

# Field Education Manual

2024-2025

*The UB School of Social Work field education program benefits from the contributions of many individuals. A special thanks to members of our Field Community Advisory Board and to our field educators whose expertise helps to ensure a quality program for our students. Their time and experience make it possible for students to develop into more responsive, skilled and ethical practitioners.*

*The Field Education Team*

# FIELD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Non Discrimination and Harassment Policy Notice

The University at Buffalo is committed to ensuring equal access to its programs and activities. The Discrimination and Harassment Policy can be viewed here: <https://www.buffalo.edu/administrative-services/policy1/ub-policy-lib/discrimination-harassment.html>

Also, see the Field Manual section entitled *Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures*.

## Victim Assistance

If a student is affected by a crime, or is the survivor of an unwanted sexual experience, victim assistance is available through University at Buffalo's Student Life Department. The office is located at 9 Norton Hall,

North Campus, and can be reached at (716) 645-6154. For more information:  
<http://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/help/emergency/victim-assistance.html>

If an incident occurs at your field placement, please notify your Faculty Liaison.

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## Student Injury

The University provides liability insurance for all students who are in a field placement. This does not cover personal injury. If a student is injured in field, coverage for care should be provided for by their private healthcare insurance.

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## Felony Disclosure

The University at Buffalo School of Social Work supports the State University of New York Board of Trustees' decision to remove application questions asking about prior felony convictions. Applicants to the University who have a felony offense in their background no longer have to report that information at the time of application. UB students will be asked to declare a prior felony conviction post-admission when they seek campus housing or participate in clinical or field experiences, internships, or study abroad programs.

All accepted MSW students, full and part time, traditional and advanced standing, and all dual degree, will be required to disclose any, and all, prior felonies when completing their field placement application. This will prompt a meeting with a field education team member who will advise the student on how best to discuss their situation with prospective field placements, which may include the field coordinator informing the placement site.

Students who do have a past felony must understand that they may encounter challenges in securing a field placement, depending on the nature of the charge(s). If students are unable to successfully complete field education requirements, it will result in dismissal from the program.

Students are responsible for investigating the licensure requirements in the state in which they wish to practice. Please note that any past criminal conviction may result in denial of state licensure. Applicants should contact the governmental department that licenses social workers in the state they wish to practice.

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## INTRODUCTION

Field Education is an integral part of the overall MSW curriculum. Students complete this component of their social work education through participation in supervised field placement experiences at agencies or institutions that have entered into a contractual arrangement with the School of Social Work. The School is affiliated with over 600 agencies, some with multiple sites, providing a variety of social work settings. Field Education provides students with the opportunity to integrate and apply the social work theories, skills, and values they are learning via coursework in a practice setting. It allows for this foundation of knowledge to come alive with real life experiences. The field placement provides a critical forum for the student's socialization into the social work profession. All candidates for the MSW degree are required to successfully complete the field placement requirements.

This manual has been prepared as a guide to field education curriculum, policies, and procedures. It is intended to provide information about the various roles and expectations of those involved in the

agency-school partnership in the education of MSW students. This manual, together with the School of Social Work Student Handbook, the School of Social Work Website, and the School of Social Work Pre-Orientation Course on UB Learns is intended to provide a comprehensive guide to the MSW program. If you have any questions specific to your Field Education experience please contact your assigned Faculty Liaison.

The School appreciates the commitment of the agencies and field educators involved in training our students. Without this investment, we would not be able to prepare MSW students for entry into the profession. Please feel free to direct any questions or suggestions regarding this manual to the Field Education Department.

Policies and procedures in the field manual reflect our program's dedication to excellence and ethics in Social Work education. Any revisions represent our ongoing commitment to continuous quality improvement.

On a final note, the contents of this manual need to be taken into account in their entirety. Multiple sections may be relevant to a single concern.

The Field Education Team welcomes you to our program. We look forward to working with you.

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## UB SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Please see the following link to review the UB School of Social Work [Mission, Values and Goals](#).

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) ABOUT FIELD CONCERNS AND POLICIES\*

**\*Note: We have included this section as a quick reference for students seeking information on some frequently asked questions. Other relevant sections in the manual should also be reviewed.**

### Field Structure and Policies

How are organizations selected to be field sites?

- Field sites are developed based on their appropriateness for providing students with the experiences they need to complete their field placements.
  - When developing a new site, the field team assesses the agency's capacity to provide [meaningful learning experiences](#) in accordance with CSWE competency standards,

provide appropriate supervision, and adhere to our accreditation requirements and SSW standards.

- The field department also engages in ongoing monitoring of field sites to ensure they continue to be suitable for meeting student learning needs.

Does the Field Department ever change student placements or discontinue sites?

- Yes, under certain circumstances. The decision to change a student placement or discontinue a placement site is only made with careful consideration and consultation.
  - Examples of situations that may lead to a decision to change a student placement or discontinue a site, include but are not limited to: safety, unethical behavior on the part of the student or agency; absence of required supervision; and other significant problems that cannot be resolved despite problem-solving efforts.
- If a situation arises but a change/re-placement is not necessary, we engage in a process of dialogue and discussion with the Field Educator, task supervisor (if applicable), and agency to remedy challenges or issues.
  - The field team, field liaisons, and field educators are all available to work through any concerns with students related to student expectations for their placements.
  - **Note:** It is important for students to remain assigned field placements, even when placements are imperfect or not as expected, because each placement is designed to provide students with learning experiences that correspond with CSWE competency requirements. This is discussed in greater detail in this document below.

(Please refer to the Field Manual section(s) on Quality of Instruction or Selection, Monitoring and Evaluation of Field Educators and Agencies, and Trauma-informed Field Instruction.

Also see section on Negotiating Field Issues below.

## Roles and Responsibilities

What are the roles of various field personnel?

Field faculty and staff develop, manage, and oversee all field placements. The UBSSW has a field team, which consists of the director and several field faculty and staff.

- The **field team** functions primarily independently within the School, in a manner similar to a department. The field team's roles include: facilitating student and field educator orientations, making placement matches, and monitoring student progress in the field, troubleshooting field concerns, and developing and maintaining partnerships with community agencies, among others.
- When students are completing their field placements, they work with a professional group, consisting of a **field educator** (an MSW level supervisor), a **faculty liaison**, and the **UB field team**. Some field students also have a **task supervisor** (see detailed description below). This structure is in place to provide students with the support they need to be successful in the field.
- Each field site has a **field educator**. The field educator is a degreed social worker, internal to the agency, and this person provides the overall supervision for the field placement.
- A **field faculty liaison (field liaison)** is also assigned to each field site to oversee the placement. The field liaison is the bridge between the field placement and the UBSSW.
  - The field liaison is the initial point person if an issue or challenge arises within the placement.
  - The field liaison is supposed to schedule a meeting with the field student and the field educator once per semester. The field liaison should also be

available for consultation when needed.

- The field liaison is in place to support students and to initiate problem solving processes if there is an issue in the field. Students should reach out to their field liaison anytime they have questions, a problem, or a concern. (If a student is unable to resolve an issue in partnership with their field educator and liaison, then they should contact the field team).
- While the field educator oversees the placement and provides social work supervision, in some instances a **task supervisor** may be assigned to manage the various day-to-day tasks associated with the field placement.
  - A task supervisor does not have to be a degreed social worker. The task supervisor should work closely with the field educator at the placement site to support the learning process. An MSW is not required for task supervisors, but they are expected to have a solid understanding of social services.
  - The task supervisor typically has expertise in an area that expands a student's learning opportunities. Task supervisors are expected to join supervision regularly (every other week), but they are not required to be present during each supervision session.
- In rare instances, an **outside field educator** is used so that a student can complete a placement at an agency where there is not a degreed social worker on staff.
  - UBSSW contracts with outside field educators and arranges for them to provide the same supervision that an internal field educator usually provides.
  - Outside field educators join the agency for the weekly social work supervision.
  - This model is used when an internal field educator is not available within the agency.

For more specific information about the roles of the field student, and the people who work with the student on behalf of field, please see the **Roles and Responsibilities** section of this manual.

## Negotiating Field Issues

If I experience issues at field, how should I address them?

Students should engage in the following steps if they experience problems in field:

1. Discuss the problem with the **field educator** and **task supervisor** (if applicable)
2. Contact the **field liaison** if more problem solving is needed, or if the problems cannot be resolved with the field educator/task supervisor
3. If the educator/task supervisor and liaison cannot resolve the problem, or if students are not satisfied with the assistance being provided, students should reach out to someone on the **field team**
4. If the contact on the field team cannot provide adequate assistance, then students should contact the **field director**.

If I don't like my placement, or I want a different placement what should I do?

- In general, students are expected to remain in their assigned field placements because each site is carefully selected for each student. Field placement sites are



developed in partnership with the UBSSW after undergoing a rigorous evaluation to determine that each site meets the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) requirements for the development of social work competencies.

- Even when placements are imperfect or not as expected, each placement offers opportunities to develop important skills.
- Often, imperfect or unexpected placements provide the most valuable learning experiences, because students are able to learn to be flexible and to function outside of their comfort zones.
- The field team, field liaisons, and field educators are all available to work through any concerns with students related to student expectations for their placements.

If my field educator is not satisfied with my performance, what will happen?

If a student has problems in field placement, the field team, educator, and liaison will work with the student to engage in a collaborative problem-solving process.

- The first step to this process is usually the development and implementation of a student development plan, where the field educator and student are asked to commit to negotiated expectations and behaviors.
- The student development plan is developed by the field liaison in consultation with the student's field educator and task supervisor (if applicable) and the field education office.
- If the implementation of a student development plan does not resolve the issue(s), the student may have to be moved to a new placement without penalty (if the issue is caused by the agency), or termination or field failure can result (if the issue is a result of a problem with the student's performance).

What do I do if my field experience is different from my expectations about social work and/or the role of social workers?

- Students often find that their field placement varies greatly from what their expectation of social work is- and that is okay!
  - Social workers use a wide variety of skills across micro, mezzo, and macro levels to pursue positive social change.
  - Students are encouraged to be open to the learning process, as all field sites have been vetted for appropriateness pertaining to MSW level social work education.
  - Even when students start off with field placements that do not match their expectations, they typically find that they have learned a lot by the end of the placement. For example, students can learn vital assessment, planning, and intervention skills across a wide range of settings.
  - Students are encouraged to creatively utilize field educator supervision, their learning contract, and their faculty liaison to develop learning opportunities consistent with the nine social work field competencies.
  - Students are encouraged to dialogue with their field educators to explore a variety of learning experiences to integrate student interests with agency needs and capacity. For example, students can potentially explore opportunities in another part of the agency, seek collaborations with agency partners, conduct research/evaluations, and/or engage in outside trainings.

I have a problem in my field placement, but I am worried if I tell someone I will be

penalized. What should I do? Why is it important that students come forward with field placement concerns?

- **Students are not penalized for identifying problems in the field.**
  - The student's ability to discuss problems directly is an essential work skill and an important component of a successful field placement.
  - Student safety and learning are the top priorities for the field department. If students are experiencing a problem, they should notify first the field educator, then the field liaison, then someone in the field team (as noted above). The process of addressing field concerns is often a valuable learning experience for the student; it helps to prepare them for the workforce.

I have trouble being direct when I need to discuss something with my field educator or task supervisor. What should I do?

- Social workers often need to have difficult conversations with clients, peers, and supervisors. The ability to directly and appropriately communicate problems and concerns is a crucial skill for social workers.
- For this reason, it is expected that students will initiate the discussion of field challenges with the field educator and/or task supervisors, the liaison, and/or the field team. Students are encouraged to practice their direct communication skills during their field placement, despite that this may sometimes create discomfort.

If a task supervisor or field educator displays inappropriate or unprofessional behavior, what are options for students?

- Students are encouraged to gain clarity from their supervisor anytime an issue of concern arises. For example, students can ask for help to better understand why a field educator or task supervisor responded in a certain way.
- Sometimes an explanation can better clarify and contextualize behavior. However, if the concern cannot be resolved with supervision, or if the situation constitutes an emergency, students should contact their faculty liaison and member of the field team as soon as possible.
- Field Educators are bound by the NASW Code of Ethics, and they have entered into a field learning agreement with the University, so it is expected that they will guide the field placement accordingly.

If a Faculty Liaison displays inappropriate or unprofessional behavior, what are options for students?

- If a student has an issue with a faculty liaison that cannot be resolved between the two, the student should contact a member of the field department.

Can I discuss my field concerns with members of the Field Team in a confidential manner?

- This depends on the individual situation.
  - Concerns can often be discussed confidentially with the field team.
  - However, there are times when issues arise that must involve problem-solving with multiple people. If this occurs, the field team will work with the student in advance to prepare for any communication or meetings that are required.

If a student is experiencing fear or stress about addressing a field issue, how should they proceed?

- Field education can create a range of emotions for students—this is normal and expected. Learning to have difficult conversations and coping with related discomfort can help students prepare for entering the workforce.
- Students are encouraged to practice addressing field issues directly and utilizing the support of their field educator, faculty liaison, and members of the field team when needed (as indicated above).

If I overhear a student discussing their struggles in field, what is my responsibility?

- Field issues are often complex, and field students may lean on their peers for support during the field placement.
- If a student is approached by a peer about a field issue, it is useful to listen to the peer's concerns, and encourage them to reach out to their educator, liaison, and/or someone on the field team to formally process their concerns.
- If a peer is informed of an issue that constitutes an ethical violation or emergency, then that concern should be brought to the field team as soon as possible.

What role, if any, should social media/technology play in field experiences?

- Students are encouraged to communicate about field directly with the field educator, liaison, or field team.
- Problems in the field should **not** be discussed on social media, as social media is a public platform and field experiences are private and unique to each student. Social media posts are also permanent, and they can create misunderstandings.
- It is always best to bring field concerns directly to the field team, educators, or liaisons.
- Students need to be guided by the policy of their field placement agency related to social media, and the School policy on ethical behavior across all settings, including social media, located in the Student Handbook under Ethical Standards of Behavior and Student Violations of Ethical Standards of Behavior.
- Students are also expected to follow the School's technical standards, the NASW Code of Ethics and the University standards of behavior at all times, including, but not limited to: classes, field placements, volunteer work, **and digital contexts. Digital contexts include, but are not limited to, online social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, etc.), text messaging, blogging, any virtual worlds, and email.**
- As is noted in the National Association of Social Work's [Technology Standards](#), "When communicating with the public using web sites, blogs, social media or other forms of electronic communication, social workers should make every effort to ensure that the information reflects the values, ethics, and mission of the profession. Social workers should consult relevant standards in the NASW Code of Ethics for guidance (especially related to competence; conflicts of interest; privacy and confidentiality; respect; dishonesty, fraud, and deception; misrepresentation; solicitations; private conduct; and acknowledging credit) (p.10)."

What role does the Committee on Students (COS) have in relation to field?

- If a field student is suspected of an ethical violation, the Committee on Students will be brought in to determine the circumstances surrounding this concern. The Committee on Students (COS) will meet, consider the facts of each case individually, and determine the status of all students suspected of violating the School's technical standards, the NASW Code of Ethics, or the University Student Code of Conduct.

## Field Hours and Replacement

If a student fails field or is terminated from a placement, will the field hours have to be repeated?

- If a student's placement has to be terminated due to student performance issues/ethical concerns, then the previously completed hours **will not count** towards the completion of field.
  - Students who are terminated from field due to performance/ethical concerns must undergo a review process with an appointed committee.
  - If the review determines that a student should be re-placed in field after the review process, any previous field hours will need to be repeated. This process parallels what occurs when a student fails a regular course (when a student fails a course, the entire course must be repeated).
- If a student is removed from placement through no fault of their own, they will be placed at a new site.
  - In these instances, the previously completed hours will count towards the field placement.
  - However, there are times when additional hours have to be added to a placement following a disruption. For example, in some instances, additional hours may be required to get a student fully oriented to the new placement, or to ensure that all competencies have been met.
  - Since these situations are individualized, a member of the field team will work directly with each student to arrange the circumstances surrounding re-placement.
  - Formal reviews for dismissal from the field placement are conducted when warranted. For additional information, see Field Manual sections on Termination of Field Placement, Student Withdrawal from Field, and Appendix G, Field Status Review.

## Student Privacy

What information can be shared between the School and a student's Field Educator?

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) is a federal policy guiding confidentiality of educational records.
  - The UBSSW adheres to these guidelines in regard to communication about field. The field team can communicate with field educators or liaisons on a "need to know" educational basis only.
  - For example, if a change in a student's academic status will result in placement disruption, or if there is a safety concern, the field educator would need to be notified. The field team works with the student to create a communication process that is comfortable for the student whenever possible.
  - Disclosure of sensitive information, such as information about personal or family problems, illness, or criminal history will **never** be shared with the educator or liaison without a student's written permission.

## TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING AND LEARNING IN FIELD EDUCATION

The UBSSW has adopted a trauma-informed and humans rights curriculum, taking into account the role of traumatic life events on all individuals, including students. Within field education, we are

committed to a trauma-informed perspective – one that cultivates success and allows students to feel both challenged and supported.

### ❖ **What we expect from students – Integrity, Ethical Behavior and a Learning Stance**

Students must adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and follow guidelines around student roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Field Manual. Students are expected to take a learner's stance, being open to constructive feedback and participating in problem solving processes when issues arise. If personal issues begin to impact field, students have an ethical responsibility to seek assistance from the UB SSW Student Services team, and/or from personal support. Students are also expected to communicate adequately any issues that may interfere with field performance with their field liaisons and educators.

### ❖ **What students can expect from us – High Expectations and High Support**

Expectations for students are high in a graduate field course – students must adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics, fulfill student roles and responsibilities as outlined in the field manual, and participate in problem solving processes when issues arise. At the same time, the field office will always be responsive to student questions and concerns; and will assist students when problems arise in field. The Field Education Office works to ensure that field policies are transparent, and that expectations around student performance are clear. The Field Office follows educational policies set by the Council on Social Work Education in order to maintain accreditation.

### ❖ **Trauma-informed principles include safety, choice, trustworthiness, collaboration and empowerment.**

**Safety:** Information about field placement safety can be found in the Field Manual. The Field Manual also outlines University policies and resources on sexual harassment and victim assistance. When issues arise in field, the Faculty Liaison supports the student and agency representatives through the process of problem solving. It is important that students feel physically and emotionally safe in their field setting. If a physical or emotional safety issue arises in field, we encourage students to communicate this to the faculty liaison or someone with whom they feel comfortable. The liaison and/or field department will want to problem-solve and be proactive in remedying the situation.

**Choice:** Students indicate broad areas of interest on their foundation field placement application and are then matched with an approved foundation placement site. In advanced year, students choose from an array of established placement sites, and can recommend new sites to the Field Office. Students are encouraged to take advantage of all relevant learning opportunities. With Field Educator approval, attendance at relevant trainings can count towards field hours.

**Trustworthiness:** Students are expected to produce high quality work, adhering to the code of ethics, and practicing social work with the integrity expected of a social work practitioner. The Field Office outlines policies and procedures in the Field Manual. Field course objectives are outlined in the Field Course Syllabus. Policies and procedures are also addressed in Field Orientation sessions.

**Collaboration:** Students collaborate with their Field Educator in developing the learning contract, which then guides their placement experience. Students should take a learner's stance as they engage with agency personnel and their Field Educator, conveying an openness to feedback and an interest and enthusiasm for new learning. Asking for help is encouraged, and students should communicate and collaborate with the agency and field office when issues arise.

Empowerment: Students are encouraged to schedule one-on-one meetings with Field faculty and staff around placement decisions. While in placement, students can speak to their Faculty Liaison regarding any questions or concerns. Students can nominate themselves to serve on the Field Education Community Advisory Board. Students may provide feedback directly to members of the field team, or anonymously via the end-of-year practicum survey.

## **UB SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK RESTORATIVE PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO RACISM & OTHER FORMS OF OPPRESSION EXPERIENCED BY STUDENTS**

Students may experience or witness racism, heterosexism, cissexism (i.e., oppressive behavior and policies targeting transgender/non-binary people) and other forms of oppression in their classroom and/or field placement. These incidents could involve faculty, staff, field liaisons, field educators, or other students. The UBSSW is committed to addressing these incidents in a trauma-informed and restorative manner when they occur. The following outlines a restorative process that serves as a guide when students have experienced racism and/or other forms of oppression in their field placement.

### **The Goals of a Restorative Process**

- To build community
- To strengthen relationships
- To repair any harm that has occurred through participatory decision-making.

### **Trauma-Informed and Restorative Principles**

| TI-Principles   | Restorative Values and Principles  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety: All parties will commit to creating a safe, brave space for students and other parties to share what happened, how it impacted them, and what needs to happen to repair and prevent future harm.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak and listen with respect.</li> <li>• Speak and listen from the heart.</li> <li>• Parties to a conflict “own the conflict” and are the ones who resolve the conflict.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustworthiness and Transparency: Administrators, faculty and staff will be transparent with students and other parties about the process. No action will be taken without the student’s consent, unless administrators, faculty, and staff determine, with full disclosure to the student, that the situation poses too much risk of physical and/or emotional harm for the student.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust, mutual understanding, and shared values bind us together and make cooperative action possible.</li> <li>• Fair Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Engagement – Shared involvement in decision-making.</li> <li>✓ Explanation – Provide a rationale for decisions.</li> <li>✓ Expectation Clarity – Widespread understanding of expectations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Confidentiality is upheld throughout the process.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Peer Support: Peer support and mutual self-help are important for establishing safety. The student may bring a peer to the restorative conversation, preferably someone who is aware of the impact the incident had on the student.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of one’s community of care may contribute meaningfully to the conversation.</li> </ul>  |

| TI-Principles  | Restorative Values and Principles  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration and Mutuality: Importance is placed on leveling of power differences</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embraces values of community participation, community caring, and respectful dialogue.</li> </ul> |



| TI-Principles  | Restorative Values and Principles   |
|--|---|
| and in the meaningful sharing of decision-making.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We build our social capital by repairing relationships.</li> <li>The needs of all affected are addressed.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowerment, Voice, &amp; Choice: Students will have choice about the extent to which the UBSSW administration, faculty, and staff will intervene in the situation, unless administrators, faculty, and staff determine, with full disclosure to the student, that the situation poses too much risk of physical and/or emotional harm for the student. The voices of all parties to the incident will be heard.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation is voluntary.</li> <li>All voices matter.</li> <li>Everyone speaks their truth.</li> <li>We build relationships and a sense of community through participatory learning and decision-making.</li> <li>Parties to a conflict “own the conflict” and are the ones who resolve the conflict.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active Movement to Create Culturally Responsive Environments: The UBSSW recognizes that our students, administrators, faculty, and staff are impacted by interpersonal and institutional racism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism (i.e., oppressive behavior and policies targeting transgender/non-binary people), classism and other forms of oppression. The UBSSW is committed to eradicating racism and other forms of oppression in our curricula, policies, Operations, and culture. The UBSSW recognizes that we are all learners when it comes to undoing white supremacy and other systems of oppression, and that we must act.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embraces values of healing, moral learning, community participation, community caring, respectful dialogue, and repairing harm.</li> </ul>   |

When a student has experienced racism or other form of oppression in the classroom or in field:

1. Whenever possible, we encourage students to professionally address the issue directly with the person involved. However, we understand that many reasons exist for why students may choose to not address the situation directly as a first step.
2. It is our best hope that the student will tell someone. We hope the student will reach out to someone they trust. This could be a faculty member, a Program Director, a Student Services staff person, a Field Liaison, Field Educator, Field Education faculty member or staff person, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, or the Faculty Support Liaison for Racially Underrepresented Students. We have multiple point persons in this process in line with our principle of providing students with choice over the person from whom they want to access help and resources. This person can help the student process the incident and potential options for intervention. This conversation will be held in confidence unless the administrator, faculty member, or staff believes, with full disclosure to the student, that the situation poses too much risk of physical and/or emotional harm for the student, and that someone else needs to be pulled into the conversation.

3. **If the student would like assistance in addressing the situation with the individual that harmed them, the student simply needs to make that desire known to the faculty member, staff person, or administrator to whom they disclosed the situation.** The people who can help them identify a facilitator are the Program Directors, the Associate Deans, the Faculty Liaison for Racially Underrepresented Students, Field Faculty and staff, and Student Services staff.
4. A Restorative Conversation will be scheduled at a time convenient for all parties. If the conflict occurred between one or more students in a class, the students' class professor may be the best person to facilitate the conversation. In other situations, the conversation may be most appropriately facilitated by a neutral UBSSW administrator, faculty member, or staff person who is not involved with the incident. Factors to consider in choice of the facilitator will be the student's preference, whether the incident was in field or in the classroom, and the availability, comfort level, and neutrality of the person(s) being considered.
5. If students, faculty, or staff have any questions about this process, please do not hesitate to contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

#### What does a Restorative Conversation look like?

- The facilitator will reach out to the parties involved, gather their perspectives on the incident, and schedule a time for a restorative conversation that is convenient for all parties.
- When the parties convene, the facilitator will review guiding principles for the conversation (i.e., One person speaks at a time; Speak from the I-perspective; Listen with openness).
- The facilitator will ask each party, beginning with the student, to address:
  1. What happened?
  2. What did you think and feel at the time?
  3. What have you thought about since?
  4. What impact has it had on you?
  5. What has been the hardest thing for you?
  6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
- The facilitator will invite each party to ask any clarifying questions they may have, to identify what they would like to see happen as a result of the conversation, and to identify ways that the harm can be repaired. The facilitator will allow time for consensus to be achieved.
- The conversation will end with the facilitator summarizing any agreements that were reached.

#### Guiding Principles for UBSSW Community Members

- This work is important. It is grounded in our shared values, with people with whom we have relationships and shared commitments.
- We will make mistakes. We will learn, grow, and keep going.
- We value acknowledging and repairing harm when harm has occurred.
- We bring an awareness to these conversations of power differentials.



- Addressing racism and other forms of oppression is more important than how concerns may sometimes get expressed. We will keep that in perspective. Both the content and the process provide us with opportunities for learning.

#### A Restorative Conversation is not the same as a Restorative Conference.

A formal Restorative Conference, called a Real Justice Conference, may be necessary in some situations when the scope of the harm is wide and involves multiple students, faculty, field personnel, and/or staff persons.

In a Restorative Conference, all involved parties come together with a trained facilitator to explore what happened, who was affected, and what needs to be done to make things right. Parties to the incident typically invite members of their communities of care (e.g., family members, friends, other colleagues).

Right now, the UBSSW expects that most incidents can be resolved with a Restorative Conversation. However, we are in the process of thinking about and identifying situations that may call for a formal Restorative Conference.

#### UB Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Students also can report any concerns about discrimination and harassment to the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will speak with any UB community member confidentially to discuss concerns about classroom or workplace situations, provide support, and investigate complaints.

Obtaining Assistance and Advice: <https://www.buffalo.edu/equity/obtaining-assistance.html>

Reporting Discrimination and Harassment: <https://www.buffalo.edu/equity/reporting-discrimination-and-harassment.html>

### **References**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014a). SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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## **MSW CURRICULUM**

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It is essential for field educators and students to understand how the field education component of the MSW program interfaces with all other courses to ensure successful integration between field and academic courses. A full description of the curriculum can be found in *Appendix A*.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM**

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*(See also Field Program Structure Table.)*

### ❖ Regular Full Time Program

Students in the regular full-time program (including BA/MSW, MPH/MSW & MBA/MSW students) complete two field placements. Foundation field is completed concurrently with Interventions I, Interventions II, and SW 555, Field Seminar. A minimum of 420 hours is required for the first field placement, and a minimum of 480 hours for the second field placement, for a total of 900 hours, as required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The first (foundation) placement is designed to provide a generalist experience allowing students to develop basic social work skills in a broad range of social work activities. The second (advanced year) field placement takes place in a setting that provides a focus on developing advanced skills in the student's chosen area of practice.

Foundation placements span two consecutive semesters for (15 hours) per week. **SW 550 (Field I)** is taken in the Fall semester and **SW 551 (Field II)** is taken in the Spring semester. Students begin foundation placement starting the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the semester.

**Field Seminar (SW 555)** meets 15 times over the course of two semesters, and must be taken concurrently with SW 550 and 551. This course is designed to allow students a professional forum where they will have opportunities to share the integration of their coursework and fieldwork using reflection tools and case-based scenarios. Both the Foundation Field course and Seminar must be completed successfully in order to receive credit.

Students in the Advanced Year practicum are generally in placement two days (15 hours) per week for two consecutive semesters. Full-time students complete this placement during Fall (SW 552) and Spring (SW 553) semesters.

Full time students are generally expected to be at their field placement site for a regular 8-hour day during the normal (traditional) work week (Monday-Friday). This is based on 7.5 field hours with a half-hour lunch break that is not counted toward field hours. An alternate schedule can be arranged at the request of a placement site. Schedules should be determined at the start of placement, and followed consistently.

### ❖ Part-time Program

Students in the part-time program complete two field placements. Foundation field is completed concurrently with Interventions I, Interventions II, and SW 555 (Field Seminar). A minimum of 420 hours is required for the first field placement, and a minimum of 480 hours for the second field placement, for a total of 900 hours, as required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The first (foundation) placement is designed to provide a generalist experience allowing students to develop basic social work skills in a broad range of social work activities. The second (Advanced Year) field placement takes place in a setting that provides a focus on developing advanced skills in the student's chosen area of practice.

The part-time program foundation field placement and concurrent Field Seminar begins in the fourth semester. Students begin foundation placements the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the semester.

Field Seminar (SW 555) meets 15 times over the course of two semesters, and must be taken concurrently with SW 550 and 551. Field Seminar is designed to allow students a professional forum where they will have opportunities to share the integration of their coursework and fieldwork using reflection tools and case-based scenarios. Both the Field Education course and Field Seminar must be completed successfully in order to receive credit.

The foundation placement spans two consecutive semesters, two days or 15 hours per week. SW 550 (Field I) is taken in the fall semester and SW 551 (Field II) is taken in the spring semester.

The Advanced Year placement is two days or 15 hours per week for two consecutive semesters. Part-time students complete their Advanced Year placement in the Spring (SW 552) and Summer (SW 553) semesters.

While placement hours can be arranged to span across several days, it is essential that the hours of placement provide learning opportunities that will meet the educational integrity of the field placement experience and meet the stated schedule requirements. Students need to maintain a consistent weekly field schedule to ensure continuity for the field agency.

We cannot guarantee that a student will be able to be placed in field placements with evening and/or weekend hours. An extremely limited number of sites have some evening and weekend hours, but these are increasingly the exception. Students should expect placements will require daytime responsibilities and plan their availability accordingly. Students should begin planning well in advance to balance work, class, and personal commitments. A student who cannot be present during daytime hours or cannot adjust their own work schedules to accommodate a field placement, may find that they need to delay field until the following academic year.

If students are at their field placement site for a regular 8-hour day, they are expected to have a half-hour lunch break that is not counted toward field hours. Therefore, the time counted toward field would be 7.5 hours.

### ❖ **Advanced Standing Program – Full and Part-time**

Students accepted into the advanced standing program complete one field placement focusing on their chosen area of practice. The initial placement is waived with the understanding that they have completed a foundation level field placement via their CSWE accredited BSW program. The total minimum required hours are 480.

The Advanced Year placement is two days or 15 hours per week for two consecutive semesters. Full-time Advanced Standing students generally complete their Advanced Year placement in the Fall (SW 552) and Spring (SW 553) semesters. Part-time Advanced Standing students generally complete their Advanced Year placement in the Spring (SW 552) and Summer (SW 553) semesters. A concurrent Field Seminar (SW 555) meets 15 times over the course of two semesters, and must be taken concurrently with SW 552 and 553. Field Seminar is designed to allow students a professional forum where they will have opportunities to share the integration of their coursework and fieldwork using reflection tools and case-based scenarios. Both the Field Education course and Field Seminar must be completed successfully in order to receive credit.

If students are at their field placement site for a regular 8-hour day, they are expected to have a half-hour lunch break that is not counted toward field hours. Therefore, the time counted toward field would be 7.5 hours.

### ❖ **JD/MSW Program**

Students in the JD/MSW program may choose to begin the four-year degree-program either in the Law School or the School of Social Work. Students in this program complete one field placement in the School of Social Work and a second placement in the Law Clinic.

❖ **BA/ MSW, MSW/MBA, and MSW/MPH Programs – See “Regular Full-time Program” section above.**

❖ **Online Part-time MSW Program—See “Part-time Program” section above.**

UB School of Social Work has some established placement sites in various regions. Students should also be prepared to research and outreach to potential placement sites in their own region, in an effort to secure an interview for placement. Students will work closely with their assigned Field Coordinator during the process of securing a field placement. To be most successful, students should be in regular communication with their Field Coordinator. There are a number of resources and support available to assist students.

See “Employment Based Placement Options” section below as another option for online students.

❖ **Field Education Program Structure Table**

| <b>Program Type</b>         | <b>Number of Placements</b> | <b>Minimum Total Required Hours</b> | <b>Semester Time Periods For Placements</b>  | <b>School of Social Work Course Numbers</b>             | <b>Field Placement Type</b>      | <b>Minimum Weekly Hours for Field Placement</b>      |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Regular Full-time           | 2                           | 900                                 | Foundation Year Field (420 minimum hours) and concurrent Field Seminar in Fall ( <i>beginning week 5</i> ) & Spring ( <i>begins before classes</i> ) | (Field I) SW 550 / SW 555<br>(Field II) SW 551 / SW 555 | Foundation Year<br>Advanced Year | 2 days or 15 hours per week<br>(for both placements) |
| Part-time                   |                             |                                     | Advanced Year in Fall & Spring ( <i>begins before classes</i> ) (480 minimum hours)  | (Field III) SW 552<br>(Field IV) SW 553                 |                                  |  |
| Full-time Advanced Standing | 1                           | 480                                 | Foundation Year (420 minimum hours) and concurrent Field Seminar in Fall ( <i>beginning week 5</i> ) & Spring ( <i>begins before classes</i> )       | (Field I) SW 550 / SW 555<br>(Field II) SW 551 / SW 555 | Advanced Year                    | 2 days or 15 hours per week                          |
| Part-time Advanced Standing |                             |                                     | Advanced Year Field in Fall & Spring ( <i>begins before classes</i> ) (480 minimum hours)<br><i>and concurrent Field Seminar</i>                     | (Field III) SW 552<br>(Field IV) SW 553<br>SW 555       |                                  |  |
|                             |                             |                                     | Advanced Year Field in Spring ( <i>begins before classes</i> ) & Summer (480 minimum hours)<br><i>and concurrent Field Seminar</i>                   | (Field III) SW 552<br>(Field IV) SW 553<br>SW 555       |                                  | 2 days or 15 hours per week                          |

## THE CONTENT OF FIELD EDUCATION

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### ❖ Understanding Field Education Learning Objectives and Expected Outcomes

A set of Foundation Competencies (*or learning objectives*), and a set of Advanced Year Competencies (*or learning objectives*) were identified by the School of Social Work faculty, in accordance with Council on Social Work Education requirements. Each individual competency has a set of component behaviors (*or expected behavioral outcomes*) associated with it. The purpose of this competency-based educational framework is as follows:

- 1) To provide an organizing framework for the field education experience and a guideline for developing the learning contract.
  - The competencies are the main areas of learning, i.e. learning about professional self, organization, community, developing skills in engagement, assessment, interventions and communication.
  - The component behaviors which are listed under each competency define what is meant by the competency, and serve to operationalize what students are required to master in order to be deemed competent. The component behaviors for the Foundation placement reflect generalist, foundational learning expectations while component behaviors for the Advanced Year articulate how competencies will be met at an advanced level.
- 2) To identify a core set of values, knowledge, skills, and cognitive and affective processes, such as critical thinking, affective reactions and exercise of judgment, that underpins all social work practice. The competencies provide a common base, transferable across settings, population groups and problem areas.
  - Students must meet the identified competencies regardless of whether the field placement setting focuses on interventions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities. The learning activities identified will be reflective of the practice in each specific field placement setting. All students must develop engagement and assessment skills. A field placement which focuses on community development in an outreach project will provide a setting for the student to learn to engage and assess, even though the application of those skills may differ from those used by a student providing services in a clinical setting.

### ❖ Field Education Learning Contract & Evaluation Form and Sonia

The School of Social Work has implemented a structured learning contract and evaluation form using Sonia, a cloud-based assessment tool used for learning and evaluation of student performance. The online tool is designed to assist field educators and students in the process of developing an individualized plan for learning that integrates classroom knowledge with field education experiences. Information about Sonia account creation is provided to students and educators via email.

### ❖ Guidelines for Completing Learning Contract

In addition to competencies and component behaviors, the learning contract provides a format that allows for planning, monitoring, and evaluating the student's progress in their field practicum experience. It reflects the synthesis of input from the School, the student, and the field educator. It is important to develop the learning contract early on as it provides direction and the foundation of what will be expected and learned.

**Please follow these basic steps for completing and utilizing the Learning Contract:**

#### **Step 1: Joint Review of Learning Objectives, Expected Outcomes and Suggested Tasks/Activities**

- The field educator and student jointly review the Field Education Competencies, and Component behaviors.

**Step 2: Assessment of Student's Learning and Available Agency Activities** - When deciding upon activities, please consider the following:

- The field educator provides an orientation to the agency/organization and discusses with the student, learning opportunities or projects available in various agency programs.
- The contract should be **completed jointly** by the student and field educator based on the particular learning needs of the student and the opportunities available in the specific field placement setting.
- The student provides input on any particular areas of learning they are seeking. These may include their areas of strengths as well as those areas that need further development.
- The learning needs of the student should be based on an educational assessment of the student. This assessment of individualized learning needs should include a discussion of the following:
  - 1) the student's previous academic and life experiences, including volunteer and work experience
  - 2) the student's learning style
  - 3) the student's career aspirations in the social work profession
  - 4) mutual expectations
  - 5) the educational objectives identified on the syllabi of their current courses

The student, together with the field educator, identifies assignments, tasks and activities available to address the expected component behaviors under each of the required Competencies on the Learning Contract Form.

Suggested activities can be found on the SSW website under Field Education > Essential Forms > Learning Contracts, or use the link <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/field-educators-liaisons/field-educator-resources/orientation-and-training-new/learning-contracts-and-performance-evaluations.html>

**Foundation Placement**

Activities/assignments identified for Foundation Placement should reflect opportunities for generalist practice. See <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/field-educators-liaisons/field-educator-resources/orientation-and-training-new/learning-contracts-and-performance-evaluations.html> for a compendium of suggested activities.

- *When site-specific activities/tasks are identified they should be written in behavioral terms using verbs such as: read, attend, complete, present, write, interview, etc. Student and field educator should discuss how the student will be evaluated on these activities. Methods of evaluation should be included as well as target dates for completion. Methods may include direct observation, process recording, audio or video recording, etc.*

**Step 3: Review, Signing and Forwarding of the Learning Contract:**

- The field educator and student agree on Learning Contract activities. The student submits these in Sonia, by the date identified in the Field Education Calendar (usually by the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the field placement), and Field Educator evaluates whether the submission “meets requirements” or “does not meet requirements”.

(Refer to the Field Education Calendar for Learning Contract submission deadlines.)

**Step 4: Utilization of the Learning Contract:**

- The field educator and student should use the learning contract as a tool throughout the field placement. The learning contract is a **working document** that guides the learning experiences and provides the basis for the student's evaluation.
- Contracts should be reviewed at regular intervals during supervision sessions to assess whether the student and field educator are on track with the learning process. It may be updated as needed to amend



or add new learning tasks. The identified target dates should provide guidance. Completion dates should be filled in once the task is accomplished.

- Contracts should always be reviewed at the end of the first semester (mid-point of placement) prior to completing the student Performance Evaluation.
- While the learning contract developed at the beginning of the placement is designed to cover learning assignments throughout the entire two semester placement, an addendum, may be developed to incorporate new areas. For example, this may involve adding additional site-specific tasks. The faculty liaison should be notified of any major changes in the contract during the placement.

#### ❖ **TIMESHEETS AND SONIA (Sonia login: <https://sonia.ssw.buffalo.edu>)**

Students are required to adhere to the schedule agreed upon at the start of the semester, reviewing their timesheet with their Field Educator where any changes have occurred.

Students will submit timesheets and field educators will approve timesheets via Sonia. As with any documentation in field and in social work practice, accurate reporting and accounting is required. The submission of an inaccurate timesheet is considered a violation of the NASW Code of Ethics. Students who knowingly submit inaccurate hours are at risk for failure in field.

#### ❖ **SUPERVISION RECORD FORM AND SONIA**

Students are required to complete the Supervision Record Form following weekly supervision sessions. The form must be uploaded to Sonia just before the mid-placement and again at the time of final evaluation. The Supervision Record form is located in Sonia.

#### ❖ **ADDITIONAL FIELD EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES**

If you are interested in gaining additional field experience through an elective field credit course or an independent study, please see Appendix B.

## **EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

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The field educator completes an evaluation at the midpoint and end of the field placement using the Sonia account provided to them by the School.

Performance evaluation is an ongoing process throughout the placement and is an important component of the student's learning process. The written evaluation should not contain anything that has not already been discussed with the student, except in rare situation where an egregious incident/event has occurred. The NASW Code of Ethics notes 3.02 (b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful. It is not fair to the student to receive negative feedback for the first time at the end of the placement when they haven't had a significant opportunity to address the problem areas. (As a reminder, if there are concerns about performance, please contact the Faculty Liaison as soon as possible.)

The *Field Evaluation Form* is due at mid placement and at the end of the placement. Mid placement evaluations are essential to provide feedback on progress and to outline areas needing continued improvement.

The evaluation outlines the student's performance: 1) related to each program competency and its associated component behaviors; 2) each identified placement activity; and, 3) the submission of accurate time sheets, supervision record forms and other documentation, including the student's comments and self-reflection submission. Evaluation should be based on a review of the learning contract, and on consideration of a student's



progress in the agreed upon areas of skill development, as well as the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes and behaviors associated with professional competence.

At the end of the first semester (*mid-placement evaluation*), if a student earns a rating of IP (Insufficient Progress or UP (Unacceptable Progress) in one or two outcome areas, or if there are any concerns about performance, it is expected that a plan be developed for improvement. The Faculty Liaison meets with the student and Field Educator to create a Student Development Plan, and to establish a timeframe for improvement. The Student Development Plan will be added to the learning contract. (See section on Student Development Plans.)

At the end of the first semester, if a student earns a rating of IP or UP in a majority of outcome areas, or if there are significant concerns about a student's performance or appropriateness for the profession, it is an indication that it is unlikely that they have the basic skills to successfully move forward. Therefore, a grade of "U" should be recommended. If a "U" grade is assigned, please refer to "Field Status Review Process" Policy and Procedure (Appendix G).

**Completion of the evaluation is of great importance. The Field Educator completes the evaluation. The Field Educator reviews the evaluation with the student discussing areas of strength, and areas for improvement. The online evaluation form should be completed by the Field Educator in Sonia by the identified due date each semester during placement.** (Refer to the [Field Education Calendar](#) for mid placement and final evaluation deadlines.)

Please notify the faculty liaison as soon as possible if there is any reason that the *Field Learning Contract Evaluation Form* will not be submitted by the due date.

### ❖ Levels of Performance (Also see Grading Procedures & Requirements)

#### **Expert Level of Performance / Advanced Competence or AC**

Some students may perform at above the acceptable level of performance, displaying creativity, flexibility, and imaginativeness reflecting a potential to perform at a superior level. A rating of AC indicates that the student **expertly demonstrates awareness, knowledge and skills as a graduate social work intern**. A rating of AC is likely to occur infrequently, and as such should be accompanied by supporting rationale.

#### **Competence or C**

**A student should attain a rating of C on a majority of the 9 program competencies/objectives by the end of the field course in order to receive a grade of S (or Satisfactory).** A rating of C indicates that the student is able to satisfactorily perform the set of component behaviors associated with a given competency, and **consistently demonstrates** awareness, knowledge and skills as a graduate social work intern

#### **Emerging Competence or EC**

While there may be periods of unevenness (with some limited degree of regression or immobilization, mainly at points of stress or pressure), the student gives evidence of both the motivation and capacity to perform satisfactorily the set of component behaviors associated with a given competency. Ratings of EC in a *majority* of competencies at the *end of placement* could indicate Insufficient Progress or Unacceptable Performance. See section on Performance Concerns which follows. **(Students should**

receive a rating of C or above on a majority of the competencies in order to receive a grade of S at end of the field course.)

### **Insufficient Progress (IP)**

The student **rarely demonstrates** awareness, knowledge and skills related to a particular competence. **Please refer also to section below, “Performance Concerns (Ratings of IP and UP)”.**

It is important for field educators to give accurate feedback. If a student’s performance is unacceptable or clearly needs improvement in order to meet the basic standards of performance, it is important to reflect this in the evaluation. If a student earns a rating of “Insufficient Progress” in any outcome area, the field educator should document example(s) that substantiate that rating.

### **Unacceptable Level of Performance (UP)**

The student **never demonstrates** awareness, knowledge and skills related to a particular competence. **Please refer also to section below, “Performance Concerns (Ratings of IP and UP)”.**

It is important for field educators to give accurate feedback. If a student’s performance is unacceptable or clearly needs improvement in order to meet the basic standards of performance, it is important to reflect this in the evaluation. If a student earns a rating of “Unacceptable Progress” in any outcome area, the field educator should document example(s) that substantiate that rating.

### **❖ Performance Concerns (Ratings of IP and UP)**

When assigning ratings it is important to consider whether the student’s overall performance is uneven or slow. Difficulties in the following areas suggest ratings of IP (rarely demonstrates related skills) or UP (never demonstrates related skills):

- Inability to establish relationships at the basic level due to lack of sensitivity and feeling for people as well as difficulty disciplining his/her own feeling responses.
- Preoccupation with own needs and feelings.
- Lack of follow-through
- Issues related to time and attendance
- Lack of showing initiative
- Inability to do case planning.
- Persistent problem viewing client systems objectively with overemphasis on either positive or negative aspects of a situation.
- Inability to be self-reflective.
- Limited ability to conceptualize.
- Behavior in supervisory relationship indicating limited ability to involve self in the learning process and a high degree of defensiveness. Frequent need for external controls and propulsion for

learning.

- Evidence of a lack of personal integrity throughout performance.

### ❖ Unacceptable Performance

**Any one of the following characteristics would automatically indicate that a student is failing, and ratings of UP would be expected.** Normally you would not expect to find only one of these characteristics in isolation, but rather in combination with others. The student demonstrates:

- Consistent lack of empathy and un-relatedness to the individual/family/group/organization/community.
- Evidence of destructiveness with clients.
- Inability to think independently.
- Preoccupation with own needs and feelings, negating effective use of self as a helping person.
- Hostile behavior when given constructive criticism.
- Inability to relate the goals and values of the social work profession to one's own behavior and social work practice. Confusion in role and identification as a social worker.
- Evidence of disorganization in responding to the basic demands for use of time, in the learning situation, in submitting recording and/or setting up appointments. No reference to theoretical concepts about behavior or no ability to begin to implement the beginning aspects of the treatment process including concepts of social study, assessment, and evaluation, as derived from class, field teaching, and readings.
- Complete inability to conceptualize or to recognize principles.
- Inaccessibility to learning in use of supervisory process as evidenced by the inability to look at own performance in a self-evaluative manner. High degree of self-protectiveness, requires a high degree of pressure to function and to meet deadlines, unrealistic perception of self, unrealistic expectations of others, motivation to learn only to "get through", or a need to control all in his/her learning.
- Evidence of lack of personal integrity in performance with individual/family/group/organization/community, or in relationship with field educator. Does not adhere to professional Code of Ethics.
- Persistent problems with attendance and/or tardiness.

### ❖ Student Development Plans

If someone is performing at a level of IP or UP, or there are concerns about performance, a student development plan should be put in place by the Faculty Liaison, in conjunction with the Field Educator and Field Education Office.

The purpose of the Student Development Plan is to assist students who have experienced challenges in meeting one or more of the required competencies to date. Students are better able to be successful in their field placement when they are provided with clear and concise feedback regarding what needs to change. Educational tools may be specified, and a schedule for review of specific performance goals may be outlined.

## GRADING PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS (ALSO SEE LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE)

The field educator, using Sonia, evaluates field performance. Grades are assigned by the Field Office in consultation with the faculty liaison based on evaluative information from the field educator.

**Sonia provides a rating scale ranging from “UP/ Unacceptable Progress” to “AC/ Advanced Competency” for each performance objective. The actual grade options for field education courses are pass/fail: "S" (Satisfactory) or "U" (Unsatisfactory). The “S” grade in field is awarded when a student’s letter grade would have been equivalent to a “B-” or better.**

It is important for field educators to give accurate feedback. If a student’s performance is unacceptable or clearly needs improvement in order to meet the basic standards of performance, it is important to reflect this in the evaluation. If a student earns a rating of “Insufficient Progress” or “Unacceptable Progress” in any outcome area, the field educator should document example(s) that substantiate that rating.

The Field Educator should contact the Faculty Liaison ***as soon as possible*** if the Field Educator believes that he or she will recommend to the Faculty Liaison a failing grade.

The *Field Learning Contract Evaluation Form* should be signed and completed in Sonia by both student and field educator by the due date identified on the field education calendar. Late evaluations could result in the student receiving an “incomplete” grade.

### ❖ **Grading and Requirements for the Foundation Field Placement Field I (SW 550) & II (SW 551)**

- Students must complete the entire year of Field placement in order to receive a final grade of “S”.
- **A student should attain a rating of “C” (Competence) on a majority of the 9 program competencies/objectives by the end of the field course in order to receive a grade of S (or satisfactory).**

After completion of SW 550 (Field I), students will generally receive an “L” grade (meaning work continuing) if they have demonstrated emerging competence or better in a sufficient number of outcome areas during the first semester of their placement. This “L” grade will only be converted to an “S” (satisfactory) grade upon successful completion of SW 551 (Field II).

- A student who received an "L" grade at the end of SW 550 (Field I) is able to continue in SW551 (Field II). If the student then does not successfully complete SW 551 (Field II), the "L" grade for SW 550 (Field I) will be converted to a "U" grade.
- Students who do not receive a satisfactory evaluation at the completion of SW 550 (Field I) will receive a “U” (unsatisfactory) at that time and will not be permitted to continue in SW 551 (Field II).
- Students who receive a “U” (unsatisfactory) grade will be reviewed by the field education department staff and the MSW Director to determine whether the student will be eligible to continue in the MSW program and have the option to repeat Field. Please refer to “Field Status Review Process” Policy and Procedure in Appendix G for further details.
- Any student who withdraws from field without following the official process will receive a grade of U in Field for the semester and be withdrawn from their concurrent courses. See Termination of Field Placement.
- If students take a leave of absence during the academic year, they will receive an “N” grade in Field and must re-register for and repeat Field if they return to the MSW program. Students who fail Field will receive a “U” grade and must re-register for and repeat Field. All field placements are a year in length (unless other

arrangements have been made i.e. block placement). Any student who takes a leave of absence prior to completing the second term (SW 551/ Foundation or SW 553/ Advanced) will need to register for and repeat both terms (SW 550 & 551/ Foundation or SW 552 & 553 Advanced) when they re-enter the program. In other words, none of the previously completed field hours can be carried over to the next field experience. If a student does not return to complete SW 550 and SW 551, the “L” will convert to a “U”.

### ❖ **Grading/Requirements for Interventions I (SW 520) and Theories of Human Behavior and Development (SW 505) as they relate to Field Placement**

The knowledge and skills learned in the Interventions I (SW 520) and Theories of Human Behavior and Development (SW 505) courses are essential to social work practice in field placement. Therefore, students who receive a grade below “B-“ in SW 520 or in SW 505 will not be able to continue on in SW 551 (Field II) even if they have performed satisfactorily in SW 550 (Field I). The student will need to wait until the following academic year to repeat both SW 520 (Interventions I) and SW550 (Field I) or SW505 (Theories of Human Behavior and Development) and SW 550. None of the previously completed field hours can be carried over to the next field experience. This may require taking a leave of absence from the program.

### ❖ **Grading and Requirements for the Advanced Year Field Placement**

#### **Field III (SW 552) & IV (SW 553)**

- Students must complete the entire year of Field in order to receive a grade of “S”.

After completing SW 552 (Field III), students will generally receive an “L” grade (meaning work continuing). This “L” grade will only be converted to an “S” (satisfactory) grade upon successful completion of SW 553 (Field IV). Students that demonstrated emerging competence or better in a sufficient number of outcome areas during the first semester of their placement are given an “L” grade to indicate continuation of their field placement.

- A student who received an "L" grade at the end of SW 552 (Field III) who then does not successfully complete SW 553 (Field IV) will have the "L" grade for SW 552 (Field III) convert to a "U" grade.
- Students who do not receive a satisfactory evaluation at the completion of SW 552 (Field III) will receive a “U” (unsatisfactory) at that time and will not be permitted to continue in SW 553 (Field IV).
- Students who receive a “U” (unsatisfactory) grade for SW 552 or SW 553 will be reviewed by the field education department staff and the MSW Director to determine whether the student will have the option to repeat Field. Please refer to “Field Status Review Process” Policy and Procedure in Appendix G for further details.
- Any student who withdraws from field without following the official process will receive a grade of U in Field for the semester and be withdrawn from their concurrent courses.

### ❖ **Incomplete Grades**

A grade of “Incomplete” (I) may be given in those instances in which the student has not been able to complete all the required tasks or field placement hours due to illness or other unforeseeable and compelling circumstances. “Incomplete” is not available to students who have not satisfactorily completed the academic requirements for a course, including Field Placement.

If an “I” is given, a letter grade must be assigned as stated in the Student Development Plan or after no more than two additional semesters plus the intervening summer as established by the academic calendar, whichever is

sooner. If the course requirements are not completed by that date, the “Incomplete” will automatically be changed to an “Unsatisfactory” (U) grade.

The faculty liaison, in conjunction with the field educator, may set their own conditions for removing an “Incomplete” as long as the time limit is no longer than the time limit specified in the paragraph above. The Director of Field Education should be informed of any plans to extend the field placement beyond the normal schedule for completion.

No student may register for courses in the Advanced Year curriculum, with an Incomplete in a required foundation-level course, including SW 550 (Field I) and 551 (Field II).

## ATTENDANCE AT FIELD PLACEMENT

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Field Education is an important part of the Social Work curriculum. The field course is an opportunity for students to integrate and apply social work knowledge and skills. To maximize learning, students are expected to: 1) attend placement according to the schedule established with the field educator at the start of placement; 2) arrive on time; and, 3) stay for the full duration of each scheduled day 4) complete field hour “shifts” that are a minimum of 3 hours and no more than 10 (unless approval received from faculty liaison) 5) be completed when there are educationally meaningful opportunities available per the Learning Contract.

In order to graduate from the MSW Program, students must complete the required number of field placement hours identified by the School of Social Work based on minimum standards set by the Council on Social Work Education. (See “*Structure of Field Placement*”)

Participation in field activities is expected, and other coursework should not be completed during field hours unless prior authorization is received from the field educator in conjunction with the faculty liaison.

**Because the field days outlined in the Field Education Calendar generally are scheduled to meet the minimum requirements, students who need to take sick days during their field placement must make arrangements with their field educator to make up the time they have missed.** Students are required to complete timesheets in Sonia that reflect the hours completed.

Some agencies require that students be available for more than the school’s minimum required hours in order to gain the maximum benefit from the experience. If the agency has such a requirement, this should be stated at the time of the student’s pre-placement interview. Once a student accepts a placement, they are expected to fulfill the hours agreed upon.

Consistent with UB policy, absence may be considered when determining a final grade. A grade of “U” or unsuccessful may be applied where: 1) students miss 3 or more days of scheduled field placement hours (22.5 hours) in a given semester; and, 2) these absences are not deemed *justifiable*.

*Justifiable absences* includes the following: 1) religious observances; 2) illness documented by a physician or other appropriate health care professional; 3) conflicts with university-sanctioned activities documented by an appropriate university administrator; 4) public emergencies; and, 5) documented personal or family emergencies. The student is responsible for notifying the Field Educator in writing with as much advance notice as possible.

Students are responsible for *promptly* making up the missed hours. Make-up hours must be approved by both the field educator and liaison. All missed hours must be made up by the student in that semester. There are NO exceptions. A make-up schedule is based on the availability of substantive learning experiences as deemed appropriate by the field educator. Student’s cannot simply “put in time”.



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| <b><i>Important Note – Field Placements Begin Before Classes Start (Spring Semester)</i></b>  |
| <b>Students and field educators should note that students who are completing a Fall through Spring semester field placement are expected to return to the field placement prior to the start of classes (late December or early January). (Please refer to your <i>Field Education Calendar</i> for the exact date). Part-time students who begin their Advanced Year placement in the Spring semester also begin at this time in order to ensure the completion of the required number of field hours to earn a September Diploma.</b> |

## ❖ Holidays and Vacation

Students are not expected to be in field placements on UB officially scheduled holidays. Students should follow the Field Education Calendar which reflects holiday and vacation time. As noted previously, vacations between semesters are shorter for field education placements than for the regular academic calendar. Students are expected to be professionally responsible in planning with field educators to meet client needs during periods of absence.

### Policy on Religious Holidays

The following is policy through the State University system. “On those religious holidays when members of a faith typically observe the expectation of church or synagogue that they be absent from school or work, campuses will avoid the scheduling of such events as registration, the first day of classes, or student convocations, and individual students will be excused from class without penalty if expressly requested.” (From SUNY Policy Manual, 1975, Section No. 091.3) At this university, if such a requested absence results in a student’s inability to fulfill the field education requirements on that particular day, the student should have an opportunity to make up the required field hours without penalty.

## ❖ Unscheduled University Closing

When there is an unscheduled university closing, students must exercise individual judgment with consideration given to their professional responsibility to clients and agencies, the physical danger to themselves, and distance to be traveled. Any decision not to report to the agency must be handled in a manner that shows appropriate regard for professional standards. During the initial orientation period to the field agency, students and field educators should discuss the proper protocol to follow.

If a student reports to the agency and that agency closes early, the student is credited with only the number of hours worked. If the student does not report due to a snow day, or other circumstance, the student must make up the missed time. Any compensatory time earned by the student may be used to make up time lost due to a storm emergency, agency holiday, etc. (*See below for Compensatory Time policy.*) Each student is responsible for planning with his/her field educator to make up lost time so that he/she meets the hours required.

## ❖ Compensatory Time

Students are expected to be at their field placement during the regular hours of the agency. Any extended amount of time in placement beyond the normal requirement of 15 hours per week is considered overtime, and compensatory time off is permitted. Any compensatory time for students requires prior approval from the field educator and liaison. The plan for taking the time also requires approval from the field educator and liaison. Time off should be taken within two weeks of when it is earned through a planned adjustment in the student’s internship hours. Students are not encouraged to be at their placement during the semester break identified on the field calendar more than is necessary to responsibly serve their clients. **Time earned during any semester break is to be used during the course of the semester and may not be accumulated and taken as a block at the semester end.** Students should remain in field placement throughout the entire scheduled two-semester field period in order to experience the accumulation of learning over time – unless prior approval has been granted.

### ❖ Conference Attendance

Attendance at social work conferences, institutes, and meetings can contribute in a meaningful way to the professional growth of students. Attendance at such conferences, etc., on field education days must be planned in advance with approval from the field educator. In instances where the School requests that students be released from field time to participate in meetings or special events, adequate notice will be provided. Students will be expected to be professionally accountable for meeting service responsibilities, rescheduling appointments, etc.

### ❖ Extension of Field Placement

In those unusual circumstances where an extension of the field placement is viewed as educationally desirable, a plan for an additional period in placement will be made by the School in collaboration with the agency director, field educator, faculty liaison and student. Such a plan will include a carefully articulated set of learning goals against which the student's work will be evaluated and determined successful. Any plan for a field placement extension requires a prior approval from the Director of Field Education.

### ❖ Student Withdrawal from Field Related to Program Withdrawal, Leave of Absence, and When Required Due to Course Failure

This decision to withdraw from field should be made only after consultation with and approval from the Faculty Liaison and the Field Office, and is permitted only for the following reasons: 1) program withdrawal or leave of absence; and, 2) failure in foundation courses (SW 505 and SW 520) that prevent students from proceeding with field. Because there are implications for a student's course sequence, Student Services staff should also be consulted prior to course withdrawal.

In these cases, students are expected to professionally exit from their placement agency in a timely manner. Students should:

- Contact their faculty liaison to make sure they are aware of the situation.
- Meet with their field educator to explain that they are unable to continue. They should work with their Field Educator to develop a plan for termination which may include terminating with clients; returning keys or pass tokens; and, making sure record keeping is up to date.
- Follow up with your Faculty Liaison and the Field Department in an email confirming they have professionally terminated from your field placement.

Any student who withdraws from field without following this process will receive a grade of U in Field for the semester and be withdrawn from their concurrent courses. Students with a "U" grade in field must undergo a field status review process. Please refer to "Field Status Review Process" Policy and Procedure in the Appendix for further details.

See also, "Termination of Field Placement"

## RETENTION POLICY

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All students are required to maintain a cumulative "B" (3.0) grade point average and have a 3.0 GPA or better upon graduation from the School. Students who drop below a cumulative 3.0 GPA will be on academic warning



during the following semester. If the student does not raise his or her cumulative GPA to 3.0 after 11 graded credits of subsequent social work courses, he or she will be dismissed from the School. “S” and “U” grades do not affect GPA.

In foundation courses and in all required Advanced Year courses, a minimum of “B-” will be required of all students in order for them to be eligible for graduation. Required courses with a grade below “B-” and field courses with a “U” grade may only be repeated once. Students with a “U” grade in field must be reviewed by the field education department staff and the MSW Director to determine eligibility to repeat a field course (see “Field Status Review Process” Policy and Procedure in Appendix G). A grade lower than a “B-” in a required foundation or Advanced Year course will prevent a student from enrolling in sequential courses in field or in Advanced Year courses.

All students are required to adhere to the criteria stated in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. A violation of this code may result in dismissal from the School.

## **TERMINATION OF FIELD PLACEMENT**

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Students should know that the Field Educator has the right at any point in the placement to request immediate removal of the student from the field site if they deem that the student’s continued presence is not in the field site’s best interest, i.e. for reasons of health, performance, or for other reasons.

However, the termination of student’s placement by a Field Educator is a serious decision. If a field educator has a concern regarding a student’s performance in field, they are encouraged to speak to them directly. They should also call upon the Faculty Liaison for assistance and support in resolving the matter. The Faculty Liaisons may recommend that a Student Development Plan (SDP) be implemented. The SDP outlines any strengths, and delineates performance expectations. Helpful strategies to support the learning and professional behavior are also included.

Termination from field will prompt a review process. Please refer to the “Field Status Review” Policy and Procedure in the Appendix G for further details.

Students are encouraged to speak directly to their field educator about any concerns they may have about their placement. Often this is all that is necessary to resolve a problem. If a concern is not resolved in this manner, students should consult with the assigned faculty liaison. The faculty liaison is available to assist in informal mediation of any problems involving a student’s field placement. If there is a need for further intervention beyond that of the faculty liaison in order to resolve a concern, the Field Education Department should be consulted.

Students are required to participate in attempts to problem-solve issues in field, including any plans for corrective action. The ability to have difficult conversations is a necessary social work skill, and social work practice frequently involves confronting uncomfortable issues. Having difficult conversations in field can allow for progress in this area, and help new social workers become more confident, and self-aware.

If a student is terminated from field, they are expected to exit professionally. Any student who withdraws from field without following the process described will receive a grade of U in Field for the semester and be withdrawn from any concurrent courses. Students with a “U” grade in field must undergo a field status review process. Please refer to “Field Status Review Process” Policy and Procedure in the Appendix for further details.

See also, “Student Withdrawal from Field Related to Program Withdrawal, Leave of Absence, and When Required Due to Course Failure”.

## **QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION**

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The School of Social Work Field Education Department and the on-site agency field educators work hard to ensure that students receive high quality instruction in all their field placements. However, despite our best efforts at identifying and maintaining quality field sites, problems may arise during a field placement. In this case, students are encouraged to speak directly to the field educator about their concerns; often this is all that is necessary to resolve a problem. If a concern is not resolved in this manner, students should consult with the assigned faculty liaison regarding any concerns they may have. The faculty liaison is available to assist in informal mediation of any problems involving a student's field placement. If there is a need for further intervention beyond that of the faculty liaison in order to resolve a concern, the Field Education Department staff should be consulted.

Similarly, if a field educator has a concern with a student's performance in field, they should first speak to the student about their concern. Hopefully this will resolve the issue. If it does not, the field educator should call upon the faculty liaison for assistance in resolving the matter. Again, if there is a need for additional assistance in resolving a concern, the Field Education Department staff should be consulted.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND COMMITTEE ON STUDENTS**

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### **Student Grievance against a Faculty/Staff Member or a Field Educator<sup>1</sup>**

A grievance can be brought to The Committee on Students (COS) when a student feels that he/she has not received fair treatment because of unfair, inequitable, or discriminatory treatment by a school of social work faculty/staff member or field educator. Reviews are to be conducted in confidence and without publicity, and all members of the School will be expected to cooperate with the Committee on Students as it seeks information. The committee will have the prerogative to determine if it chooses to refer such claims or grievances to other bodies within the University for review. All persons involved in the process will be expected to adhere to strict rules of confidentiality.

The chair and members of COS are designated by the bylaws of the School. If student members are present they can participate in the committee's discussion and can vote on the final decision. In cases where a committee member (faculty, staff- or another student) is directly involved in the grievance, and is determined to have conflicting interests, he/she will be excused from serving. The student or faculty member may be replaced at the discretion of the chair or the Dean.

The Committee on Students is empowered to assess a grievance and make decisions in cases where students believe one or more of the following:

- (a) They have been subject to a violation, misinterpretation, or inequitable application of any of the regulations of the University, the Graduate School, the School of Social Work, or the NASW;
- (b) They have been unfairly or inequitably treated by reason of any act or condition contrary to established policy or practice governing or affecting graduate students;
- (c) They have been discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation by a school faculty/staff member or field educator.

In cases where the committee finds proof of unfair, inequitable, or discriminatory treatment, it will make recommendations to the dean for appropriate action.

### **Grievance Procedures**

In cases where a student believes that she or he has received unfair, inequitable, or discriminatory treatment as described above, the student may initiate a grievance process by expressing her or his intent to open the process.

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<sup>1</sup> Field Liaisons are members of either full-time or adjunct faculty.

The request must be made in writing to the COS chair within one year of the alleged occurrence. This time limit may be extended by the Dean of the School of Social Work upon good cause. The student is required to send a copy of the letter of such intent to the school faculty/staff member or field educator who is the subject of the potential grievance. The [Student Handbook](#) must be consulted regarding procedure.

## **STUDENT VIOLATION OF ETHICAL STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**

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The Committee on Students will determine the status of all students suspected of violating the NASW Code of Ethics or University standards of behavior. The committee will address breaches in standards including violations of academic or professional behavior and norms. These standards include, but are not limited to, instances of plagiarizing, cheating, failing to report abuse, engaging in criminal action, dishonesty, or posing serious danger to the welfare of clients. In cases where the committee determines violation(s) has (have) occurred, it will make recommendations to the dean for appropriate action. The [Student Handbook](#) should be consulted for related procedures.

### **University Grievance Process**

After attempting to resolve a problem through COS, a student may file a grievance through the Graduate School. For procedures, start at [www.buffalo.edu](http://www.buffalo.edu) and then search for UB Graduate School > Policies & Procedures > Academic Grievance Policies and Procedures. Use the link: <https://www.buffalo.edu/grad/succeed/current-students/policy-library.html>

## **PLACEMENT PROCEDURES AND POLICIES**

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The Field Department team will identify potential field placements based on the written field application submitted by students, which includes interest areas, past experiences, geography, etc. Although the School will try to honor student's needs and preferences, the School is unable to guarantee specific arrangements to accommodate all student preferences. Students are matched with agencies based upon the agencies' potential to expose students to diverse populations, social issues, and a broad spectrum of social work services.

The major objective in the placement process is the matching of student educational needs with a field education placement, which offers opportunities judged to have the best potential for promoting the student's professional development. The School will consider personal factors related to the location of placements, but the primary concern is the placement of the student in a setting judged to have the best potential for promoting the student's professional development.

### **Review of Students Who Submit Field Applications Late (Beyond Due Date) or Fail to Respond to Field Office Communications Regarding Placement**

Students not submitting a field application prior to the deadline date (listed on student calendar) may forfeit placement and have to defer by one or more semesters. Delays could result in a recommendation for a Status Review. As in professional practice, the timely submission of paperwork is an essential skill.

Students who fail to respond to frequent email or phone communications from the field office regarding placement may have holds placed on their accounts by the Registrar's Office and risk

delaying their advancement in the MSW program. In some cases, a Status Review may be recommended. It is expected that students will be monitoring their UB Email. See the Placement Process section below for related deadlines.

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## PLACEMENT INTERVIEW

Once the potential agency is identified for the student, the student must complete a professional field placement interview with an agency supervisor to determine his or her acceptability for placement. Students not accepted by the assigned agency due to non-agency issues may need to meet with the field office staff to re-evaluate placement status, and may be required to seek the assistance of career services available to all UB students. Students will be given reasons for non-acceptance. Once a student accepts a placement offer from an agency, it is considered a professional obligation that is made. It is expected that students will honor the original commitment made by accepting the placement. No additional outreach or placement efforts should be made once a student is confirmed with a placement.

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## POLICY ON UNSUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

Interviewing at a field placement site does not guarantee that students will be selected. The decision of a field site to not accept a student for placement may occur for one of the following reasons:

1. Student is not selected for interview or placement: This may occur if there are multiple students interviewing for a limited number of field placement opportunities or if the field placement agency determines that the student is “not a good fit” for reasons other than behavioral/professional presentation.
2. Student had an unsuccessful interview: An interview is considered “unsuccessful” if the field placement site determines that there are examples of problematic or unprofessional behavior, attire, and/or communication.

After the first unsuccessful interview, a meeting will be scheduled with your placement coordinator to review constructive feedback and provide coaching and resources. When students experience two “unsuccessful” placement interviews, a review meeting will be scheduled to determine whether the student will be allowed to interview at another field site (see Appendix H).

See “Review of Students Who Experience Two Unsuccessful Placement Interviews”.

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## ADMISSION REQUIREMENT FOR FIELD

The goal of the field office is to provide the highest quality field education experience for all students. The Field Department will only admit those students who meet the following criteria:

1. Student completes a field placement interview and is accepted by the agency
2. Student submits the online Student Acknowledgment which includes the following: a) HIPPA signature page; b) Ethics Pledge; c) Field Manual Review/ Student Roles and Responsibilities.
3. Student meets the established UBSSW Technical Standards that focus on academic performance as well as the abilities and attributes essential for the profession. See [Technical Standards](#)

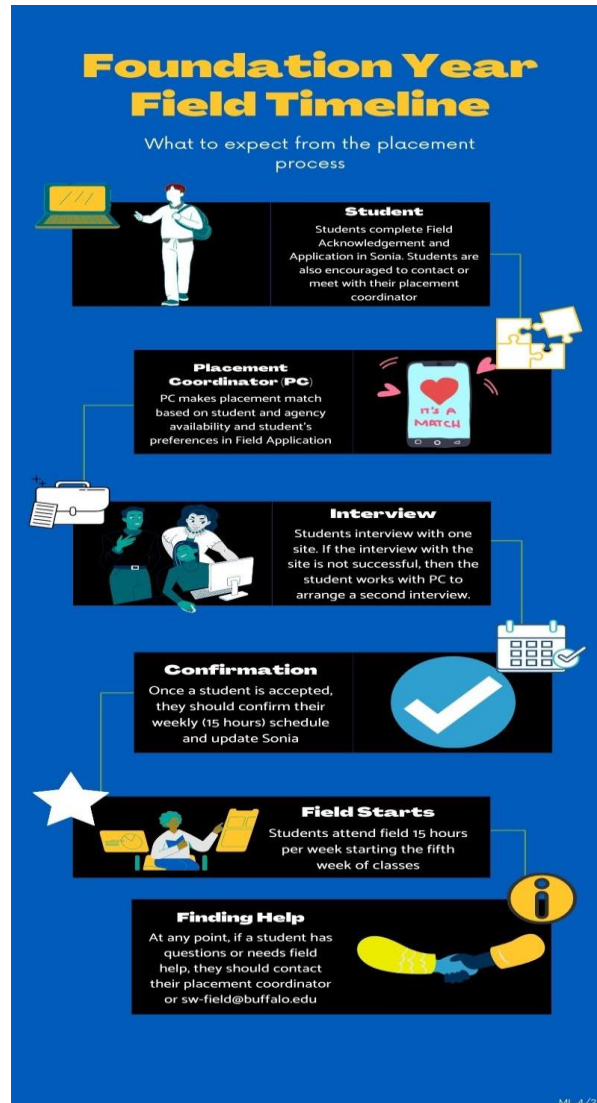
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## PLACEMENT PROCESS

Full-time foundation students submit field applications within two weeks of receiving registration materials from the School. Part-time foundation students submit applications in the Fall semester of their first year.

Placements for foundation year students are assigned based on the information provided in their field application with a focus on a generalist placement experience. The field education staff matches students with agencies to

provide the most appropriate educational experience. Below is an infographic that summarizes the foundation year field placement process.



For Advanced Year placements (in the seated MSW program), students have an opportunity to indicate their preferred areas of practice as well as identify agencies where they would like to be considered for placement.

Students need to be aware that some field agencies have additional screening procedures. Students are expected to pay the cost of screening, unless the agency covers the cost. Students may be asked to complete additional application forms or interviews. Child Abuse Registry, drug screenings, and criminal background checks may also be required by some agencies. Hospital settings will require additional health documentation.

Agencies are encouraged to provide students with additional written information that may be helpful to prepare students for the placement. If an agency requests a student to attend an orientation prior to the start of field, this should be discussed during the interview.

Placement in some geographic regions may not be possible as the start of the academic year nears. The Rochester region is one example in which placements need to be secured early on. In some cases, the Placement Coordinator in those regions may refer students to the Buffalo area for placement.

While Field faculty and staff make every effort to secure placements for students, delayed submission of required materials by students and/or non-responsiveness of students to field communications may result in students not being placed in a given academic year. Deadlines are in place because of the significant time required to establish formal affiliations with new placement agencies, and the competition for placements, particularly in certain geographic regions, as the start of the academic year approaches. The deadline dates below reflect the final date by which students will be allowed to proceed with placement where non-responsiveness and non-submission of field materials is a concern. Placements cannot be guaranteed when students are late submitting materials or are non-responsive to field communications.

## **REQUEST TO CHANGE PROGRAM STATUS -IMPACT ON FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS**

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Students must follow the field sequence associated with their program of record. Students requesting an altered field sequence should consult the Student Handbook for information on changing program status.

## **INTERNATIONAL, OUT OF REGION, AND REGIONAL IMMERSION (“BLOCK”) PLACEMENTS - ADVANCED YEAR ONLY**

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Students interested in international opportunities can visit the SSW web section entitled “[\*Academics/International Opportunities\*](#)”. The SSW curriculum allows for “block” or immersion placements (in which 480 hours are completed in one semester) in the final Spring or Summer of a student’s program. Students wishing to request approval to pursue an immersion placement in their *Advanced Year* must do so prior to the deadline for submitting their Advanced Year field application. This timeframe is reflective of the significant time required in securing legal affiliation, and ensuring that SSW program requirements will be met.

A placement must be included in one of the following categories to be considered for an immersion (“block”) placement: \*Note that any student completing employment-based fieldwork is not eligible for “block” placement.

- 1) Seated students who are seeking an out of region / Out-of-state placement
- 2) Seated or online students seeking International
- 3) Regional immersion “block” placement- ONLY considered under pre-planned, exceptional circumstances, and discussed with an assigned Field Coordinator.

### **Eligibility**

The Director of Field Education must assess and approve all “block” placement options prior to consideration of a particular agency/region. A student must be in good standing, and not involved in a process of review. Due to the greater demands placed on students in an immersion placement, recommendation forms are required, and excellence should be exemplified in all areas of a student’s program, i.e. attendance, field performance.

**Please note that seated students should not approach agencies directly to request “block” placements.**

Students who are interested in requesting Out-of-Region and International Placements should review the procedures outlined on the School of Social Work website:

<https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/education/msw-field-education/international-and-out-of-region-placements/procedures.html>



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## CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION (ADDRESS, PHONE, EMAIL, ETC)

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Field Educators are asked to notify the Field Education Department of any change in address, phone number, or other contact information.

Students are asked to notify the Main Office for the School of Social Work at 716-545-3381 or [sw-info@buffalo.edu](mailto:sw-info@buffalo.edu) of any change in address, phone number, or other contact information. Students also need to contact the Student Response Center at 716-645-2450 to update their information.

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## STUDENTS REQUIRING ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

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Any student with a documented disability, physical or cognitive, who requires accommodations for field, should contact the Accessibility Resources (AS), located at 25 Capen Hall. More information can be found on the AS website: <https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/who-we-are/departments/accessibility.html>

Students who may need an accommodation for their field placement experience should identify this need on their field application so that the necessary arrangements can be facilitated in a timely manner.

Students requesting reasonable accommodations for field must provide documentation (an accommodation letter from AS) to the Field Office prior to placement. Accommodation letters should be submitted to the Field Office via email at [sw-field@buffalo.edu](mailto:sw-field@buffalo.edu). Please note that accommodation letters should be specific to the field course. Once presented with an accommodation letter, Field Staff will work with students to identify an appropriate placement site, and will provide your agency Field Educator with verification of your disability and recommended appropriate accommodations.

When accommodations are being requested for a field placement, a meeting may be scheduled with the student, Accessibility Services, and Field Education Department staff.

Failure of notification, in a timely manner, of the need for reasonable accommodations, may hinder the student in successfully completing the field placement course.

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## EMPLOYMENT BASED PLACEMENT OPTIONS

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An employment-based field placement option is available for students who are currently employed in a social service agency. The employment-based proposal must meet a clear set of educational criteria (stated below) for review and approval by the Field Education Department. Students who are interested in this option indicate so on their field acknowledgment and proceed with the following steps.

### Employment-based Field Placement Criteria

The following criteria must be met for the student to be approved for an employment-based field placement. Please note, many agencies have different policies regarding employment-based field placements. Before pursuing an employment-based field placement, students should consult with their employer about employment-field placement policies and procedures.

Students must be in good standing, and not involved in a review process. Students who have been terminated from a field placement may not be approved for an employment-based field placement. The field placement must allow the student to participate in activities directly linked to the nine social work competencies (below). This may or may not be in the same setting as the student's current work.

**The current best practice is for students to have separate and unique work and field responsibilities.** If this is not possible, and regular work duties are requested to count as field, the student must also propose supplemental learning opportunities beyond work duties. If students use any of their regular work hours to count as field, they must complete a Capstone Project (description below). If their work and field duties/hours are separate, they do not need to complete a Capstone project.

The student must have been employed by the fieldwork site for minimum of 60-days prior to submitting an employment-based field placement proposal.

The student may only count 15 hours per week for field hours. If, for unforeseen circumstances, a student has fallen behind on field hours, they may submit a request to count more than 15 hours per week. The student will be asked to convey how the additional hours enhance the student's learning, i.e., a student who is counting their job as field will not be permitted to count more than 15 hours per week unless they are able to describe new learning experiences beyond their regular work duties. The student should submit the request to their faculty liaison.

Students are permitted to complete two employment-based field placements if they choose. When a student proposes a second employment-based field placement, they will be asked additional questions in the employment-based application. Specifically, the student will be asked to explain how the placement will be different from foundation year and how it will allow them to deepen their learning, skills and competency development. They will also be asked to describe the new role or responsibility that they are taking on at their job. Last, students must seek approval from their faculty liaison on their plan.

A field educator is defined as an individual with a Master's in Social Work (MSW) from a CSWE accredited program. The field educator should be licensed in NYS with an LMSW or LCSW. Please note: if the field placement is in an agency/program that is exempt according to current NYS law (an exempt agency is one that has a NYS operating certificate from any of the following agencies: OMH, OMRDD, OCFS, or OASAS) then the field educator may not need to be licensed in NYS.

The field educator must agree to provide a social work perspective to the student's field education experience. The field educator must agree to allow the student the space and permission to be a learner. In other words, the student's role as student should be prioritized along with their learning and skill development. In order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, the field educator cannot hold a position that works under the student's position within the organization. For instance, if the student is an Executive Director of the organization, a staff social worker within the organization cannot serve as the field educator

The agency must be willing to allow the student/employee to attend classes and have an educationally focused field placement experience.

The agency must be willing to allow the field educator to attend field education training and seminars and to have sufficient time to provide a minimum of at least one hour/week field placement supervision for the student. Supervision must focus on learning, skill development and competency development.

The agency must be able to provide a generalist placement experience if the student/employee is applying for the first/foundation placement. If the agency is providing a second/advanced year placement, it is necessary to provide a placement experience that allows the student to participate in advanced-level graduate social work activities.



The Employment-Based Application must be received by the deadline specified online. Once the application is returned to the Field Education Department, it will be reviewed and a response will be given as soon as possible to indicate whether or not the placement has been approved. A site visit may be required as part of the application review process prior to determining approval.

## Capstone Project

For students counting any of their regular work duties as field, once field begins, students will be expected to create a learning contract that contains at least one project that spans two-semester, that relates to the majority of the nine competencies, reflects attainment of social work values and ethics, and demonstrates substantial professional growth and development. Topic areas could include (for example) racial equity, anti-racism within social work practice, response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and/or trauma-informed practices within the agency. Examples include fully researching a topic, providing an agency-training on that topic, and then evaluating the training results.

At mid and final placement, students will upload their project to their learning contract and write a reflection about the experience.

## Policy for Employment-based Field Placement Disruption

If a student's field placement is disrupted i.e., the student is terminated, appropriate supervision is no longer possible, the student leaves the agency, the student would follow the same process as a field placement termination at a non-employment-based site. This process is outlined on page 36 of the field manual.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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In order for MSW students to receive high quality education, the School, the field placement agency, the field educator, and the student each have responsibilities in this collaborative effort to prepare graduates for the social work profession.

### ❖ The Student

The responsibilities are:

1. To arrange life and work schedule to include a field placement schedule that is consistent from week to week, and that meets the requirement for 15 hours of field education per week.  
[Full-time students – field hours will be during normal work hours](#)  
[Part-time students – field hours cannot be guaranteed for evening & weekend hours](#)
2. To access any electronic resources for the field course. (Currently, a Sonia account must be created in order to receive a grade for the field course.)
2. To familiarize themselves with and abide by the policies and regulations of their field placement agency and those of the School of Social Work. This includes adhering to the policies and requirements outlined in this manual, HIPAA requirements, Code of Ethics, and any other requirements specific to the placement site.
3. To follow UB School of Social Work processes for applying and interviewing for placements. Students in the seated program should not solicit placements by phone or in person. Students may complete the [Student Recommendation for Potential MSW Field Sites](#) form posted on the SSW website.
4. To not select placements: a) where they have volunteered or been employed previously (IF you have previously worked or volunteered with the agency you must submit a request with the field office in

order to proceed. A Petition form can be found in Sonia under forms); b) where they or an immediate family have received services in the past few years; or, c) where they have a personal or professional relationship with staff at this agency. Foundation students should alert the field office immediately if the placement they have been assigned meets any of the above descriptions.

5. To not transport agency clients
6. To ensure that appearance and demeanor reflect a professional manner. Students should consult with field educator regarding agency dress code.
7. To perform in a responsible, professional manner maintaining commitments to the agency, the field educator, and the clients.
  - a) Agency computers should not be used for personal reasons.
  - b) Unless expecting an urgent message, personal cell phones should not be used during placement time. If an urgent call is expected, authorization should be obtained from the field educator.
  - c) Personal cell phones should not be used to contact clients or to do agency business
  - d) Students should not be completing classroom work during field hours unless special authorization from the liaison and educator is obtained.
  - e) Students should arrive on time and stay for the full duration of their scheduled shift. A student's grade in field will be affected by tardiness or persistent absenteeism.
8. Because social media lends itself to a number of possible ethical issues, students should consult with their placement agency regarding related policies. Privacy, confidentiality, and the establishment of professional boundaries, can be hindered when the necessary precautions to protect clients have not been taken. Students should be guided by the NASW Code of Ethics, Section 4.03, which states, "Social Workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities."
9. To take the initiative to seek advice and consultation from the agency field educator and/or faculty liaison.
10. To discuss with the field educator and/or faculty liaison areas of concern or confusion about the field learning experience.
11. Students should accept critical feedback, and participate in problem solving efforts and plans for corrective action.
12. To take an active role in planning and implementing their learning experiences in the field practicum using the opportunities at the field site to integrate theory and practice, increasing their level of knowledge and self-awareness. To share course syllabi with the field educator.
13. To develop a learning contract, jointly with the field educator, which identifies the activities and expectations to meet the competencies and outcomes identified by the School.
14. To communicate educational needs and interests to the field educator and to notify the faculty liaison if they are not receiving educational experiences as outlined in the learning contract and/or an hour per week of supervision.
15. To attend and be prepared for scheduled supervisory meetings with the field educator.
16. To notify the field educator of any necessary absences from field as is expected in professional employment.
17. To maintain a timesheet (on Sonia) that accurately documents attendance at field placement. To make up any missing field time to ensure that required field education hours are met.
18. To participate in any scheduled conferences with field educator and faculty liaison.
19. To adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics in all practices in the role of intern.
20. To participate in the evaluation process with the field educator by reviewing, signing, and following up on delivery of the evaluation forms.
21. To handle stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others when stress impacts academic and professional performance.
22. To seek and effectively use help for problems that interfere with academic and professional performance.

#### ❖ The Faculty Liaison

The responsibilities are:

23. To meet with the field educator and the student in a three-way conference once each semester during the placement. This may be in the form of a group meeting with the faculty liaison and all of their assigned students. Field educators may be invited to attend the group session to discuss field experiences. Videoconferencing and other communication tools can also be utilized.
24. To be available as a consultant to the field educator and student throughout the field placement.
25. To review the field education learning contract developed between the student and field educator, adding input as needed.
26. To assist field educator and student in integrating class and field experiences.
27. To review the *Field Learning Contract and Evaluation Form* completed by the field educator.
28. To assign students' grades based on feedback and recommendations from the field educator.
29. To assess the quality of the field instruction and opportunities provided to students and make recommendations to the Director of Field Education based on this assessment.

#### ❖ **The Field Educator**

The responsibilities are:

30. To participate in an orientation session provided by the School (required for all new field educators).
31. To provide the student with an orientation to the agency, including information on safety protocol, HIPAA requirements, or other regulations specific to field site.
32. To provide suitable workspace.
33. To coordinate the involvement of other agency staff with the student's learning experience.
34. To develop, with the student, a learning contract which reflects the learning opportunities and activities to meet the competencies and expected outcomes identified by the school.
35. To provide a minimum of one hour per week of supervision in order to provide feedback, education, and role modeling. Supervision periods may be divided into two sessions. This time should be safeguarded so as not to allow interruptions.
36. To review course syllabi provided by student in order to assist in the integration of field and academic experiences.
37. To identify assignments to help the foundation year student learn a broad range of social work interventions and/or Advanced Year students to experience activities related to their area of Advanced Year.
38. To provide ongoing evaluation of the student throughout the placement and to provide feedback on progress toward meeting their identified objectives.
39. To notify the faculty liaison of any problems or questions as soon as they become evident.
40. To complete and submit, by the designated time, a written mid-placement and final evaluation of the student's progress.
41. To ensure that the student completes the minimum required hours for the field placement.
42. To participate in three-way conferences with the student and faculty liaison during the field placement.
43. To abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.

## SELECTION, MONITORING & EVALUATION OF FIELD EDUCATORS & AGENCIES

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### Criteria for the selection of Field Educators:

1. A Master's Degree in social work (Must meet the licensing requirements of the state in which they practice and provide supervision within the appropriate scope of practice)
2. Willingness to meet the stated Field Educator Responsibilities
3. To be free of any professional sanctions by NASW
4. Two years of post-graduate experience. The Field Director may make exceptions to this criteria where the proposed educator is familiar with the School's curriculum, or has prior experience in field education.

### Agencies are selected as field sites and monitored according to the following guidelines:

#### Criteria for Selection of agencies:

44. The ethics and values of social work should be demonstrated through the policies, program design, and delivery of services of the agency.
45. The agency must be willing to support an educational focus for students providing social work experiences that will meet the learning objectives identified by the School.
46. The agency contact person is expected to complete the *Agency/Organization Data Form* to provide a written description of the agency including types of student assignments available.
47. The agency must provide adequate space for the student.
48. The agency will provide professionals qualified to provide field instruction.
49. The agency will support field education staff time availability to provide a minimum of one hour per week of supervision, to attend field educator orientations, training and faculty liaison conferences.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation:

50. The quality of the learning experience.
51. The quality of the communication between the agency and the school.
52. Program or personnel changes that would affect student learning.
53. School of Social Work curriculum changes that would affect student learning.
54. Field Educator attendance at field education training sessions/workshops.

Monitoring the quality of field education is an ongoing process that is accomplished via personal and telephone contact between the Field Education Department faculty and staff, faculty liaison, and the field educator. Students provide feedback to the Field Education Department through the *Student Evaluation of Field Practicum Experience Survey* completed at the end of their placement experience. Faculty liaisons identify any concerns and what support was provided to address these concerns. Additional meetings may be scheduled between agency and Field Education Department staff to address areas of concern and to evaluate the appropriateness of an agency to continue as a field site.

## SUPPORT FOR FIELD EDUCATORS

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UB School of Social Work requires all new field educators to participate in an orientation/training session. Offered in the fall and sometimes in spring, these orientation sessions provide information about the School's philosophy, curriculum, and issues related to field education. Instruction is provided on the use of the field education learning contract and the student evaluation. Field educator training sessions and workshops may also be provided throughout the academic year. Field educators receive ongoing support, as needed, from the faculty liaison.

To enhance the field educator experience, field educators are eligible to receive tuition waivers for graduate level courses. At the end of each academic year, a reception is held for field educators providing an opportunity for ongoing interaction between the School's faculty and field educators. The *Outstanding Achievement in Field Education Award* is presented at this event.

## TASK SUPERVISION & ALTERNATE MODELS OF FIELD EDUCATION

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Although most agencies assign MSW employees to work one-on-one with interns, there are a variety of alternative models of field education. Experienced MSW Field Educators may coordinate internships (and meet with students at least one hour a week) while agency supervisors without an MSW can provide daily **task supervision**. Group supervision is another alternative.

**Task Supervision:** While the Field Educator has the primary responsibility for students' learning in the field placement, a Task Supervisor may be designated by the Field Educator or agency to assume specific responsibilities for a student's learning.

The Task Supervisor does not replace the Field Educator, and must work in collaboration with the Field Educator to ensure that the student's learning goals are being met and that regular feedback is provided.

### ❖ The Task Supervisor

The responsibilities are:

55. To attend an orientation session provided by the School (strongly encouraged for all new task supervisors).
  - To provide input into the student learning contract, in addition to the input of the Field Educator.
  - To provide input to the mid-semester and final evaluation of the student in collaboration with primary field educator and student.
  - To provide primary, direct supervision of the students' daily activities.
  - To assign cases and projects congruent with students' educational goals.
  - To orient students to the agency and their assignments.
  - To give on-the-spot positive and constructive feedback to students regarding their performance.
  - To focus on the student's skill development.
  - To consult with the MSW field educator related to the students' skill areas that need extra attention.
  - To be familiar with *Field Education Policies and Procedures*.
  - To meet with the field educator and the student at least twice each month to address progress being made.
  - To meet with the field educator and the faculty liaison at least once each semester of the student's internship, to address progress being made.
  - To notify field educators and faculty liaisons when problems arise.

### ***Qualifications:***

While a Master Degree in Social Work is not required for task supervisors, the task supervisor must work in a related discipline and have an understanding of the social work perspective. The task supervisor typically has expertise in an area that expands a student's learning opportunities.

## FIELD EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

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### ❖ Community Field Education Advisory Board

A Field Education Advisory Board is composed of a group of field educators, agency liaisons, faculty, and students. Members are representative of field agencies/organizations who work with students at the foundation level as well as from each of the School's various Advanced Year areas.

The purpose of the advisory board is fourfold:

1. to provide an opportunity and mechanism for the school and community to have ongoing conversations,
2. to enhance the collaboration between the school and the community in educating students for their future in social work,
3. to ensure that the school of social work is remaining abreast of the ongoing changes that occur in the local community services organizations and to share changes within the school of social work in order to gain feedback, and
4. to strengthen the School's efforts in continuing to develop quality field placements for our students.

### ❖ Student Participation in Field Education Advisory Board

Student members are recruited to participate in and provide key input into field program planning.

## ORIENTATION TO FIELD PLACEMENT SETTINGS

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The initial days of the field placement experience can set the tone for the many weeks to come. Both students and field educators come into placement with high anxiety and expectations. Adjusting to new roles and settings can be overwhelming, exciting, and exhausting. An **Orientation Checklist** (*Appendix C*) is provided to offer a guideline for planning the activities for the initial period of placement. A well thought out orientation can allay anxiety and allow students to have necessary information to help them engage more effectively with agency staff and clients. It is important at this beginning stage for the student and field educator to get to know each other and begin to build a working relationship. It should be a time to encourage questions, comments, and reactions about roles and expectations. It is during this initial time that students will be gaining input from field educators and task supervisors (as relevant) about activities available that will go into developing a learning contract.

## SAFETY ISSUES IN FIELD PLACEMENTS

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The School expects that the field educator and/or task supervisors will inform the student of policies and protocol regarding safety related to the agency's practice. At the beginning of placement, students should be made aware of practices that maximize personal safety in the office, on home visits, and in the community.

In order to maximize safety and reduce the risks involved in field work, students are expected to read and adhere to both the Personal Safety and Risk Management Strategies identified in *Appendix E* of this manual and any safety policies and protocol at the field agency. Students should initiate a discussion with their field educator about any safety concerns at the placement site and feel free to contact the Field Education staff with any questions.

In the event of a student feeling physically or emotionally unsafe, including being injured, harassed, or threatened, the agency and/or should contact the Director of Field Education & Student Services immediately to ensure that the appropriate steps are taken to follow up on the incident.

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS CODE OF ETHICS

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The School expects that all students and field educators will abide by the NASW Code of Ethics. A copy of the Code of Ethics can be obtained through the National Association of Social Workers (Telephone: 800-638-8799 or Website: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>).

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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The University is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking. If you have experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), UB has resources to help. This includes academic accommodations, health and counseling services, housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose.



Please be aware that UB employees may be required reporters. This means that if you tell UB personnel about a situation, they may have to report the information to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Although the situation may need to be reported, you will still have options about how the situation will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Please know that if you do not wish to have UB proceed with an investigation, your request will be honored unless UB's failure to act does not adequately mitigate the risk of harm to you or other members of the University community. You also have the option of speaking with trained counselors who can maintain complete confidentiality.

UB's <https://www.buffalo.edu/equity/obtaining-assistance/sex-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment/sexual-assault--domestic-violence--dating-violence-and-stalking/confidentiality-and-reporting-protocol.html>

provides a full explanation of the resources available, as well as contact information. You may call UB's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at (716) 645-2266 for more information, and you have the option of calling that office anonymously if you would prefer not to disclose your identity.

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## MEDICAL POLICY

### University Policy:

Every student in a clinical assignment must have a medical statement regarding immunizations. This is on file in the University Health Services.

### OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens Standard with respect to Hepatitis B vaccine:

Many health care organizations require students practicing in their agencies to receive the Hepatitis B vaccination or sign a declination statement as a condition of practicing in the facility. The Hepatitis B vaccine is a safe and effective method of preventing Hepatitis B infection.

### Hospital Settings – Additional Requirements

Students doing their field placement in a hospital setting may have additional health/medical requirements including

- Proof of Hepatitis B vaccination
- Proof of Td (Tetanus-diphtheria) booster within ten years
- Proof of PPD (Mantoux) skin test for tuberculosis performed within one year, and a chest x-ray if positive
- Proof of immunity against measles (Rubella) and German measles
- COVID-19 vaccination
- Physician's statement that the student is free from any health impairment which may pose a risk of illness or injury to health center patients or interfere with the performance of his/her assigned duties.

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## INSURANCE COVERAGE

UB School of Social Work students who are involved in field placement are covered for general liability under an insurance policy carried by the State University of New York. The field placement agency is listed as an additional insured. A certificate of insurance will be forwarded to field agencies upon request.

If desired, students are able to purchase student (malpractice) liability insurance through NASW. Information and application can be obtained at the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) website: [www.naswdc.org](http://www.naswdc.org).

Please be advised that although the University provides general liability coverage while a student is in field placement, the policy does not include health insurance or automobile coverage related to field activities; **students should not transport clients.**



## CSWE CURRICULUM POLICY STATEMENT

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The Curriculum Policy Statement for Master's Degree Programs in Social Work provided by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) can be found at [www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org) or can be requested from the Field Education Department. The CSWE is the body responsible for accrediting Schools of Social Work.

## USE OF THIS MANUAL IN CONJUNCTION WITH STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Students should use this Field Education Manual in conjunction with the *Student Handbook*. The *Student Handbook* provides additional policy information related to the MSW program. The Student Handbook may be accessed on the School of Social Work website at [www.socialwork.buffalo.edu](http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu).

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## APPENDIX SECTION

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- A [MSW Program Curriculum Overview](#)
- B [Additional Field Experience](#)
- C [Orientation Checklist for MSW Interns](#)
- D [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPPA\)](#)
- E [Basic Principles of Personal Safety/Risk Management Strategies for Social Work Interns](#)
- F [Understanding Professional Ethical Conduct in Social Work Practice](#)
- G [Policy: Field Status Review Process](#)
- H [Policy: Review of Students Who Experience Two Unsuccessful Placement Interviews](#)
- I [Field Education Log / Journal Assignments \(Sample Page of Journaling\)](#)
- J [Technical Standards](#)

## A. MSW PROGRAM CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

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Please refer to our website

<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/education/master-of-social-work-msw.html>

## B. ADDITIONAL FIELD EXPERIENCE

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### ❖ Additional Field Experience (SW719) Elective Field Credit

Students interested in an extra field experience can register for this optional two-credit course. It is designed to enable students to gain additional advanced social work practice experience in the advanced year. Students complete an additional 120 hours in a given semester. In order to be enrolled, they must also be registered for SW 552 or SW 553.

#### **Additional Field Experience Criteria:**

1. Students must not be under a process of review; must be in good standing
2. A student cannot get additional credit simply by being at field for additional hours; prior approval is acquired
3. Approval is required at the start of the semester term. A student or educator might propose elective credit at the time of the field interview.
4. Students who choose to gain elective credits connected to their field placement should discuss this option with their advisor.
5. Field educator approval is required.
6. Once field educator approval is acquired, the student should discuss the option with their faculty liaison. The faculty liaison monitors the quality of learning via learning contract activities
7. Next, an Elective Credit form should be submitted to the Director of Field Education. Students should indicate how the additional hours will be scheduled.
8. The form is signed by the Director of Field Education. A final signed copy is placed in the student's file.
9. The student then registers under the Field Director for the one credit elective.

### ❖ Independent Study Connected to Additional Time in Field

Students in their Advanced Year field placement occasionally elect to do a third day in field in the second semester. Students may elect to do this for an enhanced learning experience without requesting additional credit for this time. If however, a student wishes to gain extra credit for additional time and specific project work in field, they must register for an *Independent Study* and follow the criteria listed below.

#### **Independent Study Criteria:**

1. A student cannot get additional credit simply by being at field for a 3<sup>rd</sup> day doing the same activities.
2. The *Independent Study* must produce a "product" that can be graded. This will be a totally separate grade from the field placement. An *Independent Study* requires a letter grade (A, B, C) as opposed to an "S" (satisfactory) or "U" (unsatisfactory) grade earned for field.
3. Students may choose to do a variety of activities related to the additional field day. Examples of such activities may include: developing and implementing a psycho educational group for clients at the agency; developing a resource directory for the agency, or doing a literature review or research paper on a particular intervention to be used with consumers at the agency.
4. Students who choose to gain Independent Study credit connected to their field placement should first discuss this option with their agency field educator for approval. Once approved by the field educator, the student should discuss the option with their faculty liaison.
5. Next, an Independent Study Contract form, which can be found in the [School's Student Handbook](#), should be submitted to the Director of Field Education. Students should indicate how many credits they are registering for (from 1 to 3 credits depending on the amount of work involved in the project).
6. The form is signed by Director of Field Education and the MSW Program Director. A final, signed copy of the Independent Study Contract form will be placed in the student's file.
7. The student then registers under the Field Director for the appropriate number of Independent Study credit hours.

The Field Director, in consultation with the Faculty Liaison, will be responsible for overseeing the *Independent Study*, and for providing a grade.

## C. ORIENTATION CHECKLIST FOR MSW INTERNS

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University at Buffalo – School of Social Work

(SAMPLE – MODEL)

Please date each item as it is reviewed/completed.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Organizational Chart of Agency
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mission Statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Overview of agency treatment/service components, brochures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other agency sites: arrange visits
- \_\_\_\_\_ List of staff/credentials/titles/phone extensions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Scheduling interviews with agency staff, directors of agency programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Description & schedule of groups offered at the agency
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meetings: purpose, format, location & time (i.e. Staff meetings, Case Conference)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Policies & Procedures: Include specifics (i.e. procedures for the implementation of HIPAA regulations) and/or reference where to locate Policies and Procedures Manual.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Safety Protocols (in office, home visits, dealing with potentially volatile clients, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lethality assessments/ Duty to warn
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child abuse reporting procedure
- \_\_\_\_\_ How to make a referral: within agency, outside agency, specific agencies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confidentiality regulations, use of appropriate consent for information release forms including those to meet HIPAA regulations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ NASW Code of Ethics available at [www.naswdc.org](http://www.naswdc.org)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Forms used by the agency: Assessment forms, progress notes, Release of Information forms, Insurance & Billing forms, etc., and where to locate them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Documentation: chart order, progress notes, treatment plans, writing letters
- \_\_\_\_\_ List of Community resources/Referral sources
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dress code
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign in Sheet

## **ORIENTATION CHECKLIST FOR MSW INTERNS** *(Continued)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Use of phones, fax machine, copy machine, computers, shredder
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical space: office, restrooms, mailbox, phone messages, lunchroom, parking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Security/locking up
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supplies: Where to find
- \_\_\_\_\_ Coffee Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan for weekly supervision
- \_\_\_\_\_ Educational assessment/tools (experience, learning style, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Educational learning tools (journaling, process recording)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Learning contract
- \_\_\_\_\_ Articles: Provide a bibliography & where to locate or a copy of the actual article.  
Include articles specific to population served, agency principles, cultural competence, interventions, etc.

### **Suggestions to Field Educators for Developing an Orientation Manual for Interns**

1. Developing an orientation manual is an excellent way to tune into what information the student needs. It provides organization and a reference manual. Field educators can refer students to read the manual ahead of time for nuts & bolts information, then review information in supervision for questions. This will save time and provide clarity for present and future students.
2. The above checklist provides suggested items that can be placed in an orientation manual for student reference. Think of the essentials for your setting.
3. A 3-ring binder with dividers provides an excellent format. Tabs can be made for sections (i.e. Organizational Structure, Services, Policies, Procedures, Forms, and Articles).
4. If you do not already have a manual, your student can help you to develop one. As you go over material, forms, resource list, etc., you and the student can put a copy of the material into the binder. Have students take notes on protocols or procedures not already documented and write them up for inclusion in the manual. Reviewing what they put together will help you check out communication, organizational and writing skills.
5. Once a manual is developed, it can be easily updated as agency forms change, or new policies need to be added for use with future interns.

## **D. HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)**

**Note that students should use agency supported technology to deliver service, and not their personal email or software accounts.**

### **Information on Client Confidentiality**

HIPAA is a piece of legislation that endeavors to ensure a necessary flow of information for health insurance purposes, while increasing protection of consumers' health information privacy. While you will receive a good deal of ethical and practice information about confidentiality as your education in the School of Social Work progresses, it is a requirement of the HIPAA legislation that you be informed of basic privacy practices prior to entering your internship site. The following information will acquaint you with confidentiality practices and is also specific to the HIPAA legislation.

Clients must consent to the use or disclosure of their protected health information by healthcare providers, for the purpose of diagnosing or providing treatment and obtaining payment for health care services performed. They must be informed that for diagnosis or treatment of them by you they must sign a form provided by your field agency.

The client has the right to revoke their consent, in writing, at any time, except to the extent that the agency has taken action in reliance on their consent. (i.e. released information to others before client revoked)

The client must be informed that they have the right to review the agency or institution's *Notice of Privacy Practices Handout* prior to signing a document provided to them by the agency. The *Notice of Privacy Practices Handout* describes the types of uses and disclosures of their protected health information that may occur in treatment and payment of bills or in the performance of health care operations. The *Notice of Privacy Practices* also describes the client's rights and the agency's or institution's duties with respect to their protected health information.

The agency reserves the right to change the privacy practices that are described in the *Notice of Privacy Practices Handout*. The client must be informed that they may obtain a revised notice of privacy practices and how this document can be obtained. The client must also sign a form provided by the agency or institution stating they have received the HIPAA privacy information document.

### **HIPAA Privacy Rule Compliance: State Law Preemption**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-Privacy Rule contains a variety of complex requirements and new terminology all practitioners must learn and understand. One of the challenging areas specifically related to behavioral health practitioners involves State Law Preemption. This means that Federal law (i.e. the Privacy Rule) takes precedence over State confidentiality laws unless the State law is more stringent. **Students should receive this information at their respective field agency.**



**The student is responsible for discussing with his/her field educator at the field agency any Protected Health Information (PHI) being brought to classroom presentations and assignments.**

The client's PHI means health information including demographic information, collected from them and created or received by their physician, another health care provider, a health plan, their employer or a health care clearinghouse. This protected health information relates to their past, present or future physical or mental health where there is a reasonable basis to believe the information may identify them. (See next page for *HIPAA Identifiers That Must Be Removed.*)

**HIPAA IDENTIFIERS THAT MUST BE REMOVED**

All of the following are considered identifiers of the individual or of relatives, employers, or household members of the individual:

1. Names
2. All geographic subdivisions smaller than a State, including street address, city, county, precinct, zip code, and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of a zip code if, according to the current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census;
3. All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death; and all ages over 89 and all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age, except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older;
4. Telephone Numbers;
5. Fax Numbers;
6. Electronic Mail Addresses;
7. Social Security Numbers;
8. Medical Record Numbers;
9. Health Plan Beneficiary Numbers;
10. Account Numbers;
11. Certificate/License Numbers;
12. Vehicle Identifiers and Serial Nos., incl. License Plate Nos.;
13. Device Identifiers and Serial Numbers;
14. Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs);
15. Internet Protocol (IP) Address Numbers;
16. Biometric Identifiers, including Finger and Voice Prints
17. Full Face Photographic Images and any Comparable Images; and
18. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code.

*The information provided here is available to the public and should not be construed as legal advice. It will be essential that interns also ask for and receive HIPAA training that is specific to your respective field agency*

## **E. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL SAFETY/RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL WORK INTERNS**

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1. Assessing and managing personal safety risk are essential social work skills (essential life skills). These include becoming aware of the indicators of risk and developing a purposeful and thoughtful strategy to reduce or avoid the risk.
2. It is not possible to eliminate risk but there are specific strategies one can utilize to reduce threats to personal safety.
3. Remember you are ultimately responsible for your own personal safety. Pay attention to your instincts. They can be an important guide to danger.
4. Field Educators should provide an orientation for interns to personal safety procedures in their field practicum agencies. If students have not received this information, they should request it. Policies and procedures will vary in different agency settings. Policies may include requiring home visits to be done in pairs, requiring interview rooms to remain open during sessions, or a specific set of procedures which should be followed if a staff member finds themselves in a potentially dangerous situation.
5. Interns should always inform their field educator and faculty liaison of incidents where they feel their personal safety is threatened.
6. Social workers frequently work with clients who have histories of violence, aggression, mental illness, and substance abuse.
7. Be alert to all parties in your immediate environment.
8. Carry yourself in a confident manner. Be purposeful in your actions.
9. Be friendly; however, do not disclose a great deal of information about yourself or your family.
10. At all times consider safety. Use your observational skills to practice safely.
11. Your supervisor or someone in the agency should know where you are. Before going on home visits, give specific information about your destination and approximate time of arrival and departure. If you are concerned about seeing a particular client, ask for assistance or take another worker with you.

### **Risk Management Strategies in preparing for Agency Visits for Social Work Interns:**

1. Be aware of the physical setting where you will be seeing clients. Where is the desk located? Always have a pathway to the door. Do not seat your client between you and the door.
2. Don't place excessive items on your desk. Paperweights, staplers, scissors can all become weapons.
3. If appropriate, leave the door open when meeting with clients.

4. Find out if the agency has a buzzer system or other methods to communicate with staff when an individual worker is having problems.
5. Keep your supervisor/other staff informed when and where you will be seeing clients. Never remain alone in a building seeing clients.
6. Never work in the building alone. Your field educator or other staff should be on site and available to you when you are engaged in practicum activities.
7. Be aware of the environment when entering and leaving the agency. If you observe suspicious circumstances, notify your supervisor, or wait for others to leave the building so you can walk with them.

**Risk Management Strategies for Home Visits & Work in the Community for Social Work Interns:**

1. Home visits are a frequent part of social work services. It is not necessary to be afraid, just to be observant and use good judgment.
2. Notify your field supervisor that you will be making a home visit. Give specific information about your destination and approximate arrival/departure times. If you are concerned about seeing a particular client, ask for assistance or take another worker with you.
3. When visiting a community/making home visits do not wear expensive jewelry or do things that will make you stand out. Dress in a manner conducive to your practicum activities. Wear clothes that will allow you to run if necessary.
4. When you are in the local neighborhood, be sure to scan the environment and be aware of what is happening around you.
5. A cellular phone is very useful. If you do not have a phone, pay attention to where the nearest phone is located.
6. Carry yourself in a confident, professional manner. Send a message that you are here for a purpose. Be respectful of those in the community.
7. If you are in an unfamiliar building and are using the elevator, try to get on an unoccupied elevator. If the door opens and people who make you feel uncomfortable are on the elevator, simply state that you are going in the other direction.
8. When you knock on the door of a dwelling, pay attention to the sounds you hear from inside. If a heated argument is going on, you may want to wait or go to a pay phone to verify if this is a good time for a visit.
9. Always identify yourself, and do not enter the dwelling until you are invited in. Once inside, don't sit down until you are invited. Choose a seat close to the door and ask if you may sit there.
10. Remember, you are on the client's territory. Home visits are not inherently dangerous; however, people may react differently when they are on their territory.

11. If there are animals in the home, do not assume they will not harm you. Ask the client to please restrain the animal or put them in another room.
12. Do not turn your back on an irate client. Keep them in your vision at all times!
13. When you are in a client's home, be aware of the other people who are also there. Their behaviors such as drug taking, violence, and extreme anger should also be considered when assessing risk.
14. If you observe drugs or weapons, you should reschedule the visit and leave as soon as possible.
15. Find out about the communities where you will be working. Discuss with other workers at the agency. If working in a high crime area, discuss specifically what the safety guidelines are with your field educator. Do not go into high crime areas at night.
16. When making home visits, ask the client about any safety concerns in his or her neighborhood and recommended safety strategies.
17. Make sure that you have your car keys in your hand. Always lock your car once you are in the car and after you get out.
18. If you will be placing your purse in the car trunk, do it before you leave the office to avoid calling attention to the act or leave it in the office.
19. Check your car for sufficient gas before you leave the office. Think what you would do if you had car trouble or a flat tire. Do you have an auto club? Do you know how to fix a flat? Make sure you have emergency equipment in your car such as a flashlight, jumper cables, and emergency road kit.
20. When parking your car, choose a spot that is close to a light. Park as close to where you are going as possible. Make sure your car is pointed in the direction to leave.
21. Do not transport clients in any vehicle. Discuss this with your field supervisor at the pre-placement interview so there are no unexpected requests from the agency to do so.
22. Before you leave the office, make sure you have the correct directions and phone numbers. Get a map and plan your trip. If you get lost, go to a gas station or convenience store to ask directions.

### **Guidelines for Dealing with Agitated Clients:**

If a client becomes agitated or confrontational:

1. Maintain an appropriate distance. Sometimes, we tend to move closer to an individual and this can escalate a situation or put you in danger of being assaulted. You may need to give them space to walk out of the area or to remove yourself from the area. If needed, ask a supervisor or another staff in authority to assist you. (Allowing you to disengage with the person, get out of danger, and make someone aware of the volatile situation.)

2. Encourage the person to have a seat if they are standing. Pacing can increase the agitation. You may wish to stand until assistance arrives, or you may choose to sit after the client sits.
3. Do not touch the person, even if attempting to simply pat them on the shoulder to reassure them.
4. Watch carefully and remain alert. Clenched fists, hands that are opening and closing in a frenzied manner, darting eyes or a wide-eyed panic-stricken look and tensed jaw muscles can provide indicators that the person is very agitated. If aggressive behaviors continue to escalate despite your efforts to assist the client in calming down, identify an opportunity to leave this volatile situation to get help.
5. When faced with verbal confrontation, keep your voice calm. Do not engage in an argument. Speaking softly will sometimes allow the person to lower their tone in order to hear what you are saying.
6. Provide an honorable avenue of escape. Know when to terminate a session. Do not become so focused on the task that you ignore warning signs of a potentially dangerous situation. Offer to reschedule the appointment. You may ask the client to wait in the waiting room while you contact your supervisor for direction as to how to proceed in assisting them.
7. Realize that an individual who is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs has an increased risk of unstable or volatile behavior and impaired judgment. Learn to identify signs of being under the influence: glassy eyes, dilated pupils, staggering, odor of alcohol or marijuana, irrational or illogical behavior, acting uncharacteristically different, extremely depressed or elevated mood. It is not useful to attempt to resolve issues with a client in this condition. It is recommended that you terminate the session and reschedule.
8. If you are threatened with violence, disengage immediately until you can get assistance from your supervisor or local police if necessary.

## F. UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CONDUCT IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

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Social work students are expected to adhere to the standards and ethics of the profession as articulated in the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) *Code of Ethics* and the Standard of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Prior to signing this agreement, you are asked to read the entire NASW *Code of Ethics*. This document may be found in your student handbook or on the NASW website, located at <http://www.naswdc.org>. The following areas of the NASW *Code of Ethics* are of particular relevance for your practicum experiences:

### **Commitment to Clients (1.01)**

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients.

### **Cultural Competence and Social Diversity (1.05)**

Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

### **Self-Determination (1.06)**

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist client in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals.

### **Conflicts of Interest (1.06)**

- a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment.
- b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship.
- c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients, in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality (1.07)**

Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional services, except for compelling professional reasons.

### **Sexual Relationships (1.09 a and c)**

Social workers under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced. Additionally, social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client.

### **Physical Contact (1.10)**

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients).

### **Derogatory Language (1.12)**

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about the clients.

### **Payment for Services (1.13b)**

Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services.

### **Dishonesty, Fraud and Deception (4.04)**

Social workers should not participate in, condone or be associated with dishonesty, fraud or deception.

### **The NASW in 2018 added the following language regarding technology and social work practice:**

With growth in the use of communication technology in various aspects of social work practice, social workers need to be aware of the unique challenges that may arise in relation to the maintenance of confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, professional competence, record keeping, and other ethical considerations. In general, all ethical standards in this *Code of Ethics* are applicable to interactions, relationships, or communications, whether they occur in person or with the use of technology. For the purposes of this *Code*, "technology-assisted social work services" include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail, and emerging digital applications. Technology-assisted social work services encompass all aspects of social

work practice, including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.

**NOTE:** If at any time during your field practicum, you find yourself in a situation in which you have questions or concerns about a potential ethical issue or dilemma, contact your field instructor or faculty liaison immediately.



## G. POLICY: FIELD STATUS REVIEW PROCESS

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University at Buffalo – School of Social Work

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Topic: Field Status Review Process |   |
| Section: Field Education           |   |
| Original Date: 06/13/2006          |   |
| Date Revised: 08/7/24              | Updated By: K. McClain-Meeder; K. Stalker |

**POLICY:** A student's field status may be reviewed when a placement is terminated and a student is in jeopardy of failing, or has failed SW550, 551, 552, or 553 (field education courses).

If termination occurred and field failure is *not* being considered, the student will meet with field faculty and staff and will be given an option to repeat field.

If field failure has occurred or is being considered, a formal field status review meeting will be held with field education, student services, and the MSW Program Director. The field status committee will determine whether the student will be permitted to repeat field in another field site. If the student will not be permitted to repeat field, the student will be dismissed from the program. The student has the option of voluntarily withdrawing from the program, or appealing the dismissal prior to the dismissal deadline.

**ORIGIN OF POLICY:** Academic Affairs

**QUESTIONS REGARDING POLICY TO:** MSW Program Director

| RESPONSIBILITY  | PROCEDURE  |
|-----------------|--|
| Faculty Liaison | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Notifies the Director of Field Education (DFE) as soon as it is determined that the student will fail or is at risk of receiving a failing grade for the field course.</li><li>2. Provides DFE with a copy of the Field Performance Evaluation if available and the Field Liaison Summary Report documenting the reasons for potential failure and the efforts taken during the semester to support the student in an attempt to prevent failure.</li></ol> |

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| Field Education Representative   | <p>3. Contacts all parties (field education and student services representative(s), faculty liaison, MSW Director, Advisor, and the student) to schedule a mutually agreed time for the review meeting.</p> <p>4. The student is informed that they can bring one support person (i.e. fellow student or someone from outside of school) to the meeting. The student must indicate their intention to bring a support person in advance of the review meeting. They will then be asked to sign a FERPA waiver for the support person as the student's confidential academic information will be discussed in the meeting. The support person is not an active participant in the meeting. Students may not bring an attorney to represent them, and if they do so, the meeting will be cancelled and the student and attorney will be referred to the SUNY Office of General Counsel.</p> <p>5. Shares a copy of the Field Performance Evaluation if available and the Field Liaison Summary Report with all identified parties at least 5 academic days prior to the meeting.</p> |
| Student Services Representative  | <p>6. Once the review meeting is scheduled, a hold is placed on the student's account to prevent resignation from the field course.</p>  |
| Representative(s) from Field Education, Student Services, MSW Director, Faculty Liaison, and Student (Advisor may attend at their discretion.) | <p>7. Meet to discuss the circumstances of the failure or potential failure, and to obtain student feedback. The student is given an opportunity to address each of the issues identified. Once the discussion is completed the student will be excused from the room.</p>   |
| Representative(s) from Field Education, Student Services, MSW Director, Faculty Liaison  | <p>8. Based on the circumstances and information presented, those present at the review meeting deliberate and determine whether the student will have the option to repeat the field course and if so whether hours can carry forward. A determination is made about the grade. The DFE is responsible for assigning the grade in Hub.</p> <p>The group will consider the student's progress in attainment of the necessary competencies in their field setting and will consider the Code of Ethics and CSWE competencies.</p> <p>A second failure of a field course will automatically result in dismissal from the program.</p>  |

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| Field Education Director or Assistant Director for Field Education               | <p>8. If a determination is made to allow the student to repeat a field placement, the FED or Assistant Director of Field Education sends a letter within 10 academic days informing the student of the decision along with any recommendations.</p> <p>9. Members of the Field Team will make the decision about placement location based on their assessment of the student's professional development needs. While field personnel will attempt to replace a student right away, due to agency availability it may not be possible to restart field until the following semester.</p>  |
| Field Education Director or Assistant Director for Field education; MSW Director | <p>10. If student impairment is identified as a concern, Field personnel will talk to the student about the impairment policy option. If the student states that they are willing to engage in the impairment process, Field personnel submits a written request for review to the SSW Impairment Committee.</p> <p>The student has the right to refuse the impairment process, voluntarily withdraw from the program, or opt for dismissal. The student notifies the MSW Director within 14 academic days from the date of email notification of their decision to participate in the impairment process. If the student does not contact the MSW Director with a decision after 14 days, and has not voluntarily withdrawn from the program, the MSW Director will dismiss the student from the program, notifying the student via email.</p> |
| MSW Program Director   | <p>12. If the student will not be given an opportunity to repeat field in an alternate setting, which then automatically results in dismissal, the MSW Director sends written notification of this determination to the student via email within 10 academic days.</p> <p>The student can appeal their dismissal from the School of Social Work to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The process for requesting reinstatement that is outlined in the Student Handbook is followed.</p> <p>Information about reinstatement can be found in the <a href="#">MSW Student Handbook</a>.</p>   |

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| Student | <p>13. If not dismissed, can file a grievance with the SSW Committee on Students (if criteria outlined in the Student Handbook are met).</p> <p>14. The student can voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time.</p> |

## H. POLICY: REVIEW OF STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE TWO UNSUCCESSFUL PLACEMENT INTERVIEWS

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| Topic: Review of Students Who Experience Two Unsuccessful Placement Interviews |                                 |
| Section: Field Education   | Revised: 07/24/2023             |
| Date: August 6, 2019   | By: K Stalker; K McClain-Meeder |

POLICY: Students who experience two unsuccessful placement interviews will participate in a review meeting. A review meeting will be scheduled to determine whether the student will be allowed to continue in the field course. If not allowed to continue, and the student is registered for the field course, a determination is made about the grade.

ORIGIN OF POLICY: Academic Affairs

QUESTIONS REGARDING POLICY TO: Director of Field Education

| RESPONSIBILITY  | PROCEDURE  |
|---|--|
| Field Education Representative  | 1. Notifies student advisor and MSW Director, providing a summary report of unsuccessful interviews and actions taken.   |
| Field Education Representative  | <p>2. Contacts all parties (student, field education and student services representative(s), advisor, MSW Director) to schedule a mutually agreed upon time for the review meeting.</p> <p>3. The student is informed that they can bring one support person (i.e. fellow student or outside of school person) to the meeting. The student must indicate their intention to bring a support person in advance of the review meeting. They will be then be asked to sign a FERPA waiver for the support person as the student's confidential academic information will be discussed in the meeting. The support person is not an active participant in the meeting. Students may not bring an attorney to represent them, and if they do so, the meeting will be cancelled and the student and attorney will be referred to the SUNY Office of General Counsel.</p>   |
| Representative(s) from Field Education, Student Services, MSW Director<br>(Advisor may attend at their discretion.) | <p>4. Meet to discuss the circumstances of the unsuccessful interviews, and to obtain student feedback. Once the review meeting is complete, the student will be excused from the room.</p> <p>5. Make a determination, based on the information gathered, whether student will or will not have the option to be sent on another placement interview, and what grade will be assigned if the students is registered in the field course. The DFE is responsible for assigning the grade in Hub. A second failure of the field course automatically results in dismissal from the program.</p> <p>6. If it is determined that the student will be allowed to interview, a plan of action, including recommendations and steps that should be taken by the student, will be formulated. Placement is generally deferred by at least one semester.</p> <p>7. If student impairment is identified as a concern, student services will discuss the impairment policy option with the student. If the student states that they are willing to engage in the impairment process, a written request for review is submitted to the SSW Impairment Committee. The interview process is delayed until the Impairment Process is complete.</p> |

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|  | <p>The student has the right to refuse the impairment process, voluntarily withdraw from the program, or opt for dismissal. The student notifies the MSW Director within 14 academic days from the date of email notification of their decision to participate in the impairment process. If the student does not contact the MSW Director with a decision after 14 days, and has not voluntarily withdrawn from the program, the MSW Director will dismiss the student from the program, notifying the student via email.</p>  |
| MSW Program Director   | <p>8. If a determination is made to not allow the student to interview and proceed in field due to unethical, dangerous, or extremely inappropriate behavior, the MSW Director sends written notification of this determination to the student via email within 15 academic days. This determination automatically results in dismissal from the program.</p>   |
| Student  | <p>9. If not dismissed, can file a grievance with the SSW Committee on Students (if criteria outlined in the Student Handbook are met).</p> <p>10. Can voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time.</p> <p>11. If dismissed from the program, can appeal the decision to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Information about reinstatement can be found in the <a href="#">MSW Student Handbook</a>.</p>   |
| Director of Field Education or Assistant Director of Field Education       | <p>12. If a determination is made to allow the student to interview, sends notification letter to student within 10 calendar days, detailing recommendations discussed at the review meeting, including steps that should be taken by the student.</p>  |
| Field Education faculty/staff member responsible for the placement process | <p>13. Members of the Field Team discuss with student written recommendations detailed at the review meeting before arranging placement interview.</p> <p>Members of the Field Team will make the decision about placement location based on their assessment of the student's professional development needs. While field personnel will attempt to replace a student right away, due to agency availability it may not be possible to restart field until the following semester.</p> <p>Field education faculty/staff will identify a placement interview based on placement availability and with the</p> |

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|  | student's educational goals in mind. Students will not, however, be able to select particular agencies. |
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## **I. FIELD EDUCATION LOG/JOURNAL ASSIGNMENTS (SAMPLE PAGE OF JOURNALING)**

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### **Directions:**

- 1. Read pages 2-4 regarding content of journal.**
- 2. Before the start of each day, enter your thoughts and feelings related to scheduled activities.**
- 3. At the end of each day, following the journal entry, write 2-3 paragraphs in response to the following questions:**
  - a) What did you feel successful in?
  - b) What was challenging for you?
  - c) What were your cognitions (thoughts) and feelings about the views and perspectives of others?
  - d) How did you respond to any feedback that may have been provided you?
  - e) Can you identify areas of professional development and personal growth related to the day's events?
  - f) From a Social Work perspective, what was your key learning about your work and about yourself?
- 4. Finally, after completion of each semester, from a Social Work perspective identify areas of professional development and personal growth (i.e. related to level of self-awareness, insight; related to Social Work roles; related to Social work theory)?**

## LOG/JOURNAL FORMAT – INSTRUCTIONS

### **Description of Activities**

Discuss what you actually did during the day.

For example:

How many clients did you have?

Were you involved in any supervisory or multidisciplinary meeting?

What type of documentation did you do?

Did you study or refer to agency policies for any reason?

In other words, give a run-down of your activities of the day with special focus on those activities that have aided you in increasing your skill and knowledge as a developing social work practitioner.

### **Feelings**

What kinds of personal reaction did you have to situations you encountered during the week?

Examine both negative and positive reactions.

For example you might write something like:

*My supervisor told me she really appreciates my commitment to professionalism. When I heard that, I felt both proud and thankful. When I hear comments like that I think to myself that I am going into the right profession.*

**OR**

*All day long we were swamped with crisis calls. One mother needed food for her children, another lady said she and her baby would be kicked out of their apartment if she didn't get some help with the rent. When I went home, I was drained, and I wondered how some social workers do it.*

### **Values**

In this section discuss how personal values and professional social work values have been taken into consideration during the course of your day.

For example you might state:

*I gained a real understanding of two of the core values of social work, dignity and worth of the person and the importance of human relationships. I was working with a client who has been on my caseload for one month. Working together we have been able to get him over his immediate crisis. I was also able to locate a person who will provide him with therapy at a very affordable rate.*

*However, my client decided against it. Even though I was a little upset, because I think the therapy could help him a great deal, I remembered the importance of client self-determination in social work. So I told my client that should he decide in the future that he wants therapy, I would help him locate another therapist.*

### **Integration of Theory and Practice**

In this section you need to look back on all the information you have entered into your log for the day and examine what you have observed or done, while considering how your experiences relate to what you have been learning in the Social Work program.

For example:

*During the completion of a bio-psychosocial assessment, you realize that your client is in need of assistance in connecting with services that are available in the community. In remembering what you have learned about ecological systems theory, you remember that people may often experience problems as they interface with the external environment. Therefore, you recognize the need to act as a services broker in helping to link your client with needed services.*

**OR**

*Your supervisor states, in a client case staffing, that a particular client has been afraid to confront his boss about unfair treatment at the workplace and has instead been directing his anger at his children, becoming very agitated over easily resolvable issues. From your study of psychoanalytic theory, you recognize the client's behavior sounds very much like the defense mechanism of displacement.*

**OR**

*You may be working with behaviorally different children in a school setting, where you notice that the teacher praises good behavior and ignores disruptive behavior. From your study of behaviorism, you know that behavioral approaches of positive reinforcement combined with extinction are being used in an attempt to modify the student behavior.*

## **Example of Log/Journal Entry - Field Placement Site: A correctional facility for women**

### **Description of Activities**

During this week in placement, I was involved in plans to improve the visiting area for families. I had several individual sessions with clients at my office. I also conducted two groups for women who have chemical dependency problems.

### **Feelings**

Corrections work is very exciting, but it is also very stressful and draining. The other day I was in the middle of one of my sessions when a “lockdown” was ordered. At first, I was a little worried. I saw six correctional officers run past the window that faces the hall in our group meeting area. A moment later one of the officers instructed us that we would need to remain locked in our group meeting area until an “all clear” order was issued. At first the group members began to speculate about what might have happened. Three of the seven group members got up to look out the window. Just then one of the group members laughed and said, “Let’s get back to work, we wanted a longer group time today, and I guess we got it.” I was glad that happened, because I was concerned I might lose control of the group.

### **Values**

In the prison, the value of Dignity and Worth of the Person keeps coming up for me over and over again. So often I hear administrators and officers talk about the inmates as though they were less than human. I know these women have committed crimes, but they still are human beings. I see where social work values are not necessarily shared by other professionals in the prison.

### **Integration of Theory and Practice**

In the women’s chemical dependency group, I have come to realize that many are victims of abuse and that they have often turned to drugs to help them cope with feelings of hurt, anger, depression, or loneliness. One inmate stated that her stepfather used to sexually abuse her every night when she was 13 and 14 years old. From that point on, she used drugs to escape her feelings. She became a prostitute at age 15, after running away from home. Hearing such stories makes it hard for me to fully accept the disease model of addiction. I see much more going on in the development of addiction for most of my clients. I take more of a bio-psychosocial approach in understanding addiction among members of my treatment group. I believe that multiple factors of abuse, along with social, emotional, psychological, economic, and gender issues, have contributed greatly, and in concert, in the development of my clients’ problems with drugs and/or alcohol.

Coggins, K., & Hatchett, B.F. (2002). *Field Practicum: Skill Building from a Multicultural Perspective*. Peosta, Iowa: Eddie Bowers Publishing Co.

# UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO SSW: JOURNALING ASSIGNMENT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Before your day begins....

| Description of Activities | Values | Integration of Theory and Practice | Feelings |
|---------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Sample Page               |        |                                    |          |

**University at Buffalo  
School of Social Work  
Technical Standards for Admission, Promotion and Graduation**

### **Introduction & Purpose:**

The University at Buffalo School of Social Work (UBSSW) is preparing students for careers as professional social workers and to be leaders of social work practice. Becoming a professional social worker is a gradual process, and involves a commitment to lifelong learning and self-reflection. The UBSSW is fully committed to supporting and educating students as they prepare to enter the social work profession. Given the ethical responsibilities of professional social work practice to promote and protect the well-being of the clients and communities we serve, the UBSSW has established Technical Standards for students that not only focus on academic performance but that also emphasize the abilities and attributes essential for the profession.

This document describes the Technical Standards each student must satisfy, with or without reasonable accommodations, to enroll in, fully participate in, progress through, and graduate from any UBSSW program. These requirements apply in the classroom, in field placements, in our school, in the university, and in the broader community and societal context.

### **1.Communication Skills:**

- Communicate effectively, responsibly, and respectfully in a timely manner in interactions with other students, faculty, field instructors, staff, clients and client systems, and other professionals with whom they might come in contact within their student role.
- Demonstrate the capacity to use effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills, including the ability to actively listen, self-reflect and interpret nonverbal communication of others and self.
- Communicate clearly through verbal and written products at a level appropriate for their stage of education.

### **2.Intellectual and Cognitive Ability:**

- Ability to recall and retain information, think critically, and apply problem solving skills in an efficient and timely manner.
- Ability to plan, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize information in a timely manner.
- Demonstrate a continual effort to reflect on their own values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, biases, current and past experiences, and make efforts to be inclusive of different cultures and populations.
- Manage time effectively in order to observe deadlines, and conscientiously arrange and keep appointments.
- Ability to navigate transportation to meet field and classroom requirements.
- Ability to acquire knowledge, process experiences and incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and literature in formulating interventions and treatment plans.
- Evaluate and integrate into practice constructive feedback received in both the classroom and field settings.

### **3.Emotional and Behavioral Professionalism:**

- Seek appropriate help to ensure that personal issues do not interfere with professional and academic performance.
- Demonstrate the ability to tolerate demanding workloads, adapt to changing environments and situations.
- Maintain respectful and appropriate relationships and boundaries with peers, faculty, field

instructors, staff, clients and client systems, and other professionals.

- Be punctual and dependable, prioritize responsibilities, manage time, and attend and actively participate in class and field in accordance with relevant policy.
- Demonstrate behavior and decisions reflecting the highest standards of honesty and personal, academic, and professional integrity.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and quality of work, and consider the impact of these on others.
- Show the capacity to successfully complete required field practicum hours and demonstrate positive progress in the required social work competencies. The [2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS_Web_FINAL.pdf.aspx), can be accessed at [https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS\\_Web\\_FINAL.pdf.aspx](https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS_Web_FINAL.pdf.aspx) in the field and classroom settings.

#### 4. Skills with Technology:

- Ability to use computers for searching, recording, storing, and retrieving information.
- Navigate and utilize technologies, such as learning platforms, videoconferencing, library systems, and various software necessary to complete classroom and various assignments.
- Use required field agency technology to fulfill the work duties at their field placement site. This technology could include, but is not limited to, the use of computers, telephones, and agency databases.
- Comply with the [Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice](#).

These standards are congruent with the ethical values and standards laid down by the [NASW Code of Ethics](#), which all students must abide by. In addition, students are expected to review and abide by all University at Buffalo and School of Social Work Policies and Practices. A student can participate in our social work programs so long as they are able to meet these standards, with or without reasonable accommodations. Students who would like to request reasonable accommodations to assist them in meeting these standards should contact: Accessibility Resources (AR), located at 25 Capen Hall, Buffalo, New York 14260. More information can be found at the following link: <https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/who-we-are/departments/accessibility.html>. In addition, please contact UB School of Social Work Student Services if you are having difficulty in meeting the standards while enrolled in the program.