



**Field Manual for the  
Master of Social Work  
Degree Program  
AY 2022-2023**

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## Overview

This manual outlines the parameters of the social work MSW field program and the policies and procedures pertaining to this important component of social work education. Readers should note that, while the manual outlines the structure of the field program and details the policies and procedures on which the program is founded, the manual periodically will be updated to reflect changes and developments in the MSW program. Students in the MSW program are encouraged to use this document in conjunction with the program's Student Handbook.

### Note About Interchangeable Terms

"Field", "field placement", "field practice", "field practicum", "placement", and "internship" are all used to communicate the part of the curriculum in which MSW students are engaged as social work interns in agencies within the community.

"Director of Field Placement", "Director of Graduate Field Placement", "MSW Director of Field Placement", "Field Director", and "MSW Field Director" are all used to indicate the member of the social work faculty charged with overseeing the field component of the MSW curriculum.

## Purpose and Goals

### Purpose of Social Work Education

Social work education is grounded in the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy, and is based on a body of knowledge, values, and skills. Social work education enables students to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession for competent practice, educating students to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. To that end, social work education is committed to developing student knowledge, values, and skills essential to competent social work practice, the importance of human relationships, the dignity and worth of all persons, and integrity throughout all aspects of professional practice.

### Purpose of Field Education

Field placement is an important component of the social work degree program and is designed to help students integrate their academic learning to understand and develop good skills for entering the profession of social work. An internship placement provides opportunities for students to apply concepts and skills learned in the classroom in "real-world" work settings and to build work histories of relevant experience that will assist them in beginning their social work careers.

The purpose of the internship is to provide students with the opportunity to test, through practical experience, the knowledge and skills acquired in academic courses. The experience also allows students to identify areas in which they need additional educational experience. Through application of concepts, theories, and practices

learned in the classroom, students learn role behavior and techniques necessary to function effectively as skillful social workers. The experience provides further value by helping students decide what kind of positions they may wish to pursue after graduation. Internships primarily function to provide a learning experience for the student. Secondly, internships provide a valuable community service by contributing to the placement agencies, offering assistance on valued projects and bringing new ideas to practitioners.

### Goals of the Field Practicum

The field practicum is rooted in the understanding that social work practitioners require knowledge and skills that enable them to assess and intervene in ways that are ethical and effective in helping transform systems that fail to sustain or promote the well-being of clients. Field education students are expected to apply the professional foundation in ways that demonstrate an understanding of social work values and ethics and their implications. In linking field to their classroom courses, students are expected to:

1. Articulate basic social work concepts, roles, processes and methods for working with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, and communities
2. Establish a professional identity that is characterized by professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication
3. Apply evidence-based practice perspectives and a systems approach to problem-solving and in working with systems of various sizes and diversity
4. Apply knowledge and understanding of federal, state, local, and agency policies, procedures, organizational structures, and channels of communication to conceptualization and implementation of practice strategies
5. Demonstrate appropriate analytical and interactional skills in carrying out each phase of a problem-solving process with clients, using an ecological systems framework for identifying problems and planning interventions at micro, mezzo, and macro levels as required
6. Reflect use of social work values and ethics in work with client systems, colleagues, organizations and others involved in the change efforts, particularly in maintaining confidentiality and rights to self-determination, and in respecting the uniqueness, worth, and dignity of individuals and in accepting and respecting human diversity
7. Demonstrate understanding, sensitivity, and respect for socio-cultural differences in working with gender differences, racial and ethnic minorities, persons of all socio-economic groups, and differences regarding sexual orientation
8. Exhibit ability to connect with diverse clients and develop culturally responsive therapeutic relationships in work with client systems
9. Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice within the placement organization and in practice at all levels of service delivery
10. Use research methodology to evaluate practice effectiveness and/or outcomes in practice with client systems

11. Apply theories and conceptual frameworks of human behavior to assessment, intervention, and evaluation practices
12. Assume appropriate direct practitioner roles in contributing to the policy process for monitoring and improving the service delivery system in which they function
13. Identify strengths and limitations in their knowledge, values, and skills from regular feedback of the field instructor, peers, and faculty liaison
14. Collect, organize, and interpret client data in regard to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
15. Develop competence in oral and in written communication; and
16. Develop skills in assessing the effectiveness of interventions with various systems.

## **The Role of Field Placement in the Curriculum**

As the signature pedagogy of social work education, field placement is an important component of the social work degree program and is designed to further academic learning by integrating theories, conceptual frameworks, values, and skills into the “real world” social work practice environment. The overall goal of the MSW field education program is to facilitate students’ professional socialization, to expand their perspective of social work practice, and to provide the opportunity to apply to “real world” social work situations the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. The focus of the field practice experience is evidence-based practice in actual social service settings and the development of students’ understanding of and commitment to the profession.

## **Graduate Certificate Programs**

The University of Memphis offers several Graduate Certificate programs in fields related to social work. Students who are interested in receiving a Graduate Certificate are encouraged to review the Graduate Course Catalog for more details on the certificate of interest and discuss with their advisors using their electives to pursue the certificate. Students should note that some certificate programs may require courses above and beyond the course/elective requirements of the MSW program. Some of the certificate programs available include:

- School Social Work Certificate
- Graduate Certificate in Clinical Social Work
- Substance Abuse Interprofessional Graduate Certificate
- Graduate Nonprofit Management and Leadership
- Disability Studies Graduate Certificate
- Women’s and Gender Studies Graduate Certificate

Students should note that some certificate programs may have requirements for specific field placement internships. It is the student’s responsibility to understand these requirements and notify their field director of their specific internship requirement as far in advance as possible.

## Dual Degree Programs

Social work has two dual degree programs that are currently recognized by the University of Memphis Graduate School. These are the Master of Social Work/Master of Public Health (MSW/MPH) and the Master of Social Work/Master of Science in Instructional Curriculum and Leadership with a concentration in special education and an emphasis in applied behavioral analysis. Requirements for these two dual degrees can be found in the Graduate Course Catalog and the School of Social Work's website.

Students who are interested in pursuing dual degree options should consult with the MSW program coordinator and their assigned adviser. It is recommended that students who are interested in pursuing this option start planning at the point of admission to the MSW program if possible.

Students should note that dual degree tracks may have requirements for specific field placement internships. It is the student's responsibility to understand these requirements and notify their field director of their specific internship requirement as far in advance as possible.

## Policies and Procedures (Program Design)

### Course Requirements

At the University of Memphis, the field practicum consists of six (6) courses: two (2) courses for the foundation level of placement – Generalist Field Placement I (SWRK 7051) and Generalist Field Placement II (SWRK 7052); and four (4) courses for the advanced (specialization) level – Specialization Field Placement III (SWRK 7053), Specialization Field Placement IV (SWRK 7054), Integrative Field Seminar I (SWRK 7055) and Integrative Field Seminar II (SWRK 7056). Each course is intended to complement the material being learned in the classroom setting during that semester as well as in preceding terms, with each semester building on the preceding semester(s).

Advanced standing students are required to complete Advanced Standing Field (SWRK 7050) which incorporates objectives and competencies from both the Generalist Field Placement I (SWRK 7051) and the Generalist Field Placement II (SWRK 7052) courses before moving on to the Specialization Field courses (SWRK 7053, SWRK 7055, SWRK 7054, and SWRK 7056).

As part of the field courses in the generalist year of placement, students also are required to participate in an integrative seminar class (both in classroom and online settings) in which they have opportunities to process what they are learning in the field, applying theory to practice in a group setting, and learning from peers placed at other types of agencies. Activities related to the seminar are included in determining the grade for the respective field course in the foundation year of placement.

Students are eligible to begin field placement only after completing the majority of the SWRK 7001 course (Social Work Practice Skills). Extended study (part-time) students, complete the entire SWRK 7001 course prior to beginning field, whereas full-time

students phase into beginning their placements in the final two weeks of the SWRK 7001 course. Students in the generalist year of placement (both full-time and extended study) must attend and participate in the concurrent field seminar sessions.

#### Requirements for Field Placement – Everyone Except Advanced Standing

In order to successfully complete the requirements for field placement, each student, excluding Advanced Standing, is required to:

- Spend a minimum of 900 clock hours working in the field – 400 hours in generalist field placement, and 500 hours in specialization field placement
- Complete time logs that document their time and activities in the field
- Establish a learning contract for each year of placement. Early in the field experience, the agency field instructor and the student should construct a detailed list of tasks and responsibilities that will lead to the accomplishment of the competencies prescribed for the field placement course. This learning contract, signed by the field instructor and the student, should be unique to the student and should be used in monitoring the student's progress
- Maintain an online journal which reflects their reactions to issues raised in their work with clients, agency professionals, and peers. This journal is to be shared with the student's field instructor and with the MSW field director and should demonstrate the student's growth as a professional; and
- Complete an evaluation of her/his performance in regard to the program competencies at the end of each semester.

#### Requirements for Field Placement – Advanced Standing Only

Students in the Advanced Standing program must complete the following requirements for field placement, each student is required to:

- Spend a minimum of 500 clock hours working in the specialization field placement
- Complete time logs that document their time and activities in the field
- Establish a learning contract for each year of placement. Early in the field experience, the agency field instructor and the student should construct a detailed list of tasks and responsibilities that will lead to the accomplishment of the competencies prescribed for the field placement course. This learning contract, signed by the field instructor and the student, should be unique to the student and should be used in monitoring the student's progress
- Maintain an online journal, which reflects their reactions to issues raised in their work with clients, agency professionals, and peers. This journal is to be shared with the student's field instructor and with the MSW field director and should demonstrate the student's growth as a professional; and
- Complete an evaluation of her/his performance in regard to the program competencies at the end of each semester

## Grading and Retention

Students are evaluated at the end of each term. The program competencies define the standards by which both the field instructor and student evaluate the student's performance. Educational objectives and performance criteria are the standards by which the field instructor evaluates the student's performance. In the generalist year of placement, these evaluation results are combined with scores obtained by the student through participation in field seminar to determine a grade for the respective semester. All field grades for both the generalist and the specialization years of placement are given by the Director of Field Placement for the School of Social Work.

Students receive coordinated classroom or online instruction via Integrative Field Seminars (SWRK 7055 and SWRK 7056) which provide an opportunity for the student to integrate his/her field experience along with the experiences of other students who also are involved in practicum. The student is doing Field Instruction in the local field agency setting in Social Work (SWRK 7053 and SWRK 7054). Separate grades are given for the seminar (SWRK 7055 and SWRK 7056) vs. Field III (SWRK 7053) and Field IV (SWRK 7054), based on the student's completion of class assignments.

Students must complete four semesters of field practicum in order to fulfill the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work, while following the MSW retention standards. However, Advanced Standing students are required to complete two semesters of field practicum in order to fulfill the requirements for the MSW degree.

Withdrawal (W) or failing (below C-) any of the field sequence courses (foundation year SWRK 7051 and/or SWRK 7052; specialization year SWRK 7053, SWRK 7055, SWRK 7054, and/or SWRK 7056) will result in the student needing to repeat that year's sequence upon the next cycle of class offering (typically the next academic year). Students in this situation will receive no credit for previous internship experience/hours and they will need to complete their internship in a different agency. Students will not be allowed to register or enroll in subsequent field courses until the requirements are satisfied for the prerequisite course. Students should be mindful of general retention policies for the MSW program, as students are only able to repeat two courses over the duration of their program. Failing field courses may result in termination from the MSW program per retention and course repetition policies.

In such cases, the student's standing within the program will be addressed by the MSW program retention committee. Generally, this committee will consist of: 1) the student's advisor, 2) the MSW Director of Field, and 3) the field liaison. The program retention committee will review oral and written reports of the student's performance and the student will be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will deliberate and decide whether or not to recommend dismissal of the student from the program to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies or the Student Judicial Affairs Committee. Students shall be dismissed from field placement only after the appropriate disciplinary or academic policies and procedures of the university have been followed. However, while involved in placement, students should be cognizant that they serve at

the approval of the agency to which they are assigned. As an extension of this provision, the agency may immediately remove from its premises any student who they believe poses an immediate threat or danger and/or violates agency policy.

If the decision made by the MSW program retention committee is not to recommend dismissal, the student will be given an opportunity to re-take the field course for that year of placement (foundation or concentration) but will have to start over at a different agency with zero (0) hours credited toward the respective year of placement. If the committee's decision is to recommend dismissal of the student from the program, the student will be given a letter explaining the rationale behind the decision. In accordance with university policy, the student's case also will be reviewed by either the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences or by the Student Judicial Affairs Committee. The decision of either the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies or the Student Judicial Affairs Committee will be final. If the student wishes to appeal the decision made by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies or the Student Judicial Affairs Committee, he or she must follow university policies outlined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

A grade of "Incomplete" can be given if evaluation of the student's progress is not received by the Director of Field Placement by the specified date. If 2/3 of the hours needed in field are not accrued by the end of the semester, the student will receive an "F" for a final grade in field. If the student has accrued at least 2/3 of the hours required for the semester but is short hours due to unforeseen circumstance (previously discussed with the seminar and field instructor) then the student will receive an "I" for field. Unless the student completes the requirements for removal of the "I" within 90 days from the end of the semester or summer term in which it was received (see University Calendar), the "I" will automatically change to an "F," regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled for the subsequent semester.

The student will be certified for graduation when all requirements are met, including the removal of all "I" grades Per University policy, graduating students will have three weeks to complete coursework in which an "I" grade has been issued. After three weeks, the degree certification process and graduation will automatically be deferred to the next term.

If a student receives an "I" for a field course, the student must complete the remaining hours and evaluations before transitioning to the subsequent field course. If the student fails to complete the remaining hours by the first day of the next semester, the student will be administratively dropped from the subsequent field course. Therefore, the student will have to wait until the next cycle of class offering (typically one academic year).

### **Selection of the Practicum Agency/Institution**

Field settings are selected based upon their ability to offer students experience in providing social work services and adequate supervision for the specific activities in

which they are engaged in the respective year of placement – generalist skills for foundation field, and skills specific to the program specialization for advanced field. For both years of placement, settings must be able to provide a range of activities such that the student will be able to demonstrate competence across the range of practice behaviors identified on the competency matrix for the respective year of placement. The School of Social Work cannot guarantee night and weekend field placements.

A key feature in the selection of a field agency is whether it can provide adequate supervision for the placement experience. Per the mandates of the Council on Social Work Education, such supervision must be provided by an instructor who holds a Master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. Additionally, the School of Social Work requires that said instructor have at least two years of post-MSW experience. Agencies selected to serve as placement sites are expected to promote the educational aspect of this process by allowing the agency staff member designated to serve as the field instructor sufficient time to:

- a. Hold regular weekly conferences with each student
- b. Be available in emergency situations
- c. Have conferences with the faculty liaison at least once per semester
- d. Attend meetings sponsored by the School of Social Work; and
- e. Prepare evaluations of the student's work.

The School of Social Work foresees rare situations in which an agency might not be able to provide student supervision by an agency staff member who holds a CSWE-accredited social work degree (e.g., a field instructor leaves the agency in the middle of the placement and is replaced by someone other than a social worker). In these circumstances, a faculty member may be asked to serve as field instructor. In such situations, the agency should provide the faculty member with adequate space to meet with the student, as needed, and should assign an agency staff member to serve as liaison to the field instructor. This liaison will be charged with the responsibility to provide orientation and ongoing information about agency policies and to facilitate assignments for the student.

For the student, the agency should provide a suitable workspace. This generally should include a desk and chair, telephone, computer, supplies, and access to clerical services, but the School of Social Work recognizes that work environments vary from one agency to another. Agency partners reserve the right to require students to use their own personal technology devices (smartphones, laptop/tablet) at the agency. In all cases, students should be privileged to privacy when conducting client services that require confidentiality.

Some agencies may provide reimbursement for travel or other expenses in carrying out agency business or may offer a stipend or salary in exchange for the services the

student provides. Arrangements regarding stipends and reimbursement of expenses are strictly between the agency and the student; neither the University of Memphis, nor the School of Social Work, has any standing in such arrangements.

The criteria for selecting a field education agency includes, but is not limited to:

1. The agency/institution must be legally established
2. The agency/institution must follow the guidelines of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for MSW programs
3. The agency/institution must be an organization that embraces and incorporates the values and ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
4. The agency must offer social work practice across micro, mezzo, and/or macro systems, providing direct services that are preventive, habilitative, or rehabilitative
5. Clients from the agency must be sufficiently diverse in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, age, culture, religion, sexual orientation and identity, and social class to ensure that students are exposed to issues that have an impact on a range of people and problems
6. The agency/institution must provide direct weekly supervision with a social worker who holds a MSW degree from an accredited institution, but also can include diverse learning opportunities under the supervision of various staff members
7. Although students are to be involved in doing the work of the agency, said agency must recognize that field placement is a learning experience and must agree to view work expectations and workloads for students differently from those of staff
8. The agency/institution must provide facilities for the student's use (e.g., office space, office equipment, etc.)
9. The agency/institution must observe policies of non-discrimination regarding race, ethnic origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation and identity
10. The agency/institution must allow time necessary for the field instructor to adequately supervise students, meet with the faculty liaison and/or the Director of Field Placement, attend training(s), and prepare student evaluations as required
11. Membership in a national standard-setting body appropriate to its function or licensing by the state is desirable. The agency must approve the

- arrangements for the practicum and the agency staff must be receptive to students and willing to cooperate with their program of learning; and
12. The agency/institution must provide a learning environment that allows the student to demonstrate all ten core competencies outlined in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education.

#### Acceptance and Placement of Students in Field Practice

The following criteria are used for accepting and placing students in field positions:

1. Students are eligible to begin generalist field placement only after completing the majority of the SWRK 7001 course (Social Work Practice Skills). Extended study (part-time) students, complete the entire SWRK 7001 course prior to beginning field, whereas full-time students phase into beginning their placements in the final two weeks of the SWRK 7001 course
2. Students are to make a formal written application for the generalist year of field placement. For full-time students, this application is to be submitted immediately after they are accepted into the MSW program; part-time students should submit their application for the generalist year while engaged in coursework 4-6 months prior to when they plan to begin placement
3. Along with submitting an application for field placement, the student must join the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and purchase liability insurance (with minimum coverage of \$1,000,000/\$5,000,000), and provide documentation of such coverage to the Director of Field Placement
4. Generalist students are assigned to an agency by the program's field director. The primary basis for these assignments is information provided by the student on an application for field placement, but the field director also may rely on ancillary information (e.g. information the student already has provided in her/his application to the MSW program and information shared in classes, if applicable). In completing the field application form, the student is invited to indicate the type of social work agency to which s/he would like to be assigned, but the program does not guarantee that the student's assignment will match those preferences. Assignment to placement is solely the province of the program's Director of Field Placement
5. Students are notified of their generalist assignments via e-mail, asking them to contact a specific person at the assigned agency to request an interview for placement with the agency. Generally, this person is the field instructor who will be the student's supervisor while in placement, but for some agencies the point of contact is a coordinator of interns. In making the assignment, the field director sends both the student and the prospective field instructor (or coordinator of interns) a packet containing forms to be sent back to the field director following the interview. For the agency, this form allows them to indicate whether they feel

the placement can proceed or if they feel the matter needs further consideration, whereas the student form asks the student to document when and where they are to report on the first day of placement as well as requirements to which the student must attend prior to beginning placement (e.g., background check, physical exam, TB test, vaccination verification, orientation)

6. Based on this interview, if neither the instructor nor the student strongly objects to moving forward, the student formally is assigned to that agency/institution for placement. Students may then want to contact the faculty liaison to the respective agency/institution in order to learn more about the placement
7. When the placement plan is not acceptable either to the student or to the agency/institution, these concerns should be brought to the attention of the Director of Field Placement, who has the responsibility of addressing these concerns. Even in these situations, however, assignment to placement remains solely the province of the program's Director of Field Placement
8. The process of assignment for specialization placements differs in that students have more voice in selecting the agency at which they would like to do placement. The field director still is charged with making the actual assignment, but students have the opportunity to interview with more than one placement site and both student and agency preferences are given strong consideration in deciding which student will be assigned to which agency. Again, assignments are done via e-mail but, in most cases, this is done following the interview process, not preceding it. Although students are more involved in selecting the agency at which they will do their concentration placement, assignment to placement remains solely the province of the program's Director of Field Placement
9. In the interest of assuring a well-rounded social work education, students are not allowed to do their specialization placement at the same agency at which they did their generalist placement. In that same interest of assuring a well-rounded social work experience, students admitted to the advanced standing program will not be allowed to do their placement at the same agency at which they did an undergraduate placement. (Please note: various programs within the same agency are not necessarily to be considered separate placement sites).
10. Possible impact of a misdemeanor or felony record on students pursuing field placement:
  - A misdemeanor or felony conviction may impact your internship and employment prospects because many agencies and employers request criminal records of their prospective interns and hires. In addition, a conviction may impact your ability to secure liability insurance as an intern/professional as well as licensure upon graduation from an accredited social work program. Below are the identified practices of the NASW, liability companies, and the Tennessee Board of Social Workers:

- NASW – A conviction does not prevent a student from being able to apply and be accepted into the NASW.
- Liability Insurance - Will consider liability insurance for a student or professional with a felony/misdemeanor conviction on a case-by-case basis. They do not guarantee approval.
- TN Board of Social Workers – A student with a conviction must provide a letter of explanation and documents from jurisdiction with disposition indicated. The board will review and consider each application on a case-by-case basis.

### Selection of Field Instructors

Anyone selected to serve as field instructor must hold a Master's Degree in Social Work from a CSWE- accredited program. The School of Social Work also requires the instructor have at least two years of post- MSW practice experience. Those who indicate an interest in serving as field instructors are asked to complete an informational form on which they document their academic credentials and professional background.

The program foresees rare situations in which an agency might not be able to provide student supervision by an instructor who holds a CSWE-accredited social work degree (e.g., a field instructor leaves the agency in the middle of the placement and is replaced by someone other than a social worker). In these cases, a member of the social work faculty, in close collaboration with the agency, will be asked to provide such supervision. These situations would be exceptions to standard practice.

Field instructors should be comfortable teaching from a conceptual standpoint as well as training students to perform specific tasks. Persons serving as field instructors are expected to have demonstrated a high level of skill with respect to communication and practice, as well as being committed to the education of students. Prior experience in supervision is desirable.

Those selected as field instructors also must express a willingness to participate in all aspects of the field program as outlined in this manual – attending pertinent training sessions, corresponding with the faculty liaison and Director of Field Placement, providing meaningful student supervision, and completing forms (e.g., the learning agreement, performance evaluations, and signing off on time logs) necessary to substantiate the field education process.

### Ethics and Values in Field Instruction

Social work is a profession that is organized around the assumption that people have a right to the social services necessary for a good quality of life and that society has a corresponding responsibility to provide these services. In this capacity, social work is responsible for providing services designed to enhance the functioning of individuals, families, groups, and larger systems in relation to intra- and inter-personal factors, as

well as to environmental components that impinge upon their lives. These services are based on the philosophy, the body of knowledge, and the methodologies for practice promoted by the social work profession.

Practice in social work addresses the person-in-situation with a clearly defined understanding of the interdependence between the individual and society. Students are encouraged to develop consistent patterns of respect for the commitment of the profession to serving populations-at-risk – e.g., consideration of issues related to race, gender, ethnicity, culture, age, class, religion, sexual orientation, and disability.

Although each client is a unique person with different life experiences, there also is acknowledgment that there are common human needs that must be addressed in social work practice. To this end, field placement students must demonstrate an ability to analyze, formulate, and advocate for social welfare policies that impact the client population(s) with whom they are working and to explore ways in which they can address the broader societal and global concerns that contribute to their clients' areas of need.

Students are taught to assess and intervene in the lives of their clients using the ethics and values that guide the profession. Prior to beginning field placement, students study and discuss the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). In response to their study of the code, students are required to sign a form, indicating their willingness to adhere to the principles outlined in the code throughout their field practicum.

Students are encouraged to reflect on the values and ethics that have been taught within the classroom setting as these concerns now become an integral part of their practice in the field placement. Discussions are facilitated in the concomitant field seminar (of the generalist year) intended to help students to see the utility of the Code of Ethics and the importance of applying social work values and ethics to casework situations.

Emphasis is given in the placement to issues of self-determination, the client's right to participate in the helping process, and to confidentiality. In looking at what techniques and policies hamper the client's self-determination; the social work student is encouraged to become an advocate for the client. Additionally, in his/her role as client advocate, the student works toward the protection of the client's individual rights, particularly the client's right to confidentiality. As part of this role, it is incumbent upon the social work student to inform the client of those times when confidentiality will not be maintained – e.g., when there is a serious suicide threat/attempt, when threats against others occur, or when legal requirements to report abuse of any nature are met.

## Professional Conduct

Students enrolled in the Master of Social Work program must conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner toward clients, students, faculty, and staff. Professional

conduct is expected at all times. The School of Social Work, through its faculty and appropriate committees, reserves the discretionary right to recommend dismissal from the program of any student who exhibits failure to maintain appropriate personal conduct or professional standards and ethics. Any act that would constitute unethical practice, professional misconduct, or violations of the law (whether committed in college-related activities or not) may be ground for disciplinary action – up to and including dismissal from the program. The NASW Code of Ethics and The University of Memphis Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities serve as guidelines and standards for professional conduct both on- and off-campus.

In their role as social work educators, the members of the faculty of the School of Social Work are charged with a gate-keeping function in which they are responsible for assessing the professional “fit” of those who are seeking to join the profession – measured in regard to the student’s skills and knowledge levels, but also by consistent ethical competence. In light of that charge, students should understand that if there is evidence of the student’s lack of professional preparedness and/or ethics, the School of Social Work may recommend the student be dismissed from the MSW program. Such a lack could include, but is not limited to, the following examples:

1. Documented behavior that is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers
2. Documented problems in behavior or performance, which raise questions from the faculty or field instructor about the student’s suitability for professional social work. Such problems could include, but are not limited to, the following list of behaviors:
  - a. Inappropriate behaviors and/or communications with client(s)
  - b. Forced or coerced sexual behavior with client(s)
  - c. Sexual activity with client(s) including, but not limited to, kissing, fondling, or sexual intercourse
  - d. Physical aggression, such as hitting, spanking, or slapping, directed at client(s), student(s), faculty or staff member(s)
  - e. Physical or emotional threats directed toward client(s), student(s), faculty or staff member(s)
  - f. Acceptance of gifts or money (not considered standard payment for services) from client(s). Students shall not ask for, or accept, gifts from client(s)
  - g. Illegal or unethical behavior that limits or takes away client(s)’ rights or results in financial, material, or emotional loss for client(s) or gain for the social work student; and/or

- h. Sexual harassment of client(s)
3. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty or disruption
4. Failure of the student to maintain a 3.0 GPA beyond one semester of academic probation
5. Failure to follow policies and rules as outlined in the MSW Student Handbook, the MSW Field Manual, or the University of Memphis Student Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities
6. Failure to comply with policies and procedures of the professional agency
7. Failure to adhere to privacy and confidentiality policies and/or laws; and/or
8. Non-attendance at the internship site.

Concerns about unethical behavior will be addressed by the MSW program retention committee. If the unethical behavior occurs in regard to academic processes other than field placement, the program retention committee will consist of: 1) the student's advisor, 2) the classroom instructor, and 3) one additional faculty member. If the unethical behavior occurs in regard to field placement, the program retention committee will consist of: 1) the student's advisor, 2) the MSW Director of Field Placement, and 3) the faculty liaison. If the unethical behavior occurs in regard to a student organization event, the program retention committee will consist of: 1) the student's advisor, 2) the faculty liaison to the student organization, and 3) another faculty member.

The program retention committee will review oral and written reports of the student's unethical behavior. The student will be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will deliberate and decide whether or not to recommend dismissal of the student. If a decision is made to recommend dismissal, the student will be given a letter explaining the rationale behind the decision. The School of Social Work will then follow University policies and procedures for dismissal by referring the student's case to either the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research in the College of Arts and Sciences or to the Student Judicial Affairs Committee, as indicated.

Students who wish to appeal a recommendation of dismissal must first write a letter of appeal to the MSW Program Coordinator. If the dispute is not resolved to the student's satisfaction by the MSW Program Coordinator, the student must follow the grievance procedures of the Graduate School as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.

### Professional Boundaries

In their work with clients, students are reminded that they are to maintain professional boundaries at all times. This provision includes, but is not limited to:

- Refraining from engagement in any type of dual relationship with a client
- Refraining from giving clients his/her cell phone number; and/or

- Refraining from giving clients access to the student's social media sites.

### Sexual Harassment

Harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the University. It subverts the mission of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff. Incidents involving sexual harassment or racial harassment have no place within the University, nor in its programs (e.g. field practicum). In both obvious and subtle ways, even a suggestion of sexual or racial harassment is destructive to individual students, faculty, staff and the academic community as a whole. When through fear, or reprisal, a student, staff member, or faculty member submits or is pressured to submit to unwanted sexual attention, the University's ability to carry out its mission is undermined.

While sexual harassment most often takes place in situations of a power differential between the persons involved, the University also recognizes that sexual harassment may occur between persons of the same status. The University will not tolerate harassment between or among members of the University or its programs.

Sexual harassment and racial harassment have been held to constitute forms of discrimination prohibited by Title VI, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. The University may be held liable pursuant to Title VI or Title VII and/or lose federal funds pursuant to Title IX for failure to properly investigate and remedy claims of sexual or racial harassment.

The University is committed to ensuring equality in education and eliminating any and all acts of sexual misconduct from its campus. Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can make a report to the Office for Institutional Equity at [oi@memphis.edu](mailto:oi@memphis.edu) or 901.678.2713. Please note that if you make a report to me university faculty, they required to report it. If you want to make a confidential report you can contact the University Counseling Center, 214 Wilder Tower, 901.678.2068.

### Academic Conduct

Graduate students at the University of Memphis are expected to observe the regulations and policies that govern the behavior of students as members of this academic community. These regulations and policies are published in the MSW Student Handbook. In particular, graduate students should become familiar with the University's policies on plagiarism in its various forms. Furthermore, term papers may not be used to meet the requirements of more than one course unless approved in advance by both instructors.

The University of Memphis Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities defines academic misconduct as all acts of cheating, plagiarism, forgery, and falsification.

The term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- Using any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes or tests
- Using sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments
- Acquiring tests or other academic material before such material is revealed or distributed by the instructor
- Misrepresenting papers, reports, assignments or other materials as the product of a student’s sole independent effort when this is not the case
- Failing to abide by the instructions of the proctor concerning test-taking procedures
- Influencing, or attempting to influence, any university employee in order to affect a student’s grade or evaluation; and/or
- Any forgery, alteration, unauthorized possession, or misuse of university documents.

The term plagiarism includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Academic misconduct also includes furnishing false information to a University official, faculty member, or office; or the forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University document, record, or instrument of identification. The Academic Discipline Committee, a standing University committee appointed by the President, addresses allegations of academic misconduct.

### **Policies and Procedures (General)**

The student in field practice has a responsibility to perform in the same professional manner as an employed staff member and is expected to follow agency policies and abide by the rules and regulations of the agency as well as those of the School of Social Work. These responsibilities include:

1. Protecting the confidentiality of all information about clients
2. Observing agency working hours
3. Being at the agency when assigned to be so
4. Being on time for the placement and punctual in completion of assignments
5. Being available for client emergencies, if possible, even if these occur after regular hours
6. Completing and submitting activity reports in a timely fashion

7. Notifying the field instructor in advance (if possible) of unavoidable absences or tardiness; and
8. Making up time for absences and tardiness.

As a general rule, students spend only the required number of hours per week in field practice and reserve the other time for classroom courses and study. Classroom work should not be done during field practice and, ordinarily, students should not be asked to fulfill field obligations during class time. A student who works overtime in field practice for client emergencies or special projects may arrange with the field instructor to take time off for necessary academic work.

Some agencies may prefer that students spread the required field hours over more than two days per week in order to provide client coverage, and some students with part-time jobs or childcare responsibilities may request some flexibility in scheduling for field practice. The School of Social Work has no objection to any arrangement that provides the necessary learning experiences, meets the requirement for hours of field practice, is satisfactory to the agency and student, and insures good service to clients. Similarly, students who wish to be involved in placement between the semesters of the practicum year (i.e., between SWRK 7051 and 7052, or between SWRK 7053 and 7054) may do so only with the agency's approval AND approval from the field director. In such instances, the student's time can be credited toward the following semester, but the student must remain engaged in placement throughout the entirety of the subsequent semester.

#### Optional Volunteer Hours

There are opportunities for students to obtain extra field hours by participating in university-sponsored activities and community-based social work activities (ex. Social Work Day on the Hill, Critical Conversations, Field Agency Fair, U of M research, professional conferences, online trainings, health fairs, advocacy, crisis hotline, etc.).

Students are allowed to accrue 25 volunteer hours per semester toward these university-sponsored activities and community-based social work-based opportunities. These activities must be documented separately from their field hours and are signed off on by their respective field director.

#### Communication

An e-mail account is available free of charge to University of Memphis students. This UoM account will be the official contact used for all School of Social Work correspondence. If the student elects to use another email service, s/he must obtain an account through the university and forward her/his mail to the personal account. Much correspondence is conveyed to students via email so the account should be checked frequently.

Students are asked to ensure that the School office has a current e-mail address, mailing address and telephone number. The success of this degree program depends

partly on the department's ability to foster ties to its students, alumni, and the larger community. Students can update their contact information by informing the School of Social Work administrative assistant of any changes.

### Holidays

Students are entitled to observe holidays listed on the University of Memphis calendar and to holidays and hazardous weather closings observed by the agency – even when these fall on field practice days. Students who need to observe certain cultural and/or religious holidays that fall outside of the University of Memphis holiday schedule must inform their Field Director and their agency field instructor prior to the holiday, if absence from field is needed. Regardless, the student remains responsible for making up these hours at some other time such that s/he completes the required number of hours for the placement.

### NASW Membership

All students enrolled in field education must obtain and maintain a membership with NASW for the duration of their field education experience. Student memberships are \$60 per year. MSW students who had a policy as a BSW student will need to call the 800-number at the bottom of the membership page and explain they are still a student, so NASW can edit the account and give the correct membership rate. Students must provide proof of membership to their respective field director prior to beginning placement.

### Professional Liability Insurance

All students enrolled in field placement are responsible for procuring liability insurance (with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000/\$5,000,000) prior to the beginning of field placement and keeping coverage for the duration of their field education experience. Coverage should be obtained through the National Association of Social Workers for \$15 per year. The student must provide the Director of Field Placement a copy of the certificate of coverage, verifying her/his purchase of the insurance, prior to beginning placement.

### Transportation

Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the agency. If transportation is a problem, the student should communicate this to the Director of Field Placement. Some agencies pay mileage for travel required to perform agency work. Students should ask their field instructor about mileage reimbursement if required to travel. Arrangements regarding mileage reimbursement are strictly between the agency and the student; neither the University of Memphis, nor the School of Social Work, has any standing in such arrangements. Students who drive must have a valid, current driver's license and automobile liability insurance.

Due to liability concerns (i.e., to be sure that s/he is covered to do so), any student who transports clients in her/his personal vehicle must, at the beginning of the placement, inform the provider of her/his automobile insurance that s/he is using the vehicle for

internship. If s/he is asked to transport clients in an agency vehicle, s/he is to meet all requirements for licensing and insurance coverage designated by the agency prior to providing transportation. Students who drive (or ride) in a vehicle in performance of their field responsibilities – whether transporting clients or not – should be aware that they are not covered for this activity under the university’s insurance.

### Financial Remuneration

Some agencies may provide reimbursement for travel or other expenses in carrying out agency business or may offer a stipend or salary in exchange for the services the student provides. Arrangements regarding stipends and reimbursement of expenses are strictly between the agency and the student; neither the University of Memphis, nor the School of Social Work, has any standing in such arrangements.

### Onboarding Costs

Some agencies require onboarding tasks such as vaccination verification, health tests (fitness tests, TB tests, drug screening, receiving specific vaccinations, etc.), security checks (criminal background check, medical background check, etc.), trainings (CPR/AED training, etc.) and other required items that may fall on the student to pay for. Medical placements especially can be expensive and lengthy to onboard prior to internship start. Students may be required to pay between \$300-500 for onboarding, depending on what is needed. The School of Social Work does not pay for/reimburse students for these onboarding items. Some agencies are able to reimburse students for their onboarding costs, but it needs to be discussed between the student and the agency during interview.

### Use of Job as Practicum Site

Students currently employed in a social service agency/institution or human service organization may complete their field practicum in their current job only if specific conditions are met. Approval of plans by the Director of Field Placement is required before the start of the practicum. Specific restrictions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Students are allowed to use their place of employment as a field placement site but can do so for only one of their two placement experiences, and only if that agency meets all requirements for serving as a placement site (including, in the case of the concentration year, if that agency is suitable for the competencies specific to advanced practice);
- The field instruction experience must be distinct from the student’s normal work activities and must be evaluated separately from those activities;
- The student must be supervised by someone who is not his/her regular work supervisor. This instructor must meet the usual requirements of field instruction – i.e., someone who holds a MSW degree with at least 2+ years of post-graduate experience in the field of social work;

- The hours credited toward field placement must be distinct from the student's employment hours (which will be gathered through the completion of the Student Request to use Employment as Field form); and
- Assignment to placement remains solely the province of the program's Director of Field Placement.

### Equity, Inclusion, and Special Needs

Students with disabilities are encouraged to notify Disability Resources for Students (DRS) for reasonable accommodations. Students must follow established university procedures for obtaining accommodations and services. Specific accommodations and services are determined on an individual basis and are based on documented functional limitations resulting from the disability.

Students with disabilities who are placed in field internships must note that the Field Education Office, the MSW Program, and the School of Social Work have no control over whether UofM DRS accommodations transfer into their internship placement. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their learning needs with their field director prior to internship coordination, and also discuss their learning needs with the agency upon interview.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Responsibilities of the School of Social Work

In the partnership between itself and the cooperating field agencies/institutions, the School of Social Work will execute the following responsibilities:

1. Design the curriculum, establish a framework for outcome measurement (competencies), determine the "norm" of expected content of field instruction (including, but not limited to, assignments), and share these with those who provide field instruction
2. Conduct workshops and periodic meetings for field instructors and/or students to ensure understanding of the material(s) and its use in a way that achieves the goals of the program and the particularized learning needs of the student
3. Arrange meetings, seminars, and/or workshops for field instructors to orient, train, and coordinate class content and field practice. These times also serve to further the development of the teaching skills of the field instructors. Such sessions also are used to familiarize field instructors with current concepts and theories in social work
4. Recruit and make decisions regarding the acceptance of field instruction agencies and the placement of students in these agencies
5. Evaluate the field instruction agency/institution's commitment to, and ability to provide, a good experience of the profession of social work

6. Provide faculty who act as liaisons to serve as mediators between the School of Social Work and the agency/institution regarding their respective needs, to monitor the student's performance, and to proactively solve problems that may arise; and
7. Arrange practice seminars for students in order to better prepare them for entrance into practice and hold ongoing meetings with special emphasis on the use of the overall educational experience in the field placement.

#### Responsibilities of the Director of Field Placement

The Director of Field Placement is responsible to the MSW Program Coordinator, and by extension to the Chair of the School of Social Work. This person has primary responsibility for the practicum component of the social work program which includes implementation of field processes and procedures, development of good field sites, and maintaining effective working relationships with placement sites, field instructors, faculty, and students. The responsibilities of the Director of Field Placement are to:

1. Develop policies, procedures, and competencies for the field courses: Generalist Field Placement I (SWRK 7051), Generalist Field Placement II (SWRK 7052), Specialization Field Placement III (SWRK 7053), Specialization Field Placement IV (SWRK 7054), Integrative Field Seminar I (SWRK 7055), and Integrative Field Seminar II (SWRK 7056)
2. Develop field placements by negotiating with appropriate agencies in the community that can provide a well-rounded social work field experience for the student
3. Work with the agency/institution administrators concerning the selection and approval of field instructors, and the maintenance of ongoing communication with agencies concerning the implementation of the field program
4. Provide orientation and other opportunities for field instructors to become familiar with the overall curriculum of the School of Social Work, including trends and changes in course content, and to participate in the ongoing assessment and development of the overall field program
5. Plan seminars and meetings of field instructors in order to develop the quality of teaching in the field and strengthen the performance of the field instructors as educators
6. Arrange meetings with interested student applicants to discuss the goals of the field practicum, the agencies/institutions available as placement sites, and policies and procedures for beginning placement
7. Coordinate planning for the placement of students in agency/institution settings, and assign students to the designated field sites

8. Assign a faculty liaison to work with the field instructor and student in relation to the student's field performance
9. In cooperation with the field instructor and the faculty liaison, evaluate the student's performance in the field and assign an appropriate grade for his/her completion of the field placement
10. Provide an opportunity for students to evaluate their field experience, and in cooperation with the faculty liaisons, evaluate and assess the agencies that participate in the field instruction program; and
11. In cooperation with the coordinator of the MSW program, develop, and revise as needed, the policies and procedures for field practicum. Similarly, maintain, and modify as necessary, the field manual.

### Responsibilities of the Faculty Liaison

The faculty liaison serves as a consultant to field instructors and ensures the educational integrity of the field experience for his/her respective students. The faculty liaison also serves as a mediator/problem solver when conflicts may arise between the agency and/or the field instructor and the student. The responsibilities of the faculty liaison are to:

1. Advise students with regard to what they are learning in their field placements. This includes direct contact with the student during each semester in order to review progress and to evaluate the adequacy of the learning experience
2. Represent the MSW program of the University of Memphis School of Social Work to the administration, field instructors, and other significant staff of the agency/institution, and act as the liaison between the agency/institution and the School of Social Work
3. Consult with the field instructor in relation to learning opportunities available to students, problems in the placement, and overall evaluation of the student's performance
4. Perform a minimum of one site visit per semester to each agency/institution for which s/he serves as faculty liaison and document visit via the Faculty Liaison Consult Form
5. Communicate with the field instructor during the course of the semester in order to serve as a mediator between the School of Social Work and the agency/institution regarding their respective needs, to monitor the student's performance, and to proactively solve problems that may arise
6. In collaboration with the field instructor, assess the student's performance. If the student's performance is considered marginal during the semester, the

- liaison arranges a meeting with the student and the field instructor to discuss the situation and to help the student and instructor to use the teaching/learning experience more effectively. If the difficulty cannot be resolved, the liaison refers the matter to the Director of Field Placement; and
7. Provide an evaluation of the field placement at the end of the semester and make recommendations about placement planning with the respective agency/institution for subsequent semesters.

### Responsibilities of the Field Instruction Agency

Agencies play a vital role in the education of social work students. It is through the agency/institution experience that the student comes to grips with the reality of working with people experiencing problems. Through this process, the student learns to test his/her knowledge and skills. It is important that agencies create an atmosphere for learning and provide a means through which students can begin to identify with the values and objectives of the social work profession. In order to afford a well-rounded educational experience for students, the agency/institution (as represented by its administration) assumes responsibility for the following:

1. Contract with the School of Social Work via the clinical affiliation agreement to work mutually with the School in providing the student(s) with a good field experience of the social work profession
2. Select qualified field instructors and allow time in their schedules for teaching responsibilities
3. Provide adequate physical space and facilities for the student to function effectively
4. Provide appropriate learning experiences, including orientation to the agency/institution and the community in which the agency operates, as well as in-person contact with clients or constituencies
5. Demonstrate a commitment to the values and ethics of the social work profession, including provision for confidentiality of records
6. Commit to the education of social workers at the graduate level and work collaboratively with the School of Social Work in developing the field instruction program; and
7. Discuss the progress of the student with the faculty liaison and/or Director of Field Placement and maintain close contact with the School of Social Work should problems occur in regard to the student's field performance.

### Responsibilities of the Field Instructor

The major function in field instruction is teaching through practice. The field instructor provides the support and experience through which students can develop, test, and

demonstrate the degree of their integration of social work knowledge, principles, and methods. In doing so, the field instructor assumes primary responsibility for the student's education in the placement setting. This involves locating appropriate assignments which enable the student to achieve the program's educational objectives, sharing knowledge, providing regular feedback to students, writing formal evaluations and enabling the student to evaluate self. The role of field instructor requires a basic commitment to the teaching role and commitment to development of the profession of social work.

In his/her role as educator, the field instructor will execute the following responsibilities:

1. Provide the School of Social Work with information regarding her/his academic background and a current resume relative to acting as an instructor for social work students
2. Familiarize him/herself with the educational philosophy of the School of Social Work and with the content of the social work curriculum which the student already has taken or currently is taking
3. At times, the field instructor may be called upon to teach specific content material for students to fulfill a particular field assignment when this content has not yet been covered in the classroom
4. Attend an orientation, if new to the role, which will help the instructor become familiar with his/her responsibility in taking on this role, educational requirements of the field process, the design of the learning experience, what to do regarding early identification of problems, and the curriculum of the School of Social Work
5. Attend training sessions at the university throughout the year. Field instructors who do not attend the orientation, or who habitually miss training sessions, may be asked to discontinue the responsibility of field instruction
6. Conduct an orientation for the student to help her/him prepare adequately for her/his field practice. This orientation includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. Policies and procedures of the agency/institution
  - b. Composition of the community and the clientele served
  - c. The role of the agency/institution in the community; its relation to the community resources most often used
  - d. Societal factors that may impact the clientele of the agency/institution
  - e. Content regarding cultural diversity and discrimination that may affect the agency/institution's clientele

- f. Responsibilities of the student to the client, as well as to the agency/institution
  - g. Mutual roles of the field instructor and the student in the field setting
  - h. The practical models most frequently employed for direct practice and measures used for evaluation of practice; and
  - i. Codes of conduct and office rules – e.g., dress codes, punctuality, absenteeism
7. Arrange a schedule that makes time available for weekly supervision meetings. This includes a weekly conference with each student of at least one (1) hour and sufficient time to prepare for supervision
  8. Negotiate and mutually develop a learning agreement with the student early in the course of the placement that guides the learning experience and serves as a point of reference for subsequent evaluations. Said learning agreement is to be based in the competencies on which the student will be evaluated at the end of each semester
  9. Monitor the time and activities of the student while in placement and sign off on the logs the student submits in reporting on her/his time and activities
  10. Make available to the student relevant materials and arrange time for conferences with the faculty liaison and/or the Director of Field Placement. In these meetings, the field instructor should be prepared to discuss the student's progress, learning difficulties, and performance in the respective placement
  11. Consult with the faculty liaison regarding the student's performance in the placement, including problems that need attention; and
  12. Prepare an evaluation of the student's performance near the end of each semester and discuss this with the student in a mutual process. The field instructor will complete this evaluation and other statistical reports to the Director of Field Placement according to designated timelines and/or deadlines. If the student objects to anything in the evaluation, s/he has the right to submit those objections to the Director of Field Placement (with copies being submitted to the faculty liaison and the field instructor as well).