Dear Students, Members of our Field Team are trying very hard to stay one step ahead of the corona virus crisis. We will continue to update this document, and are in the process of creating additional resources. We promise to do our best as circumstances change. We are working hard to make sure that your experience in field, if it is disrupted in any way, isn’t jeopardizing your ability to complete the field course or preventing you from ending the program on time.

As always, we welcome your feedback, suggestions, and concerns! We will continue to send information and resources via email, and will be scheduling more live question and answer sessions.

Are members of the Field Team at UBSSW still available to students and members of the larger field community?

While we are no longer in our building at Baldy Hall, we are continuing to work, and will each continue to be available to students via our regular emails and phone. We are also able to set up scheduled zoom meetings with individual students. Please reach out! sw-field@buffalo.edu is a great way to reach the field team.

What can I do if I am experiencing economic hardship related to the virus?

Students can contact Dana Horne in student services about the Students Helping Students Fund if they’re experiencing illness or economic hardship and need financial support. Dana's email is dhorne@buffalo.edu. See http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/current-students/students-helping-students-fund.html.

What if circumstances worsen and students are not allowed to do face to face work with clients? What should they do?

Our best hope is that you work with your Field Educator and Liaison to develop an individual work plan to continue placement activities, but remotely. Sample activities, and a listing of remote activities can be found on the School’s COVID-19 web page under Field Education, http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/about/covid-19.html.
We hope that supervision can take place remotely either by phone or video conferencing, but we are also open to supervision being a bit more flexible and fluid. If it's not possible to create a remote work plan within your field placement, members of the Field Team are working on developing supplemental field assignments to help you reach both the hour and the competency requirements.

I have viewed the listing of Remote Activities for field posted on the School’s COVID-19 page. Can we generate our own ideas? Can we complete online CEU or non-CEU trainings as remote activities?

Absolutely! Our advice is to be creative. In some ways, coming up with your own ideas is preferred as we want the activities that you will be doing to be tailored to your placement, and be relevant to your learning needs. We are eager to hear your ideas, and will use them to expand our list of remote activities. We know our current listing is not exhaustive. As we learn of CEU training opportunities they will be added to the list of remote activities.

What if I have been told by my field agency that I’m unable to return to my placement? What if my agency doesn't allow me to work remotely? What if my Field Educator / Field Supervisor is no longer able to supervise me?

We have some preliminary plans for students that are unable to return to placement, or need supplemental activities to complete the required hours. We have created a UB Learns course site (which is still under development), and we'll be using that to provide some instruction for students, for students that are looking for supplemental activities to fulfill their hours, for supervision, and for solidarity and support. Students will receive an invitation to participate in the coming days.

We are really working hard to make sure that your experience, if it is disrupted in any way, isn’t jeopardizing your ability to complete the field course.

What if I can't complete my hours due to illness, or other obligations? What if I don’t feel comfortable returning to field?

If a student doesn't have their hours completed by the end of the semester, we have the option of assigning a grade of Incomplete, and then we will work with students on developing an alternative plan (for completion of hours) once they are able to return.
If students, for some reason, don't feel comfortable returning - maybe they're worried about a health condition that they or someone they're close to has or they're feeling some distress - we have developed a protocol for students to use and follow if they would like to be released from field for a period of time and that protocol is on the School's website. Please see the Protocol for Requesting Leave from Field posted on the School's COVID-19 webpage under the Field Education heading.

We are going to be available to consult with students, and will provide support about how you might be able to rearrange your schedule to get more hours in, for example, once you return.

I’m a part-time student in my first semester of advanced year field, how will I make up field hours if needed?

See above response. Remember, we are here to support students through this crisis, and ensure that options are available to allow you to complete the program on schedule.

Will the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), our accrediting body, change their requirements about field hours during this crisis?

As of now, that doesn’t seem to be the case. Our suspicion is that they will not, because there are implications for licensure and credentialing across many different states. Some schools require more than the CSWE minimum hours (three days per week, for example, rather than two). These schools have been able in many cases to end field early as students are already at the minimum required by CSWE, and they have dropped the additional hour requirements. Because our program requires the bare minimum, this is not the case for us.

What is happening with student placement for next academic year? When will we hear from the Field Office about placement interviewing?

We've put a pause on sending students to interview. This is for all students currently, and it's really due to feedback that we've received from our agency partners. Our agency partners are needing time and space to manage the day-to-day issues, and are not thinking about next year quite yet. We are hoping that this pause isn't long-term, and just for a few weeks. We will keep students posted.