contacts via video software.

- BSW Field Liaisons are expected to have a minimum of one face-to-face agency visit per semester with the field instructor. The student should be present for at least part of the discussion with the field instructor. University supported video conferencing software may be utilized to conduct field visits with students and Field Instructors rather than driving to the agency.

### **Guidance for Field Liaisons**

#### **First Contact**

- Call or email the Field Instructor, introduce self, and give her/him your telephone and e-mail contact information.
- Make sure that Field Instructor has received the syllabus and Field Manual and/or has reviewed the Field Webpage.
- Let the Field Instructor know you will be meeting with the student weekly in seminar and the Field Instructor should schedule weekly supervision meetings with the student to discuss her/his internship experiences and assignments from their seminar class.
- Discuss the development of and give final approval of the Learning Plan
- Remind the Field Instructor that you will meet via Zoom at the end of the semester, but they can request a meeting at any time if needed before then.
- Discuss with Field Director if an agency appears to have a concern or seems to be unable to fulfill WKU's expectations.

#### **Mid-semester Contact**

- Call or email the Field Instructor to check in on student progress, offer support or assistance if the Field Instructor has any questions or concerns.

#### **Agency Visit- Final Evaluation**

This visit should occur within three weeks of finals week. During this visit the final evaluation for the semester will be completed. Each competency and the accompanying behaviors on the learning plan will be reviewed to determine behaviors demonstrated and if the competencies have been met. During the first semester, you may have NA for a few behaviors, but for the second semester it is not acceptable to have ANY non- applicable behaviors for the competencies, since all must be met by the end of the year.

- Complete Student Evaluation (first semester) utilizing the field software platform.

- Complete Student Evaluation (second semester), also utilizing the field software platform. Students are encouraged to keep a copy of their Learning Plan Evaluation.
- At the end of the second semester of field, student, Field Instructors, and Field Liaisons are to complete an online survey of the field experience. This survey will be emailed to all parties by the Field Office.
- Advise Field Director if problems are identified (using Professional Concerns form).
- Present students with significant problems to the social work faculty.

## **Important Field Documents**

Forms related to field can be found on the [WKU Department of Social Work field website](https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/).  
(<https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/>)

The following webpages include additional field information:

[Field Instructor Toolbox](https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/fieldinstructortoolbox.php)

<https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/fieldinstructortoolbox.php>

[Student Toolbox](https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/student_toolbox.php) - Contains forms and field material for all students

[https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/student\\_toolbox.php](https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/student_toolbox.php)

[BSW Field](#) - Contains documents pertaining to BSW field students

Students, Task Supervisors, Field Instructors, Field Liaisons, and agencies interested in becoming an approved agency can find more information about Field (including a copy of the manual) on our website at <http://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/>