



University of Findlay

Social Work & Gerontology

# Field Instruction Manual

2020-2021





# University of Findlay

## Social Work & Gerontology

### Field Instruction Manual

#### Field Instruction Courses:

**SOWK 310: Field Instruction I**

**SOWK 410: Field Instruction II**

**This manual is a description of the policies and practices employed in the field instruction sequence of the Social Work program at the University of Findlay. Its development originates from the principles espoused by the Council on Social Work Education and articulated in its Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.**



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## **Chapter 1**

### **An Introduction and Statement of Purpose**

The field placement experience is an intrinsic part of the curriculum in keeping with the mission of preparing students for entry-level generalist practice and the concomitant goal of having them effectively serve individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities with diverse populations. One of the ways in which students accomplish this preparation is via the completion of two field placements in human services agencies which offer services to individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities with diverse populations. Successful provision of these opportunities for students requires a clear understanding of the policies and procedures of the field placement sequence by all parties involved, including, social work faculty, agency personnel and designated Field Instructors, and students. Collaboration among all these parties is also an essential component in this endeavor. This document articulates the guidelines assembled by the Social Work Program for students and the helping professionals engaged in the noble task of assisting this program in the preparation of future professional social workers.

Each student brings to the university and to the field opportunity a different background, experience, and interest. Despite these differences, it is essential that all of them have the chance to learn and develop in their journey from student learner to professional social worker. Field Instructors in agencies, together with the social work faculty, particularly the Director of Field Instruction, have the responsibility to plan experiences which engage students in actual practice which draws upon all the knowledge, values and ethics, and skills they have acquired both through life experiences and through the social work curriculum. These learning opportunities allow for the development and implementation of new knowledge and skills, a heightened awareness of the professional self, and a strengthened commitment to the principles, values and ethics of the social work profession.

Openness, flexibility, and a willingness to perform the tasks necessary for adequate learning are important traits for students entering the field experiences. Field Instructors can expect from social work students an eagerness to learn, a tolerance for others, a genuine concern for

the well-being of humans, and a respect for the diversity in our species. Moreover, they can anticipate that students will not only have knowledge of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board Code of Ethical Practices and Professional Conduct and their detailed descriptions of appropriate conduct for social workers but that they will adhere to these Codes in their respective field placements. However, student learners that they are, they will need direction in all of these areas. In their enthusiasm and idealism, students may seek a rationale for current practices and some may even challenge the status quo. They may err, unintentionally, in their passion for their profession. Limits, compassion, and tolerance from Field Instructors and agency staff will permit them to see these moments as growth opportunities. In that process, however, Field Instructors will discover the reciprocal nature of their teaching role. They, too, will learn from their students' comments and questions, rethinking old practices and giving permission for innovation where appropriate.

Field instruction, as an educational process, must have structure and the Field Instructor plays a critical part in the establishment of that framework. Structure establishes expectations and defines responsibilities without squelching the uniqueness of each student. To that end, Field Instructors must possess a solid understanding of the knowledge foundation of social work, including: policy and services; human behavior in the social environment at the micro and macro level; practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; human diversity; populations at-risk; social and economic justice; social work research and evaluation. They will also have a working comprehension of the values and ethics of the social work profession and the skills required of professional social workers. Upon this basis, then, they will be capable of assessing student performance on all of these dimensions. The learning contracts, completed by students in their first month of field practicum, will detail student assignments and responsibilities and will serve as a roadmap for the series of evaluative conferences with the student, Field Instructor, and Director of Field Instruction. At the conclusion of the field placement sequence, then, students will emerge prepared to function at the beginning level of generalist social work practice.

Field instruction at The University of Findlay entails two courses, SOWK 310 (Field junior year, the latter in the final semester of the senior year. In the case of a traditional four-year

student who expresses an interest in majoring in social work in the first year, completion of SOWK 101 (Introduction to Social Work) precedes enrollment in SOWK 310 in the first semester of the junior year. Traditional students who decide to major in social work in the sophomore or junior year will also enroll in SOWK 310, having - completed SOWK 101 or concurrently taking SOWK 101 and SOWK 310. Transfer students entering the program, not having completed an introductory field placement course and having completed SOWK 101 in another institution will also enroll in SOWK 310. Over the course of one semester, these students will spend 3 hours weekly in class while completing 60 hours of supervised experience in a human service agency.

In the final semester of the senior year, students will enroll in SOWK 410, Field Instruction II. Prior to enrollment in this course, they will have completed the following requirements: admission to the Social Work Program and completion of the Human Behavior Sequence (SOWK 360 and SOWK 361), the Practice Sequence (SOWK 305, SOWK 307, SOWK 306, SOWK 405, and research methods (SOWK 347). Referred to as a block placement, the seniors will spend 4 days a week in a human service agency, accruing a total of 480 hours under the supervision of a practicing social worker or approved human services professional. Attending class on campus for one day a week during their final semester at the university, seniors will participate in a one hour seminar attached to SOWK 410 with the Director of Field Instruction, a three hour integrative seminar, SOWK 495, and a one hour research project, SOWK 447.

By the time that the students graduates from the Social Work Program at The University of Findlay, they will have completed 500 hours in human service agencies, under the tutelage of professional Social workers and other human services providers. Implementing the knowledge base of the social work and the attendant skills along with the values and ethics of the profession, these graduates will be ready for an entry level position in social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Framing the completion of the social work curriculum is a broad curricular array of courses, drawn from competencies expected of all university graduates at this institution and a liberal arts distribution of coursework in the fine arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Electives permit students to amplify areas of interest in their major or in other disciplines. Ideally, then, students will leave the university prepared for initial social work



practice with a diversity of population sizes and groups or graduate School in social work. And they will be well aware that their education in the profession will continue, having been exposed to the Continuing Education Units mandated for all professional social workers who hold a License in Social Work. Their field placement experiences will remain with them forever, altering the course of both their professional and personal lives.

## Chapter 2

### Requisites for Affiliation

Collaboration between the Social Work Program at The University of Findlay and human service agencies requires a firm commitment to the knowledge base, values and ethics, and skill development intrinsic to the profession of social work. Since the learning that occurs with students exacts no small allocation of resources from the agency, they must exhibit a willingness and a pay to engage in that endeavor. At the same time, there are responsibilities incumbent upon the Social Work Program to insure that students can learn in an optimal manner.

Affiliation between the Social Work Program and a human services agency can occur in a variety of ways: 1) the Director of Field Instruction may initiate contact with agencies based upon knowledge of the community; 2) an agency may approach the Social Work Program about the feasibility of student field placements; 3) Students may recommend a potential agency to the Director of Field Instruction; 4) members of the community such as the Social Work Advisory Council may identify an agency for possible affiliation.

Subsequent to these inquiries, the Director of Field Instruction contacts the appropriate person at the prospective agency, to inquire and confirm the interest in affiliation with the Social Work Program. If the agency indicates both an openness to consideration of student field placements and acknowledges properly credentialed potential field instructors, the Director of Field Instruction meets with agency personnel and completes the following:

- 1.) Basic agency information and education of potential Field Instructors (**Field Placement Agency and Instructor Data Form**);
- 2.) Descriptions of agency mission, organizational flow chart, agency brochures and descriptions of services;
- 3.) Review of the **Affiliation Agreement** which spells out the responsibilities of the Social Work Program and the agency.

A copy of the Social Work Program Handbook and the Field Placement Manual are given to the agency at this meeting. The former document provides a cursory overview of the program

including the curriculum sequence, field instruction, and ethical responsibilities of students. The Field Placement Manual depicts in detail the parameters of the field placement process for prospective agencies.

In order for the agency to affiliate with the Social Work Program, it must meet certain criteria congruent with the principles and values of the social work profession. These criteria include the following:

- 1.) The agency's philosophy of service is compatible with the knowledge base, values and ethics, and skills of the social work profession;
- 2.) The agency agrees to abide by the values and principles outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct;
- 3.) Programs and methods of practice within the agency are clear;
- 4.) There is ample opportunity for the student to observed and engage in generalist social work practice;
- 5.) The agency has a clearly defined and active role in the community and participates in local and regional planning in its field;
- 6.) The administrator and staff demonstrate a commitment to professional social work education and accept the objectives and educational focus of the program of field instruction;
- 7.) The staff is large enough and so deployed that the basic program of the agency is maintained and developed without reliance on students. This does not preclude enhancement of the basic program through student activity. However, continuity and continuation of the program shall never be solely based on student participation;
- 8.) The social service department of an institution such as a hospital, course, or school, is an integral part of the program of the institution both in the philosophy and structural organization;

- 9.) The volume and flow of the program offers students a fairly wide range of learning opportunities commensurate with the university objectives for field instruction. where a setting is deficient, arrangements can be made with the university for linkages with other agencies, either directly, or through a joint Supervisory experience;
- 10.) The agency attempts to make available suitable desk space, where possible, telephones, documentation rubrics, Supplies, transportation costs, clerical services, and program Space for the Student. Computer training and usage, when appropriate, is also helpful;
- 11.) The agency provides the qualified field instructors essential to learning. The relationship between these persons and the Director of Field Instruction is established with the purpose of maximizing student learning;
- 12.) The agency is willing to risk the involvement of students in appropriate responsibilities for practice through clearly defined tasks;
- 13.) The agency possesses and implements sound personnel policies and practices, including, non-discrimination manifested in an Equal Opportunity Employer statement.

Following the meeting with the appropriate personnel involved in the decision-making process to affiliate, the Director of Field Instruction compiles the Data Sheets on the agency, possible field instructors, organizational information (mission, organizational flow chart, annual reports, brochures, etc.), service descriptions and proposed tasks and responsibilities for social work students. There is a file kept on each agency, retained by the Social Work Program.

Upon the agency submission of these documents to the Director of Field Instruction, there is a careful review with the Program Director and other faculty of the Social Work Program. If the potential agency meets the criteria, then the field instructor and agency director sign the Affiliation Agreement as well The Social Work Program Director and the Director of Field Instruction with the agency retaining a copy along with the Social Work Program.

The Director of Field Instruction is responsible for the regular review of the Affiliation Agreement and the capacity of agencies to have a student in a field placement. Given the shifting demands that occur regularly with human service agencies, there will be times when having a social work student in the field agency is not feasible. Consequently, the Director of Field Instruction annually contacts each affiliated agency to determine its ability to manage a field placement. Armed with this information, the Director of Field Instruction can more efficiently begin the placement process at the beginning of each semester.

In the rare event that an agency would fail to meet the required criteria for affiliation, it is the responsibility of the Director of Field Instruction, in collaboration with the Social Work Program Director, to identify those issues with the agency and to see if any remediation can occur. For instance, if an agency field instructor does not allow sufficient supervisory time with a social work student, then the Director of Field Instruction would address this matter with the Field Instructor. If remediation is not possible, for whatever reason, then revocation of the Affiliation Agreement can occur. While the termination of an Affiliation Agreement is highly unlikely, it is the responsibility of the Social Work Program to insure that agencies and their staff understand the importance of their teaching responsibilities and comply with expectations identified in the Affiliation Agreement and this Field Placement Manual.

## Chapter 3

### The Role of Field Instruction and the Social Work Program

The Education Policy and Accreditation Standards articulated by the Council on Social Work Education (2015) highlight field instruction as a critical component of the curriculum with clear guidelines regarding its implementation. Those specifications include:

1. The program explains how its field education program connects the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom and field settings
2. The program explains how its field education program provides generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and illustrates how this is accomplished in field settings
3. The program explains how students across all program options in its field education program in its field education program demonstrate social work competencies through in-person contact with clients and constituencies.
4. The program describes how its field education program provides a minimum of 400 hours of field education for baccalaureate programs.
5. The program provides its criteria for admission into field education and explains how its field education program admits only those students who have met the program's specified criteria.
6. The program describes how its field education program specifies policies, criteria, and procedures for selecting field settings, placing and monitoring students; supporting student safety; and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness congruent with the social work competencies.
7. The program describes how its field education program maintains contact with field settings across all program options. The program explains how on-site contact or other methods are used to monitor student learning and field setting effectiveness.

8. The program describes how its field education program specifies the credentials and practice experience of its field instructors necessary to design field learning opportunities for students to demonstrate the program social work competencies. Field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-social work degree practice experience in social work. For cases in which a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited social work degree or does not have the required experience, the program assumes responsibility for reinforcing social work perspective and describes how this is accomplished.
9. The program describes how its field education program provides orientation, field instruction training, and continuing dialog with field education settings and field instructors.
10. The program describes how its field education program develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of student as learner, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.

Administration of field education is consistent, also, with the goals and objectives of the Social Work Program. A restatement of the mission, goals, and objectives of the Social Work Program at this point will offer a frame of reference for understanding the importance of field instruction.

**Mission:**

The mission of the Social Work Program at The University of Findlay is to prepare baccalaureate-level social workers with the professional knowledge, values and ethics, and skills for entry-level generalist practice in a variety of settings and with systems of all sizes.

**Goals:**

- 1.) To prepare generalist social workers who are able to integrate the necessary knowledge, values and ethics, and skills of the Social work profession for

competent practice in settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

- 2.) To prepare students who demonstrate a commitment to continue their own professional growth and development, including but not limited to graduate education in social work and other disciplines;
- 3.) To familiarize students to the profession of social work through the study of its history, philosophy, and purposes, with particular regards to social and economic justice and populations-at-risk;
- 4.) To provide students with content about the social, political, and global contexts of social work practice, the ever-changing nature of those contexts, the behaviors found in individuals and systems, and the dynamics of change.

**Program Objectives:** (drawn from Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards)

A social work graduate from The University of Findlay will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice;
2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles and practice accordingly;
3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation;
4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and Social change that advance Social and economic justice;
5. Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues;
6. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes;
7. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities;



8. Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies;
9. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions;
10. Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues and communities;
11. Use Supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice;
12. Functioning within the structure of organizations and service delivery Systems and seek necessary organizational change.

It is within the field instruction experience that the mission, goals and objectives of the Social Work Program converge. Field Instruction I is the student's first glimpse into the integration of knowledge, values and ethics, and skills of the Social work profession in the 'real world' of social work practice. Field Instruction II is the implementation of the knowledge, values and ethics, and skills derived from coursework which will contribute to the realization of the mission, goals and objectives of the program. In a human service organization, the student operationalizes and expands knowledge of the profession, performs ethically and responsibly, and practices the skills required of a generalist social work practitioner. As a student learner, the Student has the opportunity to become immersed in the tasks and responsibilities of an entry-level baccalaureate social worker. Having spent 540 hours in human Service agencies over the course of the academic career, the graduate will be ready for practicing social work in a variety of agency settings and with a variety of system sizes, including, individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Field Instruction, then, is an essential component in the realization of the mission of the Social work program, the preparation of students for entry-level generalist practice.

## Chapter 4

### The Field Instructor

Either the affiliated agency or the Director of Field Instruction may initiate the selection of a potential field instructor. For instance, an agency director may designate one or more individuals with the appropriate credentials and experience for the role of field instructor. On the other hand, a social work faculty member who is aware of potential candidates for this position may make a recommendation to the appropriate administrative personnel within the affiliating agency. Or a social worker in the community can request affiliation along with field instruction responsibilities with approval from superiors. Hence, the initial process could take any one of the following forms:

- 1.) The agency representative submits to the Director of Field Instruction the names of those social workers who appear to meet the criteria for the role of field instructor;
- 2.) The social work faculty suggests to agency administrator(s) the names of individuals who seem appropriate for the role;
- 3.) An agency social worker contacts the Social Work Program requesting students for field instruction, having received authorization from the administrative hierarchy.

#### **Field Instructor Qualifications:**

Agency staff members who express an interest in supervising baccalaureate students must hold a B.S.W. or an M.S.W. degree, per the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standard B2.2.9. In the state of Ohio, these individuals will also possess a license in social work at either of two levels: the L.S.W. (Licensed Social Worker) or L.I.S.W. (Licensed Independent Social Worker). Given the grandfathering clause for the L.S.W., it is possible that an individual may possess the L.S.W. without having a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work. Additionally, there are persons who possess the L.P.C. (Licensed Professional Counselor) or L.P.C.C. (Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor) and who wish to supervise social work students. In the latter two instances, it is incumbent upon the Social Work Program to insure that students receive a social work perspective. The Director of Field Instruction conducts seminars for both field placement courses, insuring that students receive the requisite social

work framework. Additionally, the seniors take an integrative seminar, SOWK 495, while they are in block field placement. In the event, then, that a field instructor does not have a degree in social work which can occur in a rural setting like Findlay, OH, there is an ongoing emphasis via the social work faculty to provide the essential social work perspective.

In addition to these educational and licensing requirements, it is preferable if the potential field instructor meets the following criteria:

1. At least six months experience in the agency in which the field instruction will occur. 2.) An interest and ability to teach, communicate knowledge, and stimulate student self-development;
2. Flexibility in allowing for the development of each student, recognizing the inherent uniqueness in each person;
3. Ability to develop learning experiences consistent with the educational mission, goals, and objectives of the Social work program;
4. A positive orientation toward learning;
5. Sound knowledge of generalist social work practice;
6. A working understanding of community social welfare structure and the utilization of community resources;
7. An understanding, acceptance and willingness to implement the mission, goals and objectives of the Social Work Program;
8. The capacity to assume responsibility for contributing ideas and thinking with the goals of strengthening the education experience in the classroom and the field;
9. Sufficient time allocation by the agency for carrying out the instructional responsibilities, including:
  - a. availability and accessibility to students;
  - b. regularly scheduled supervisory conferences with students, maintaining at least 1 to 2 hours per week in direct, face-to-face supervision;

- c. planned conferences with the Director of Field Instruction, at least twice a semester;
  - d. written evaluations of student performance;
  - e. attendance at orientations for students and field instructors and other continuing education programs provided by the Social Work Program, as deemed appropriate;
10. Professional identification through organizational affiliation, for example, the National Association of Social Workers;
11. Knowledge of current trends in social work and social welfare.

At the initial stage of affiliation between the agency and the Social Work Program, the appropriate administrative staff has identified the candidates for field instruction. The Social Work Program Director will review the information submitted by the agency, including the Field Placement Agency and Instructor Data Form. In the event that there is an ongoing affiliation and a staff member wishes to be a field instructor with the program, the individual will complete the Field Placement Agency and Instructor Data Form for review and approval by the Social Work Program faculty.

**Expectations of the Field Instructor:**

The Field Instructor plays a critical role in the education of future social workers. For this reason, the expectations for them are many. Generally, individuals come to the field instructor role grateful for past mentors who spent time and energy that led to their own degree in social work and thereby played a critical role in their own educational and professional development. Field Instructors are individuals who now want to give back to the profession through the tutelage of the social workers of tomorrow. Again, it is not an easy task and the demands on these generous souls are many, including:

1. Comprehension of the educational mission, goals, and objectives of the Social Work Program;
2. Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and

Marriage and Family Therapist Board Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct;

3. Assistance to students in designing, negotiating and implementing a wide range of field learning experiences that are congruent with the expectations of the social work program, student individual needs and objectives, and the expectations of the agency;
4. Knowledge of resources within the agency and the larger social welfare system to disseminate to students;
5. Weekly planned supervisory conferences with students, minimally, 1 to 2 hours in face-to-face contact;
6. Allotted time for meetings with the Director of Field Instruction, at least twice a semester, along with a willingness to communicate on an ongoing basis as the situation necessitates;
7. Development of a positive working relationship with students that permits a climate of reciprocal learning;
8. Encouragement of maximum student activity and creativity within the parameters of educationally and agency appropriate responsibilities;
9. Orientation of students to the agency, including, policy and procedures and other professional and administrative staff;
10. Accessibility between Field Instructor and students along with other professional and administrative personnel;
11. Commitment to serving as a primary role model of the social work and/or helping professions to the student learners;
12. Maintenance of the appropriate boundaries between Field Instructor and student, remaining conscious of the differences between supervision and treatment;
13. Awareness of the Social work curriculum and the role of the field experience in the preparation of future social workers;

14. Employment of various strategies assisting in the knowledge and skill development of students, e.g., participating in initial student interviews, reviewing documentation, group supervision, guidance on the use of computers in the agency;
15. Participation in orientation and other continuing education conferences sponsored by the Social Work Program;
16. Provision of ongoing feedback to the Social Work Program relative to the field placement process, curricular issues, or other relevant policies and procedures;
17. Availability for meeting with the Director of Field Instruction at least twice during the course of an academic semester for evaluation conferences;
18. Completion of mid-term and final evaluation forms;
19. Retention of the prerogative to recommend termination of a student from the field placement whose performance violated the principles of the NASW Code of Ethics or the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct;
20. Openness to providing letters of reference to graduating seniors upon request when appropriate.

**Expectations of the Agency vis-à-vis the Field Instructor:**

In order for the Field Instructor to accomplish the tasks expected by the Social Work Program, it is crucial that the agency provide the necessary opportunities to do so. While the Field Instructor has the primary responsibility for the social work student, the entire agency makes a commitment to the process of field instruction. During the initial affiliation process, the Director of Field Instruction clarifies the agency role. At the outset of any initial field placement, the student, Field Instructor and Director of Field Instruction sign the **Field Placement Contract** which delineates the responsibility of all parties during the term. Thus, the agency agrees to the following:

1. To provide the student opportunities to function in a social work capacity that will enhance the student's learning objectives;

2. To abide by the values and ethics articulated in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and the Marriage and Family Therapist Board Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct;
3. To respect the student's position as a beginning professional social worker by making assignments congruent with the student's skill range designed to enhance learning, providing suitable work space, and by promoting an appropriate relationship with other staff;
4. To provide adequate supervisory time so that the student will become properly oriented to the agency and have a person with whom he/she can relate closely in his/her learning experience';
5. To provide adequate time for the field instructor to participate with the University in meetings or other events structure to enhance this program;
6. To collaborate with students in the formation of a **Learning Contract** which establishes the goals and objectives for the Semester.

**Expectations of the University:**

Since field instruction is partnership among a variety of parties, viz., the Social Work Program, the human services agency, and the student, it is evident that the Social work Program bears numerous responsibilities. From the very beginnings of the affiliation process, an openness and accessibility between the agency and the Social Work Program should characterize this important relationship. It is altogether fitting that the agency has a clear idea of the role of the Social Work Program in this process. Highlighted throughout the affiliation process and reaffirmed during the signing of the **Field Placement Contract** the responsibilities of the Social Work Program include:

1. Coordinating the selection of students designated for field placements;
2. Providing adequate liaison through the Director of Field Instruction so that the objectives and expectations of the Social Work Program can be understood and that any concerns or problems be handled promptly;

3. Respecting the agency's role in the final selection of the appropriate student for the field placement;
4. Acknowledging the agency's role in providing Supervision of the student's assignments;
5. Providing a Field Manual that will explain the program and its objectives along with the materials necessary to evaluate the placement;
6. Incorporating Field Instructor feedback into the evaluation of the student;
7. Providing students with a weekly field placement seminar to further consolidate their learning experiences;
8. Providing Field Instructors with continuing education programs sponsored by the university.

As mentioned earlier, any successful partnership between the Social Work Program and the community of human service agencies affiliated with the program requires ongoing contact that can take many forms. The Director of Field Instruction is responsible for maintaining a positive working relationship and this can occur in a variety of ways: regular phone contact, site visits, e-mail and other correspondence, campus orientations for field instructors and students, and continuing education programs for human services professionals.

**Benefits to the Field Instructor:**

Although there is no financial remuneration for Field Instructors, they are able to attend professional conferences sponsored solely by the Social work Program, Securing Continuing Education Units (mandated by the Licensing Board in the State of Ohio) at no charge.



## Chapter 5

### Placement Procedures: Field Instruction I

#### **SOWK 310:**

#### **SOWK 310: Field Instruction I: Eligibility:**

There are several routes to the initial course in field instruction. An incoming traditional student (age 18-19) who declares an interest in social work will have a social work faculty member assigned as an advisor. In either the first or second semester of the first or second year, this student will enroll in SOWK 101, Introduction to Social Work. Earning a grade of “C” or better in this course, the student will be eligible for SOWK 310 in either the first semester of the sophomore year or the first Semester of the junior year.

A student currently enrolled at The University of Findlay who wishes to switch a major to that of social work, depending upon when this occurs, may take SOWK 310 after having successfully completed (“C” or better) SOWK 101 or may take the course concurrently with SOWK 101 (with the permission of the instructor) if they are in their third year at the university. This occurs infrequently.

Transfer students from another institution who have completed the equivalent of SOWK 101 are also eligible for SOWK 310. In a more uncommon circumstance, a transfer student wishing to major in social work without having taken SOWK 101 may enroll in both Introduction to Social Work and Field Instruction I with the permission of the social work faculty member, usually the Director of Field Instruction.

#### **SOWK 310 Course Overview:**

Designed to introduce the student to the profession of social work in a ‘hands-on’ manner, this course grants students the opportunity for an immersion into the real world of social work practice. Students spend a total of 60 hours over the course of a 15 week semester in a social services agency, under the supervision of a professional social worker. At the same time, students meet in a weekly seminar for 3 hours with classmates who are similarly engaged in human service agencies, thereby offering a unique opportunity to teach and learn from each other’s respective experiences.

During this time, students will encounter the key knowledge base foundations of the social work profession: human behavior in the social environment social work practice with individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities; policy and services; human diversity; social and economic justice; populations-at-risk; research and evaluation. Infusing this knowledge base with all of the attendant skills, students will also become familiar with the implementation of the value and ethical base so integral to the profession of social work. Having some curricular knowledge of social work drawn from SOWK 101, the student will now have direct exposure to how the profession operates in the framework of a human services organization. There will be observation of activities along with some directed participation with the understanding that the student does not yet have the knowledge of theory and practice skills possessed by a senior social work major.

#### **Placement Procedures for SOWK 310:**

In the first week of the seminar, students meet with the course instructor, typically the Director of Field Instruction, and complete the **Field Placement**. This form provides some basic information on each student, including previous work and volunteer experiences in human services, areas of interest in the field of social work, and a brief assessment of strengths and weaknesses. With this data, the Director of Field Instruction can then begin the process of matching students with an appropriate agency. In this initial placement, the Director of Field Instruction selects a field of practice relatively unfamiliar to the student. For instance, if a Student has volunteered extensively with the elderly, the Director of Field Instruction will select a setting that serves women and children. Even if the Student hopes at some point to practice with the elderly population, the Social Work Program maintains that a broad based exposure in the field instruction courses is desirable. In the senior year, if the same student still wishes to work with the elderly, then the Director of Field Instruction will attempt to honor this request.

Upon completion of the questionnaire, students receive instructions on drafting a brief autobiographical narrative, **The Field Placement Essay**. Going into greater detail about prior educational and employment experiences, students elaborate upon interests in the field of social work. They also identify current class and employment schedules, noting available times for the field placement. The Director of Field Instruction reviews the rough draft of the essay

and makes editing suggestions where appropriate. The student then finalizes the narrative which will be used in the interview process.

After reviewing the materials submitted by the student, the Director of Field Instruction selects an appropriate agency and shares that with the student in an interview. The student is able to review some of the agency materials collected during the affiliation process, including a description of student responsibilities at that facility. Additionally, the student receives instructions on the appropriate person to contact within the agency for an interview and on the importance of sending the Field Placement Essay to the Field Instructor in advance of the interview.

The Director of Field Instruction makes the first contact with the Field Instructor at the agency, indicating the name of the prospective student and informing her/him that the student will be making contact within the week. Subsequently, the Director of Field Instruction notifies the student that the Field Instructor will be expecting a phone call to schedule an interview. The student then contacts the Field Instructor WITHIN 5 DAYS, schedules an interview, and sends the autobiographical essay which will serve as an introduction. Reviewing the **Interview Protocol** assists the student in preparing for the initial meeting at the agency. Both the Field Instructor and the student contact the Director of Field Instruction within two (2) working days of the outcome of the interview. Typically, agencies are quite willing to accept students in their initial field experience, understanding that these individuals do not yet have the curricular foundation that will come later in their academic future within the Social Work Program.

**Summary of Initial Field Placement Procedures for SOWK 310:**

1. Student meets with Director of Field Instruction during first week of class
2. Student completes Field Placement Questionnaire in first week in SOWK 310.
3. Student submits a rough draft of the Field Placement Essay to the Director of
  - a. Field Instruction for review and editing;
4. Director of Field Instruction matches student with agency for placement
5. Student completes an FBI and BCI background check

6. Student sends final essay to Field Instructor and agency
7. The Director of Field Instruction contacts the Field Instructor with name of student
8. Student contacts Field Instructor within 5 days
9. Student review **The Interview Protocol**
10. Student Interview with Field Instructor
11. Student completes any paperwork needed for agency
12. Student, Field Instructor, and Director of Field Instruction sign the **Field Placement Contract**

#### **Attendance and Completion of Required Hours:**

In SOWK 310, students will generally begin their field experience after the first four weeks of the semester, having ample time to accomplish the pre-placement tasks already outlined. Scheduling of the required 6 hours per week for 10 weeks (60 hours) occurs in the interaction between the Field Instructor and the student. Students are to spread their hours in the agency throughout the duration of the semester rather than attempting to complete those hours in a more condensed manner. Their course assignments match the full semester field placement.

Faithful attendance at the agency at the agreed-upon times is extremely important. Since their involvement in the agency affects a variety of people, including professional staff and clients receiving agency services, it is imperative that students adhere to the established schedule. At the same time, emergencies do occur and sicknesses do arise. These are some guidelines to attendance:

1. Short-term absence due to illness, hardship, family or personal needs should be discussed with the Field Instructor in advance, when possible, so that a mutual agreement is reached;
2. In the event that no advance warning is possible, the student is to contact the Field Instructor on the day of the absence, indicating the plan for return;

3. The student will negotiate a schedule with the Field Instructor for making up the hours missed due to the absence;
4. Attendance at a conferences or workshop related to social work may interfere with a field placement. Consultation with both the Director of Field Instruction and the Field Instructor may allow that those hours in conference count as field placement hours;
5. In all other situations, any absence of more than 1 week should entail discussions with the Field Instructor, Director of Field Instruction, and the student in an effort to reconcile the needs of the student and the minimal hour requirements within the agency.

Tabulating the hours in the field placement is the shared responsibility of the student and the Field Instructor. The Director of Field Instruction provides students with a Time Sheet for their own personal use in tracking hours in the field placement. Agencies will vary in how they record student hours, a topic covered in the initial interview. The official documentation of the number of hours in the field placement occurs in 2 locations: on the final **page of the Field Instructor Evaluation** as well as on the **Field Placement Time Log**.

**Scheduling:**

At the outset of the field placement experience, both the students and the Field Instructors receive a schedule of events occurring throughout the semester. Included in this overview are the following dates:

1. start-up times for the field placement;
2. Due dates for the Field Placement Contract and the Learning Contract;
3. Scheduled visits by the Director of Field Instruction, including the initial visit and the final evaluation conference;
4. Due date for the mid-term evaluation by the Field Instructor;
5. Scheduled holidays in which the university is not in Session, e.g., Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break.

**Field Placement Contract:**

The **Field Placement Contract** describes the responsibilities of the agency, the Social Work Program, and the student for the duration of the field placement. During the first week of the placement, the student, Field Instructor and the Director of Field Instruction sign this contract. Each party receives a copy.

**Learning Contract:**

A learning contract is a guide for both the student and the Field Instructor that serves as a reference point throughout the field experience. Established in the first three weeks of the field placement, the Learning Contract is a joint project between the Field Instructor and the student. The Field Instructor knows what tasks and responsibilities are appropriate for the student at this level of experience. The student receives guidance on the knowledge base and the values and ethics of the social work profession. Together, they construct a working document with goals and objectives, organized under the categories of the foundations of social work: policy and services; practice with individuals, families, and communities; human behavior in the social environment; research and evaluation; human diversity; social and economic justice; populations-at-risk: and values and ethics. Both students and Field Instructors receive **Learning Contracts: Content Guidelines** and a **sample Learning Contract: SOWK 310** that will assist them in this venture.

By the end of the third week in the field placement, the student will submit a draft of the Learning Contract to the Director of Field Instruction. After editing, the student will provide the Director of Field Instruction and the Field Instructor with the revision, keeping a student copy. All parties will sign the document. This contract will serve as the framework for student tasks and responsibilities as well as the tool for ongoing and final evaluation of student performance.

**Evaluation:**

Evaluation of the student's field instruction performance is the joint responsibility of the Field Instructor and the Director of Field Instruction. This is an ongoing process that also includes the student. The Director of Field Instruction meets weekly with the students,

reviewing written journals that are part of the course assignment. In addition, the Director of Field Instruction will meet at least twice on a face-to-face basis during the course of the semester with the agency Field Instructor. Other contacts, as needed, may encompass phone conversations, e-mail correspondence, and written communications.

Both the Field Instructor and the student play an integral part in the evaluation process. Each has a particular level of responsibility in making it a mutual educational task in the field instruction course. Communication between the Field Instructor and the student should be such that both are aware of the level of performance of the student at any given point in time. Ongoing and regularly scheduled meetings or conferences between students and the Field Instructor are necessary for realization of an accurate and productive evaluation.

Even though the evaluative process between student and Field Instructor is a continual process, a written summary of the student's progress at certain points in time are essential. The Field Instructor, in collaboration with the Director of Field Instruction, assesses the progress of the student in relationship to criteria specified in the Learning Contract. The Director of Field Instruction, the Field Instructor, and the student all complete written assessments of the student's performance.

#### **Types of Evaluations and their Timing:**

After approximately 2-3 weeks in the Field Placement, the Director of Field Instruction conducts an onsite interview with the Field Instructor to review the initial adaptation of the student to the agency. The early identification of strengths and potential areas for growth provide the rationale for this visit. While the student is not present for this meeting, the Director of Field Instruction completes a summary form of the conversation with the Field Instructor and keeps a copy of this in the student's file. The student has access to this form and can see this at any time. If issues arise that may require more explication, the Director of Field Instruction will arrange a meeting with the student.

At the midpoint of the student field placement, the Field Instructor completes the mid-term segment of the **Field Evaluation Form** and sends it to the Director of Field Instruction describing the student's performance. Employing the Learning Contract as well as meeting with the

student, the Field Instructor will summarize the contents of this evaluation both verbally and in writing.

In the final week of the semester, the Field Instructor completes the **Field Evaluation for SOWk 310: Field Instructor Form**. Given the importance of the evaluation process and the role that it plays in the future of the student, it is imperative that these evaluations are accurate, clear, and concise. Similarly, the student completes the **Field Evaluation for SOWK 310: Student Form**. They will do this independently of each other, without prior consultation. The student will also fill out the **Student Evaluation of Field Placement** in preparation for the final meeting, arranged by the Director of Field Instruction with the student and the Field Instructor. Thus, the process for the final evaluation follows this order:

1. The student completes the self-evaluation on the Student Form and the evaluation of the Field Placement;
2. The Field Instructor completes the student evaluation on the Field Instructor Form; 3.) The Director of Field Instruction schedules a meeting at the agency with the student; and Field Instructor at which time all parties review and discuss the respective evaluations;
3. All parties sign and date each of the evaluations. The Field Instructor records the final number of hours in the field placement on the final page of the evaluation;
4. The Field Instructor, student, and Director of Field Instruction retain the signed copies of the evaluations.

### **Grading:**

The Director of Field Instruction is responsible for the final grade for each student. Input from the Field Instructor is invaluable in this process and is a factor in the grade determination. Completion of the academic assignments for SOWK 310 in addition to the evaluative process contribute to the final grade. The grading system utilized for this field placement course is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U):

1. Satisfactory (S); Consistently acceptable performance or above. Acceptable performance means that the student is consistently able to meet the expectations outlined in the



Evaluation Form, adheres to the student responsibilities described in the Learning Contract, and meets the minimal requirements in the academic work required for SOWK 310;

2. Unsatisfactory (U): Failure to meet performance expectations on a consistent basis.

A grade of Unsatisfactory (U) can be given for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to complete the essential tasks described in the Field Placement Contract and/or the Learning Contract;
2. Violation of any of the principles of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct;
3. Gross violation of agency policy and procedures and the failure to adhere to sound professional practices (e.g., repeated absence and tardiness, failure to comply with standards outlined in the agency policy manual);
4. Failure to complete the necessary number of hours allotted for the Field Placement;
5. An unsatisfactory evaluation by the Field Instructor, noting glaring deficiencies and inadequate skills for a student at this juncture in their academic career;
6. Failure to meet the minimal standards in the academic coursework articulated in the syllabus for SOWK 310 (see Chapter 7 for additional factors).

## Chapter 6

### Placement Procedures: Field Instruction II

#### **SOWK 410:**

#### **SOWK 410: Field Instruction II: Eligibility:**

Seniors enroll in SOWK 410 in the spring semester of their final year. Fully admitted to the Social Work Program, they have completed these courses: Human Behavior in the Social Environment, I and II; Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families along with the Lab Experience (Interviewing Skills); Social Work Practice with Groups; Social Work Practice with Communities; and Research Methods.

#### **SOWK 410 Course Overview:**

SOWK 410 consists of the student's final field instruction experience in a program approved social service agency under the Supervision of a professional social worker or approved human services professional. As a learner, the student will gain and implement the knowledge, values and ethics, and skills acquired in the curriculum, leading to entry level practice as a professional social worker. Referred to as a block placement, the seniors will spend 4 days a week in a human service agency, accruing a total of 480 hours under the guidance of a social worker. Generally, students will spend 32 hours per week, Monday through Thursday, over the course of 15 weeks. Attending campus on Friday during this final semester, seniors will participate in a one hour seminar attached to SOWK 410 with the Director of Field Instruction. Students will receive 12 hours of credit for SOWK 410.

#### **Placement Procedures for SOWK 410:**

In the fall semester of the senior year, the Director of Field Instruction meets with the entire senior class to review the protocol for entering the field placement in the following semester. Students receive specific instructions on the process and receive a Field Instruction Manual in the event that they do not have one (e.g., transfer student who completed SOWK 310 at a different university or college). Among the materials distributed include the following:

1. An application for membership to join the National Association of Social Workers (NASW);

2. The **Field Placement Questionnaire**;
3. Memorandum on **Liability Insurance**;
4. Instructions on completing the **Field Placement Essay**;
5. A scheduled time to meet with the Director of Field Instruction to discuss possible placement opportunities;
6. A checklist to follow to guide the completion of necessary tasks before the beginning of the field experience;
7. **Preparing for the Senior field Placement Form**;
8. **Field Placement Interview Protocol form**;
9. A **Field Placement Contract form**;
10. A **Sample Learning Contract**;
11. Evaluation forms;
12. A copy of the **Weekly Time log**.

During this discussion, the Director of Field Instruction explains the necessity of becoming a member of NASW and the stipulation of purchasing liability insurance as a prerequisite to entering the field as well as completing background checks. In fact, students sign a form indicating that they have received this notice in order to underline its importance.

The **Field Placement Essay** for seniors contains more detail than that required of the first field placement experience. Again, students will complete a draft of this essay to be scrutinized by the Director of Field Instruction. The completion of this essay takes place before the 1 on 1 meeting with the Director of Field Instruction. At this time, the Director of Field Instruction gives a brief synopsis of the agencies affiliated with the Social Work Program. Students are free to ask questions about the services, and they can review agency material (brochures, annuals reports, description of student tasks and responsibilities) if they desire. In preparation for this 1 on 1 meeting, students come prepared with:

1. The Field Placement Questionnaire;

2. A rough draft of the Field Placement Essay for review;
3. An update on their application for NASW and the Liability Insurance.

The Director of Field Instruction discusses in detail with each student the agencies available and assists student in their agency selection. If all parties agree that the selected agencies meet the student's interests and the requirements of those facilities, the Director of Field Instruction makes the initial contact with the potential Field Instructors, indicating the student's name and interest in pursuing an interview. In that way, the Field Instructor is aware of each student who will be making contact. Again, the student contacts the Field Instructor(s) WITHIN FIVE DAYS of notification that it is appropriate to do so from the Director of Field Instruction. After the student and Field Instructor(s) establish an interview date(s), the student will forward the Field Placement Essay IN ADVANCE of the interview time. The student alerts the Director of Field Instruction to the interview dates as well, either by phone or by e-mail. Preparation for the interview also includes a review of the **Interview Protocol** and agency materials accrued from the Director of Field Instruction.

Both the Field Instructor and the student contact the Director of Field Instruction within FIVE DAYS of each interview. The Field Instructor provides valuable feedback to the Director of Field Instruction regarding the appropriateness of the fit between the student and the agency. Similarly, the student provides feedback to the Director of Field Instruction with their perceptions on the efficacy of a potential match. If the student is interviewing at more than one agency, then that student may evaluate the interview experience with the Director of Field Instruction in a single meeting. Of course, the student has provided ongoing feedback to the Director of Field Instruction on the status of all of the interviews. It is not typical that students interview at multiple locations, but in the case this does occur, students review all meetings with the Director of Field Instruction.

Having received feedback from the potential Field Instructor(s), the students meet with the Director of Field Instruction no later than FIVE DAYS after the completion of the final interview. It is at this time that the match becomes final. If the Field Instructor deems the student appropriate and the student has selected that agency, then the Director of Field

Instruction contacts the Field Instructor. If, on the other hand, there is no match, either on the part of the agency or on the part of the student, then the interview process described above resumes, following the same format. The plan of the Social Work Program is to finalize all of the spring semester senior field placements by December 1<sup>st</sup> of the fall semester. Hence, students know their senior placement prior to leaving campus for the Christmas Break.

**Summary of Field Placement Procedures for SOWK 410:**

1. Director of Field Instruction meets with seniors early in the fall semester, providing them with the materials and information described earlier in this chapter;
2. Students join NASW, obtains liability insurance, and completes background check;
3. Students complete the **Field Placement Questionnaire** and the **Field Placement Essay**;
4. Students review the **Interview Protocol**;
5. The Director of Field Instruction matches a student with an agency based on the 1 on 1 meeting that has already occurred;
6. The Director of Field Instruction contacts the Field Instructor to inform them of the match;
7. The student then contacts the Field Instructor within 5 DAYS;
8. The Student sends a final copy of the **Field Placement Essay** to the Field Instructor;
9. The student completes an interview with the Field Instructor;
10. The student meets with the Director of Field Instruction within 1 week;
11. The Director of Field Instruction calls the Field Instructor and the match is confirmed.

**Orientation:**

Prior to the onset of the Field Placement, the Social Work Program hosts an orientation for Field Instructors and students who are preparing to enter the field. The agenda for this meeting includes many details. Students and Field Instructors are given breakfast and have a chance to introduce themselves to other Field Instructors as well as other students. The Director of Field Instruction then gives a brief overview of the Social Work Program as a whole and provides updates to the attendees. The Field Instructors are then given copies of many materials to aide in their duties as an instructor. This includes a copy of the Field Manual and necessary forms that are completed over the upcoming semester as well as a schedule for the semester. After discussion to explain the forms, the Director of Field Instruction explains the roles of all parties involved and the expectations of students during the field experience. There is also discussion of what Field Instructors expectations for the semester may be. Following this, there is time for questions and answers.

**Attendance and Completion of Required Hours: SOWK 410:**

In SOWK 410, students begin their field experience during the first week of the Spring semester, typically the first week in January. Scheduling of the required 32 hours per week for 15 weeks (480 hours, factoring in Spring Break and Easter Break) occurs in the initial interview between the Field Instructor and the student. Given the condensed nature of a block placement, faithful attendance at the field placement at the agreed-upon times is imperative. A student begins the field experience with the orientation: "I will maintain 100% attendance." Naturally, emergencies occur, weather intervenes, and sicknesses arise. Here are some guidelines for attendance:

1. Short-term absence (1 day) due to illness, hardship, family or personal needs should be discussed with the Field Instructor in advance, when possible, so that a mutual understanding among parties occurs;
2. If no advance warning is possible, the student contacts the Field Instructor on the day of the absence, indicating the plan for return;
3. The student will negotiate a schedule with the Field Instructor for making up

the hours missed due to the absence;

4. Attendance at a conference or workshop related to social work may conflict with a field placement. Consultation with both the Director of Field Instruction and the Field Instructor may allow that those hours count as field placement hours.

Tabulating the hours in the field placement is the shared responsibility of the student and the Field Instructor. The Director of Field Instruction provides students with a Time Sheet for their own personal use in tracking hours in the field placement. Agencies will vary in how they record student hours, a topic covered in the initial interview. The official documentation of the number of hours in the field placement occurs on the final page of the **Field Instructor Evaluation** as well as on the time sheet the Director of Field Instruction gives to students.

### **Scheduling:**

At the outset of the field placement experience, both the students and the Field Instructors receive a schedule for the upcoming semester. Included in this overview are these dates:

1. Start-up times for the field placement;
2. Due dates for submission of the Field Placement Contract and the Learning Contract;
3. Scheduled visits by the Director of Field Instruction, including the initial visit and the final evaluation conference;
4. Due date for the mid-term evaluation by the Field Instructor;
5. Schedule holidays in which the university is not in session, e.g., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, Spring Break and Easter Break;
6. Due date for Final Evaluations by the Field Instructor.

### **Field Placement Contract:**

The **Field Placement Contract** describes the responsibilities of the agency, the Social Work Program, and the student for the duration of the field placement. During the first week of

the placement, the student, Field Instructor and the Director of Field Instruction sign this contract. Each party receives a copy.

### **Learning Contract:**

A learning contract is a guide for both the Student and the Field Instructor that serves as a reference point throughout the field experience. Established in the first three weeks of the field placement, the Learning Contract is a joint project between the Field Instructor and the student. The Field Instructor knows what tasks and responsibilities are appropriate for the student at this level of experience. The student receives guidance on the knowledge base, values and ethics, and skills of the social work profession. Together, they construct a working document with goals and objectives, organized under the categories of the foundations of social work: policy and services, practice with individuals, families, groups and communities, human behavior in the social environment, research and evaluation, human diversity, social and economic justice, populations-at-risk, and values and ethics. Both students and Field Instructors receive detailed instructions for developing this document. The following forms assist them in this venture: **Learning Contracts: Content Guidelines** and a sample contract for a senior student, **Sample Learning Contract: SOWK 410**.

By the end of the third week in the field placement, the student will submit a draft of the Learning Contract to the Director of Field Instruction. After editing, the student will provide the Director of Field Instruction and the Field Instructor with the revision, keeping a student copy. All parties sign the document. This contract serves as the framework for student tasks and responsibilities as well as the tool for the mid-term and final evaluation of student performance.

### **Evaluation:**

Evaluation of the student's field instruction performance is the responsibility of the Field Instructor and the Director of Field Instruction with inclusion of the student. The Director of Field Instruction meets weekly with the students, reviewing written journals that are part of a course assignment. In addition, the Director of Field Instruction will meet at least twice on a face-to-face basis during the course of the semester with the agency Field Instructor. Other



contacts, as needed, may encompass phone conversations, e-mail correspondence, and written Communication.

Both the Field Instructor and the student play an integral part in the evaluation process. Each has a particular level of responsibility in making it a mutual educational task in the field instruction course. Communication between the Field instructor and the student should be such that both are aware of the level of performance of the student at any given point in time. Ongoing and regularly scheduled meetings or conference between students and the Field Instructor are necessary for realization of an accurate and productive evaluation. Minimally, students and Field Instructors meet weekly for either one to two hours of direct supervision. Group Supervision along with individual conferences are appropriate in this process.

Even though the evaluative process between student and Field Instructor is continual, a written summary of the student's progress at certain points in time are essential. The Field Instructor, in collaboration with the Director of Field Instruction, assesses the progress of the student in relationship to criteria specified in the Learning Contract. The Director of Field Instruction, the Field Instructor, and the student all complete written assessments of the student's performance.

#### **Types of Evaluations and their Timing:**

After approximately 2-3 weeks in the field placement, the Director of Field Instruction conducts an onsite interview with the Field Instructor to review the initial adaptation of the student to the agency. The early identification of strengths and potential areas for growth provide the rationale for this visit. While the student is not present for this meeting, the Director of Field Instruction completes a detailed summary of the conversation with the Field Instructor and a form is kept in the student's file for access. If issues arise that require more explication, the Director of Field Instruction arranges a meeting with the Student for a more detailed conversation.

At the midpoint of the student field placement, the Field Instructor completes the mid-term evaluation on the **Field Evaluation, SOWK410: Field Instructor Form**. Using the Learning Contract as a point of departure, the Field Instructor discusses this material in a conference

with the student. Then, the student and the Field Instructor sign and initial the document, sending it to the Director of Field Instruction for review and signature. All parties receive a copy.

In the final week of the semester, usually at the end of April, the Field Instructor completes the final evaluation on the **Field Evaluation, SOWK 410: Field Instructor form**. Given the importance of the evaluation process and the role that it plays in the future of the student, it is imperative that these evaluations are accurate, clear and concise. Similarly, the student completes the **Field Evaluation, SOWK 410: Student** form. They will do this independently of each other, without prior consultation. The student also fills out the **Student Evaluation of Field Placement** in preparation for the final meeting, arranged by the Director of Field Instruction with the student and the Field Instructor. Thus, the process for the evaluations occurs in this manner:

1. Director of Field Instruction meets with the Field Instructor approximately 3 weeks after the student begins the field placement;
2. The Field Instructor completes a mid-term evaluation of the student, reviewing this material with the student in conference. The Director of Field Instruction, the Field Instructor and the student sign this document;
3. During the final week of the semester, the student, Field Instructor, and Director of Field Instruction meet at the agency to review the completed evaluation forms, including: **Field Evaluation, SOWK 410: Field Instructor Form; Field Evaluation, SOWK 410: Student Form; Student Evaluation of Field Placement.**

Preparation for the final evaluation, then, follows this format:

1. The student completes the Field Evaluation, SOWK 410: Student Form and the Student Evaluation of the Field Placement independently of the Field Instructor;
2. The Field Instructor completes the Field Evaluation, SOWK 410: Field Instructor Form independently of the student;

3. The Director of Field Instruction schedules a meeting at the agency with the student and the Field Instructor at which time all parties review and discuss the respective evaluations;
4. All parties sign and date each of the evaluations. The Field Instructor records the final number of hours in the field placement on the final page of the evaluation;
5. The Field Instructor, student, and Director of Field Instruction retain the signed copies of the evaluations.

On the final page of the **Field Evaluation, SOWK 410: Field Instructor Form**, there is a question posed to the Field Instructor: "Overall in this setting, do you feel the student has demonstrated a level of competence require of entry level social workers?" There is a place to check either 'yes' or 'no.'" If the response is negative, then there is room for explanation. It is the general hope and understanding that the Field Instructor would respond in the affirmative to this question, and only the gravest of circumstances would result in the negative answer.

**Grading:**

The Director of Field Instruction is responsible for the final grade for each student. Input from the Field Instructor is invaluable in this process and is a factor in the grade determination. Completion of the academic assignments for SOWK 410 in addition to the evaluation process contributes to the final grade. The grading system utilized for this field placement course is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U).

1. Satisfactory (S); Consistently acceptable performance or above.  
Acceptable performance means that the student is consistently able to meet the expectations outlined in the Evaluation Form, adheres to the student responsibilities described in the Learning Contract, and meets the minimal requirements in the academic work required for SOWK 410;
2. Unsatisfactory (U): Failure to meet performance expectations on a consistent basis.

A grade of Unsatisfactory (U) can be given for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to complete the essential tasks described in the Field Placement Contract and/or the Learning Contract;
2. Violation of any of the principles of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist board Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct;
3. Gross violation of agency policy and procedures and the failure to adhere to sound professional practices (e.g., repeated absences and tardiness, failure to comply with standards outlined in the agency policy manual);
4. Failure to complete the necessary number of hours allotted for the senior Field Placement (450 hours);
5. An unsatisfactory evaluation by the Field Instructor, noting glaring deficiencies and inadequate skills for an entry-level social work practitioner;
6. Failure to meet the minimal standards in the academic coursework articulated in the syllabus for SOWK 410.

**Employment Policy and Field Placement:**

It is rare for a social work student to be currently employed in a human service agency only to complete a field placement in that same facility. More typically, a senior student actively involved in a field agency performs well enough that the agency offers the student a part-time position. Regardless of the way in which employment might occur with the student, the Social Work Program has a well-articulated policy on these situations.

The general theme of this policy is a clear distinction between employment activities and field placement responsibilities. Consequently, there are three basic parameters which guide the student and the agency:

- 1.)The Field Instructor responsible for academic tasks of the student is a

DIFFERENT PERSON than the person supervising her/his work responsibilities for which reimbursement occurs;

2.) The job responsibilities for the employed student are DIFFERENT from her/his tasks and responsibilities for the field placement experience.;

3.) Work hours are NOT counted as field placement hours.

In this way, there is a concrete distinction between the student as learner and the student as employee. Typically, field instructors, agency directors or the students contact the Director of Field Instruction when this possibility arises. This open communication allows for the dissemination of these principles and has occurred via correspondence, e-mail and telephone conversations. In the few instances in which this arrangement has occurred, the students and the agency have adhered to this policy.

## Chapter 7

### Difficulties, Grievance Procedure, and Termination of Field Placement

It is not unusual for students to experience a myriad of challenges during the course of the field placement experience. The rigors of an academic course load, the demands of travelling to field placement sites, and the expectations of the Social Work Program and the agencies present formidable hurdles for students. Wearing many hats, particularly during the field placement experience, can exact a toll on even the most accomplished and gifted student. Normalizing these experiences on the part of the Field Instructor and the Director of Field Instruction can go a long way to assuaging some of these responses. In a very concrete manner, this field instruction offers a beginning glimpse of the numerous challenges faced by professional social workers on a daily basis. Field Instructors can provide valuable guidance to students in sharing some of the many ways in which they negotiate the stressors associated with the profession.

At the same time, students vary in how they respond to the many pressures exacted by the field instruction experience. Given the openness and detail of the placement process, the evaluation process, and the attendant coursework, the Field Instructor and/or the Director of Field Instruction will be able to identify students who find themselves floundering. Students themselves have the responsibility to also approach either the Field Instructor and/or the Director of Field Instruction when they perceive that their performance is less than adequate.

In the event that a student is experiencing difficulties in the field placement and not meeting minimum level expectations at any point in time, the Field Instructor, student, and/or the Director of Field Instruction need to identify the nature of the problems, sharing this information immediately and as openly as possible. It is only in this way that some resolution of the matter is possible. Discussions can occur between the student and the Field Instructor, between the student and the Director of Field Instruction, between the Field Instructor and the Director of Field Instruction, and at times, between all three parties. Through the vehicle of open communication, however difficult for any or all of the parties, some strategy for

addressing the student concerns can emerge. Both the Director of Field Instruction and the Field Instructor remain committed to successful Student performance.

In the event that some manner of disagreement, concern, or conflict emerge between the Field Instructor and the student, the following process is useful to both parties in moving toward some degree of resolution. An additional party, of course, in this endeavor is the Director of Field Instruction whose involvement may occur at varying stages of this process.

1. In the event that an issue of concern arises either generated from the student or from the Field Instructor, then the initial step is for a conference to occur between these principals.
2. At times, the student may approach the Director of Field Instruction or the Field Instructor may do likewise at which point each party will be encouraged to sit down and discuss the matter between the two original parties.
3. If this conference is unsatisfactory, then it would be important to arrange a three way conference involving the Field Instructor, the student, and the Director of Field Instruction. This is a joint approach to problem identification and the examination of Solutions to the concern(s).
4. In the event that the problem remains unresolved, the student may pursue a meeting with the Social Work Program Director. The intent of this conference is to offer a resolution of the problem, taking into account the viewpoints of all parties involved.
5. If the student is not in agreement with the decision put forth by the Social Work Program Director, then that individual may seek out the Dean of the College of Health Profession with the purpose of satisfactorily addressing the concerns of all parties.
6. Finally, if the matter remains unresolved, the student may approach the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The purpose of this meeting is to ascertain the degree of adherence to policies and procedures and to offer

suggestions for remediation of the problem to the student, the Field Instructor, and the Social Work faculty.

Termination of a student from a field placement is a serious matter and happens only under the most serious of situations. The Director of Field Instruction retains the immediate responsibility for assessing the merits of termination, and if appropriate, the timing of that occurrence. In some cases, a request for termination of the field placement may originate with the student. Since this is such a grievous matter, the rationale for such an inquiry transcends the typical stresses and demands of student field placement or the concomitant pressures of juggling many roles. At other times, the Field Instructor may initiate the request to remove a student from the Field Placement. Again, this is a grave circumstance, not to be taken lightly or when the usual pressures of mentoring students arises. While it is difficult to describe all the conditions under which the Director of Field Instruction removes a student from a Field Placement, there are some instances when this may be appropriate. Here are some general hypothetical situations:

1. It is not the policy of the Social Work Program to maintain a student in an agency in which the student is experiencing undue stress, viz., pressures far and beyond situations typical to that experience.
2. It is not the policy of the Social Work Program to maintain a student in an agency in which the Field Instructor is experiencing undue stress, viz., pressures far and beyond situations typical to that experience.
3. If the field instruction course objectives and learning contract goals and objectives are unachievable, then it would be appropriate to remove the student from the field placement.
4. If the agency fails to meet the terms of affiliation, the expectations outlined in the Field Placement Contract, or the basic criteria spelled out in this Field Instruction Manual, then it would be prudent to remove the student from the field placement.
5. If the student's actions violate policies of the Social Work Program, the



agency, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics or the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board Code of Ethical Practice and Professional Conduct.

More specific expectations of student conduct can lead to the cessation of the field placement. Before listing these items, the Social Work Program expresses its gratitude to Ashland University for sharing this material. Among those behaviors are:

1. Breaking a law in some agency related manner (i.e., misappropriation of agency funds) or conviction of criminal activity during the course of study. A prior conviction which becomes known during the course of study which demonstrates unsuitability for generalist practice may also be grounds for termination.
2. Substance abuse, alcohol abuse, or any use of illegal drugs.
3. Chronic absenteeism from field placement.
4. Academic dishonesty Such as plagiarism, lying or cheating.
5. A hostile or resistant attitude toward learning and supervision.
6. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior towards colleagues, faculty, and staff at the university or the agency field placement.
7. An inability to carry out one's assignment in the agency setting.
8. Behavior that is emotionally or physically damaging to clients.
9. Repeated failure to demonstrate an ability to work effectively with client systems (Field Instruction Manual, Ashland University, p. 12).

**Final Commentary:**

Of all the experiences that a social work graduate will recall from their college years, none will be much more profound than that of field instruction. This is the province where theory meets practice, and in an optimal sense, true integration begins. At the level of the agency, the chasm between the ivory tower and the real world dissipates. Theory informs practice and practice informs theory. Values and ethics inform practice and practice informs

values and ethics. Students begin to implement skills, realizing how much they know and how little they know. It is in the field experience that students grasp their passion for social work. It is there that they embrace the many, complex reasons for selecting this noble profession. It is there that they begin to face themselves and their histories in powerful lessons that they will retain for the remainder of their lives.

In the cauldron of field instruction, students begin to mold their professional identities with the assistance of Field Instructors, social work colleagues, and the Social Work Program faculty. For all of them, there is a tremendous impact on the course of their future professional careers. For most of them, there is a personal legacy that will shape their own growth and development. To make a positive difference with all of humankind is admirable. To be a social worker is a noble calling. And to learn from our clients about the resiliency and the challenges of the human spirit is a lifelong endeavor.

### **FINGERPRINT POLICY**

Due to the nature of the profession, prior to working with clients in field placement (SOWK 310 and SOWK 410), the Social Work Program will require each student go through a BCI check at both the state and federal level at two different times during the course of the program. The student is expected to cover the cost of this and the check can be completed through the security office at the University of Findlay, or at an agency of the student's choice.

### **SUBSTANCE USE TESTING POLICY**

Additionally, students are also required to give a urine sample for substance use testing prior to beginning any field placement experience (SOWK 310 or SOWK 410). The results of this test are then given to the Coordinator of Field Education and kept in the student file. The Coordinator of Field Education informs students of the process and the location for substance testing. Students are also expected to cover the cost of this test in addition to their fingerprinting. If at any point a field instructor, Coordinator of Field Education, Program Director, agency professional, or faculty member has concerns that a student is using substances during semesters of field placement, students can be subject to drug testing at the request of the Program Director or Coordinator of Field Education. If at any point a student's substance use test comes back positive for substance use, a meeting will be held with the Program Director, Coordinator of Field Education, Field Instructor and student to discuss an appropriate action.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

Students currently enrolled in the social work program, whether in courses, fieldwork, or both, are held to high standards for codes of conduct. Students are expected to adhere to social work values and ethics, and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW code of ethics when using social media communication tools, whether these are personal, professional, agency, or university sites.

Some common issues identified are particularly privacy and confidentiality, conflicts of interest, dual relationships, and proper boundaries. The use of social media and technology requires ongoing attention to these challenges.

As a social worker and professional, please consider the ways in which you are using social media and technology. Your professional image and professional self that are guided by the NASW code of ethics extend beyond the field agency and physical setting of an office or classroom.

As you begin a field placement experience, there are questions the program would advise you, as a student, explore with your field instructor:

1. Does your field placement agency have policies in place regarding social media and technology?

2. How much personal information is generally shared with clients, agency staff, and colleagues?
3. What are common ethical concerns that have come up in your agency regarding social media and technology?
4. Are there texting policies for the agency about practices with cell phones and messaging during the work day?
5. What are appropriate methods of contacts with clients? Do agency staff text clients?

(Adapted from: *Guidelines for Social Media, Boise State University School of Social Work*)

The program has outlined the following guidelines for enrolled students in order to make them better future practitioners. The program has the responsibility of creating, monitoring, and disseminating the information outlined in this policy. Information can be changed and edited at any time if deemed necessary. Students, faculty, staff, and agency field instructors will be made aware of this information and have access to a copy for reference at any time.

### **E-Mail**

Students are advised to send e-mail correspondence with a proper greeting, body, and signature. A subject should be included. E-mails should be professional in nature and include a person's title when sending to field instructors and social work faculty. Students should allow 48-72 hours for a reply.

### **Cell Phones and Texting**

1. Students will provide social work faculty with a proper working phone number before beginning all experiential education.
2. Students should begin contact with agency field instructor through a phone call. After this initial contact, an agreed upon method of communication can be determined by field instructor and student.
3. Texting should not be initiated by student until a field instructor has made the student aware this communication is acceptable. If texting is an agreed upon method of contact, students should be cognizant of times when texts are sent. Texts are not to be sent during weekend hours when field placement hours are not being completed. Texts are not to be sent before 8:00a (unless emergency) or after 8:00p. After 8:00p, information can be sent in e-mail or wait until the following business day.
4. Students should not text social work faculty questions regarding assignments, grades, scheduling, syllabus, or course content. Students are expected to e-mail these sorts of questions or discuss during office hours or after class times.
5. Students are not to text agency staff any identifying information about clients or confidential agency information.
6. Students are not to text during a time in which they may drive an agency vehicle. It is best practice to not text behind the wheel of any vehicle.

7. Students are expected to have a professional voicemail message as they are considered professionals. Ring back tones, etc. are not professional.
8. Students are not expected to give cell phone numbers to clients.

### **Phone Calls**

Students are expected to speak professionally during phone conversations. Phone calls should be returned within 24-48 hours and should be the primary method of communication during field experiences until which a time a field instructor determines other contact methods are appropriate.

### **Social Media**

Social Media includes but is not limited to the following: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, WordPress, etc.

1. Students are not to be on personal social media accounts during class time or field placement hours. Keep in mind: you may have a different schedule than your classmates, however, social media posts during the typical work day, even if you are not at placement, still look as though they are being posted during placement.
2. Students should not friend or accept friend requests from agency staff, field instructor, colleagues, clients, or client families, etc.
3. Students should unfriend people they already know who become agency clients.
4. Students are expected to talk with agency field instructor and Social Work Program Field Director at any point they are unsure how to handle friends requests or boundary issues.
5. Social media presence should be professional in nature. Consider the following to aid in this process: use proper grammar and spelling, delete or hide unprofessional or inappropriate posts from the past, change privacy settings to strictest settings, do not keep accounts public, possibly remove last name, etc. Students are reminded that comments and interactions with posts that are public are then available for all to see.
6. Students may consider ways to separate personal content from their professional content.

This policy is put in place for the protection of all parties involved. This includes students, agencies, agency employees, field instructors, social work faculty, the social work program, and the University of Findlay. Students should always seek supervision and ask questions when navigating new territory or when they are unsure of how to handle potentially problematic ethical situations.

Students in the social work program and in field placement are representative of all these parties and their social media presence is a byproduct of this representation. Students are cautioned when promoting products, taking positions on issues, or endorsing companies, products, people, etc., especially during placement hours.

Remember: You can use social media and technology to your advantage while remaining professional. While there is not an explicit expectation of privacy, there are guidelines outlined in this policy and the expectation is that you, as a student, are thoughtful about your posts.

On a final note, use your resources. The code of ethics is a great place to find guidelines for privacy, confidentiality and boundaries. There are many other social work programs who also have social media policies in place that you can reference. Consider writing your own personal and professional social media policy to help you begin setting boundaries before you enter field placement.

### **Condition Based Language**

Social Work training can involve physical demands and exposure to certain procedures or substances which may be harmful to a student who has a permanent or temporary medical condition or impairment, including but not limited to illness, injury, or pregnancy. It is the responsibility of the student to report any medical condition that may impact their progress/participation in the program to the UF Social Work Field Education Coordinator (or designee) and the Office of Accommodation & Inclusion (OAI) as soon as the condition is known.

The UF Social Work Field Education Coordinator (or designee) and OAI will consult with the student to develop an appropriate plan for continuation of the student's education. This includes an evaluation to determine whether reasonable accommodations can be made to allow the student to continue the program. To complete the accommodation verification process, the student must provide information from their healthcare provider outlining their current limitations in performing the essential functions outlined in the program and the expected timeframe of the limitations. Due to the unique requirements of each experiential learning site or facility, additional evaluation may be required. Standards within experiential learning sites may not be the same as those within the University. All evaluations for the purpose of medical verification is provided at the student's expense.

### **Non-Discrimination and Title IX**

#### **Prohibition of Harassment and Discrimination; Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Reporting Requirements**

The University of Findlay prohibits harassment and discrimination in any of its programs and activities, including those conducted in partnership with another institution. Harassment or discrimination based on sex, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, color, religion, gender identity, handicap/ability, sexual

orientation, genetic information, veteran or military status and physical or mental disabilities is strictly prohibited.

Sexual harassment is defined as conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following: (i) an employee of the University conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the University on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; (ii) unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity, or (iii) sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking.

Harassment on the basis of other protected traits may include any conduct which the submission to or rejection of: (i) is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the person's grade or evaluation in the program, (ii) is used as the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting an individual in the program, or (iii) creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment within the program.

Specific definitions and examples are provided within the applicable policies below.

- **Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Harassment/Discrimination:** Allegations of sexual harassment or discrimination by or against a University of Findlay student **MUST** be reported to the University of Findlay Title IX Coordinator immediately. Allegations of harassment or discrimination against a University of Findlay student by someone at the preceptor's institution should also be reported to the preceptor institution in accordance with its institutional policies.
  - University of Findlay Title IX Policy: <https://www.findlay.edu/offices/student-affairs/title-ix/title-ix-policy>
  
- **Reporting of All Forms of Harassment/Discrimination:** Any allegations of harassment or discrimination that involve a University of Findlay student on experiential rotation may be reported to the University of Findlay Director of Equity and Title IX or to the Harassment Hotline.
  - University of Findlay Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy: <http://catalog.findlay.edu/en/Archived-Current/Shared-Content/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities-Statement/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities-Statement/X-Non-Discrimination-Anti-Harassment-and-Hostile-Campus-Environment-Policy>

Individuals involved in making a report as indicated above are protected from retaliation. More information about those protections can be found in the policies listed above.

Preceptors must assist the University of Findlay in providing adequate supportive measures to ensure University of Findlay students have continuing access to the program.

**Contact Information**

*University of Findlay Title IX Coordinator*

*Director for Equity and Title IX*

Skylar Mettert

(419) 434-4733

[metters@findlay.edu](mailto:metters@findlay.edu)

Office Location: Old Main 45, University of Findlay, 1000 N. Main Street, Findlay, OH 45840

*University of Findlay Harassment Hotline*

(419) 434-6777