MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FIELD EDUCATION

The Field Work Manual is designed to serve as a guide and a resource for students, field instructors, agency educational coordinators and executives, and field advisors. The Manual includes information which is vital to the design, expectations, and evaluation of the field experiences of our social work graduate students.

The field practicum is an important and integral component of the curriculum and provides our students with supervised experiences in applying the knowledge, values, ethics, and skills necessary for advanced social work practice. The field practicum is one of the distinct strengths of our master’s degree curriculum.

We extend our appreciation to the field instructors and agencies who are our partners in providing rich opportunities in field education. Your contribution to our educational program is vital in the preparation of our graduates who are known for the high quality of service they provide to our community.

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Calendars can be printed from Field Education web site:
http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/
MISSION STATEMENT

The Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College of the City University of New York (CUNY), established in 1958, is the oldest and the largest public school of social work in New York. The School’s mission is to work on behalf of cultural diversity, human rights, and social and economic justice. It is a mission commensurate with the profession’s purpose to promote and enhance human and community well-being. Our mission understands people as nested in their communities and therefore seeks solutions in human interactions and in the policies and communities which affect people.

Program Goals

- To graduate excellently prepared and diverse social work leaders operating out of a strengths-based perspective for New York City and other major urban areas
- To emphasize urban contexts in our curriculum’s person-in-urban-environment perspective, our research agenda, and our community partnerships
- To build our students’ capacity to respond to emerging practice challenges
- To be a School that values and respects the diversity inherent in New York City
- To produce culturally competent practitioners and scholarship relevant to diverse populations
- To instill a commitment to social and economic justice in students through our explicit and implicit curricula
- To produce community-engaged scholarship and practice-based research
- To work in partnership with New York’s communities, agencies, and organizations

FIELD PRACTICUM

A primary purpose of the field practicum is to enable students to develop competence within the framework of social work values and ethics. The field practicum provides opportunities for students to perform social work tasks under the supervision of a field instructor and encourages the integration and application of concepts and principles learned in both the classroom and the field placement site. The agency or community-based field instructor provides educational supervision; the school-based field advisor plays an integrating and monitoring function between the school and the agency; and the field education staff coordinates and has oversight of the field experience, in collaboration with the agency partners.

Our students are expected to master two sets of measurable practice behaviors that operationalize the competencies:

1. Core (or foundation) practice behaviors.
2. Advanced practice behaviors associated with Advanced Practice Method Concentrations: Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups; Community Organizing, Planning, and Development; and Organizational Management and Leadership.

Another primary purpose of the field practicum is to provide practice opportunities so that students can attain the objectives of the program in order to develop, demonstrate, and deepen...
practice behaviors in the following areas:

- Identification as a professional who adheres to the core values and ethics of the profession
- Application of social work ethical principles and tolerance for ambiguity in practice
- Critical thinking in the formation and communication of professional judgments
- Respect for and acceptance of difference associated with culture, ethnicity, religion, race, class, sexual orientation, age, gender, and physical and mental abilities
- Application of knowledge from the study of human behavior and the social environment to practice
- Advocacy in the advancement of human rights and social and economic justice through the provision of social services in human service organizations that serve the diversity of communities within the New York City urban environment and its surrounding areas
- Advocacy for the needs of the poor, oppressed, vulnerable, and stigmatized groups in society through promotion of economic and social justice for clients and communities
- Utilization of research evidence to inform practice and practice experience to inform research as assessed through performance in the classroom, the field practicum, research courses, and the professional seminar
- Practice competencies in social work methods concentrations including clinical practice with individuals and families; group work; organizational management and leadership; and community organization, planning, and development as assessed through their performance in the field practicum
- Advocacy for human rights and economic and social justice in agency and community practice
- Ability to respond to the contexts in which practice occurs, organizations and communities. Understanding of the contexts that shape practice, including local, state, and federal policy; organizational policies; and the political and social organization of communities
- Development of the habits of lifelong learning and ongoing professional development.
- Effectiveness in assessment, intervention, and evaluation of individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities

Mutual Agreement Between the School, Agency, and Student

The Field Practicum Manual serves to document the agreement among all the participants—the Silberman School of Social Work, the agency, and the student—regarding field practicum expectations and responsibilities. The School seeks to develop and maintain relationships with agencies that will assure a field practicum of high quality for MSW students and foster the acquisition of core and advanced-practice competencies. Close cooperation based on mutual trust and clarity about expectations is essential for effective collaboration between the School and its affiliated agencies. Readiness to share and review the teaching and learning relationship is a requisite for strengthening the field practicum experiences of students.

Expectations of the School

The School will establish an affiliation with a field placement agency on the basis of mutual
exploration of the agency’s accord with the School’s educational mission and the appropriateness of the agency setting, the projected assignments, and the designated field instructor for the supervision and instruction of students.

- The School will send information about assigned students to the agency prior to the beginning of each academic year.
- The School will keep the agency informed of the academic calendar, curriculum developments, and special events for field educators.
- The School will designate a Field Advisor to guide the educational development of the student, provide consultation to the field instructor, and assign a grade for a student’s performance in the practicum.
- The School will provide a Seminar in Field Instruction required of all first-time field instructors at no cost to the agency or the field instructor.
- The School will provide annual meetings and workshops to orient and inform field instructors on various aspects of the curriculum, including the teaching of core/foundation and advanced-practice behaviors and to offer information about new developments in the field.

Selection of Practicum Agencies

The School has the responsibility for selecting agencies based on the agency’s ability to support the School’s educational objectives. Agencies are also selected if they extend the range of learning opportunities to students. The School is concerned with providing an appropriate and rich agency environment for its students. The School considers the following criteria when selecting placements (see also Expectations of Agencies):

- The agency, whether public or not-for-profit, has a commitment to serving a diverse clientele, with particular attention to members of poor, oppressed, vulnerable, and stigmatized groups.
- The agency adheres to the values, ethics, and standards for cultural competence for the profession.
- The agency provides services in a new or developing area of practice that is consistent with the School’s mission.
- The agency designates a person or persons qualified to serve in the capacity of Field Instructor and supports them in fulfilling their educational role (see Expectations of Field Instructors).
- The agency designates an Educational Coordinator, who may also be the field instructor in some agencies, to maintain administrative liaison with the School.
- The agency can provide the physical space and resources conducive to student learning and professional practice.

Process for Affiliation With Agencies

The process of affiliation with agencies for the placement of Two Year, Advanced Standing, Accelerated, and Dual Degree Program students begins, most commonly, with a request by the agency. Agencies interested in serving as a field placement site contact the Director or Field
Education Department. The Field Education Department and faculty members may also reach out to agencies in developing areas of practice. If inquiring agencies meet the School’s basic criteria for affiliation, they are asked to complete an Agency Database Form and Field Instructors’ Experience Outline Form, which provide the Field Education Department with a description of the agency’s programs, projected learning opportunities, and the qualifications of prospective field instructors. Agencies accepted as placement sites may also complete an Agency Request Form indicating the number and type of assignments available in a given year.

Students are not encouraged to seek their own placements since the School has a varied complement of affiliations with educationally approved agencies. However, student input about agencies which meet special educational needs will be considered.

Process for Assignment of Students to Agencies

The Assistant Directors, accountable to the Director of Field Education, place first-year field practicum students in the full-time program in agencies on the basis of the student’s major practice method, field of practice, prior experience, learning needs, location, and other special needs.

First-Year Student Placement Process

After a first-year student’s information is reviewed by the Field Education Department, the Department offers the student a placement opportunity. First-year students have limited input regarding the selection of the agency setting. Every consideration is given to ensure that the students are placed within 90 minutes of travel time from their homes and with a population consistent with their practice methods. The students should be aware that an agency interview is often required, and the placement decision is based upon feedback from the agency and the students’ performance at the interview. If a student rejects a field placement opportunity, the Field Education Department will review the rationale and assess if another placement opportunity is indicated. If a student rejects or is rejected by three (3) agencies after interviewing, the School assumes the student is not ready to matriculate in our program and will require the student to take a leave of absence for one year.

Second-Year Student Placement Process

The Field Education Department will review each student’s Field Practicum Planning Form. Based on the information presented on the form, the student’s field practicum evaluation, and the field advisor’s feedback, the Field Education Department will discuss placement options. Second-year students are given no more than three (3) reasonable field placement opportunities based upon realistic geographical considerations, the availability of appropriate field assignments, and adequate field supervision consistent with their chosen method sequence and field of practice. In situations where the students reject or are rejected by the agency after interviewing for the three (3) placement opportunities, the School assumes the students are not ready to resume the field practicum and they will be referred to Student Services to adjust their status in the program.
The Assistant Directors of Field Education contact the designated Educational Coordinator in the agency and discuss the projected assignment. Written confirmation of the assignment is sent to the agency and to the student.

**Process for Affiliation With Agencies Employing OYR Program Students**

Students in the OYR program are expected to fulfill field practicum requirements in their employing agencies. If a student leaves employment prior to the start of the practicum, the student must seek the School’s approval to enter the practicum in a newly employing agency. Prior to starting the field practicum, students must successfully complete their probationary period at their new employment. When students are dismissed from their places of employment, the Field Education Department will evaluate the cause of termination of employment as a part of the review process. Upon approval of the Director of Field Education, students may request placement on a self-financed basis by the process used for Two-Year program students.

When employees apply for admission to the OYR program, the employing agency is asked to sign an agency executive agreement indicating readiness to provide a field practicum for the OYR student/employee during the second phase (Time Frame II) of the program.

In the fall semester of Time Frame I, OYR students provide the names of contact persons for practicum planning in their employing agencies to the advisor. The advisor works with the agency in developing the field placement for the following (residency) year.

**OYR Students in the Field**

Assignments that will offer a student new learning within the context of employment are developed between the Field Education Department and the educational coordinator of the agency. A written agreement detailing the assignment must be approved by the School and signed by all three parties (agency director or field instructor, student, and the school’s assistant director or advisor). The OYR field practicum must include significant opportunity for new learning in the student’s method concentration. This may be achieved through placement in another setting within the agency, creating new assignments within the original job setting, a combination of the two, or placement in another agency. All of the work—including relevant aspects of the student’s 28 hours a week—is considered part of the supervised practicum experience. The school expects that agencies will make every effort not to add hours to a student’s work week. The field advisor monitors field assignments during the year and meets with the student and the field instructor at least once during the year to insure the quality of the experience. Students should consult the field advisor regarding concerns about the agency’s ability to comply with the written agreement.

**SEMINAR IN FIELD INSTRUCTION (SIFI)**

Potential field instructors are required to have the MSW degree from a Council on Social Work Education accredited social work program, three years of post-master’s work experience in the field, competence in the area of practice which they will supervise, the ability to allocate time to field instruction, and a current license and registration as either a licensed master social worker
(LMSW) or a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) or its state equivalent.

Another requirement is **SIFI Certification**. The SIFI, developed and approved by the Greater New York Area Directors of Field Education, involves 12 two-hour sessions with written assignments and readings. Upon successful completion of the SIFI, field instructors receive a **SIFI Certificate** at a graduation ceremony held at the School. The SIFI Certificate is accepted by other schools of social work in the greater New York area.

**Seminar Objectives**

- To help social work practitioners acquire competence as field instructors of graduate social work interns related to the following: relevant educational principles and methodology, the School’s curriculum and expectations for field instruction, and the criteria for evaluation of field education performance.
- To provide a forum for learning and the mutual exchange of ideas and concerns related to acquiring the role, knowledge, and skills of field teaching.

**Continuing Education Opportunities for Field Instructors**

The Silberman School of Social Works offers a 15% discount to our field instructors for its post-masters training courses.

The School’s continuing education opportunities—ranging from advanced clinical and trauma-related coursework to organizational management and leadership skills and Spanish for social workers—can be reviewed through the following link:
http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/programs/professional-development/

**Orientation to Field Instruction for Experienced Field Instructors**

Field instructors new to the Silberman School of Social Work but experienced in field instruction through affiliation with another school/program of social work may be exempt from attendance at our SIFI program by the Field Education Coordinator. However, we acquaint these field instructors with our curriculum, field practicum policies, and practices through their attendance and participation at two meetings at the School during the academic year.

**FIELD ADVISEMENT**

The primary objective of the field advising process is to monitor, evaluate, and support student progress in the field practicum. The advisor monitors and evaluates student learning in the field agency and supports socialization to the profession. The advisor collaborates with the agency field instructor to insure a quality experience in the field placement. The advisor is responsible for granting the field practicum grade.

All students are assigned a field advisor by the Field Education Department at the beginning of each year. With some exceptions, a different advisor is assigned after the first year. In their work with students, the advisor is responsible for the following: orientation, teaching
(integration), educational consultation, evaluation, and professional development.

**Teaching (Integration)**

The advisor assists the student in integrating knowledge from the classroom and the field, particularly as it pertains to attainment of both core competencies and those associated with the student’s method concentration. The advisor promotes the use of resources within the agency, the School, and in the profession that advance learning. Students’ attendance and participation at the monthly advisement meetings are part of field grades.

**Educational Consultation**

The advisor will refer students to an academic advisor for assistance in selecting and registering for courses, in completing a degree audit prior to graduation, and when academic or writing challenges are identified in the classroom or in the placement. The advisor assists the first-year student in planning for placement in the second year and the second-year student in planning for employment and further professional development.

**Evaluation**

The advisor is responsible for monitoring and assessing student performance for the field practicum. The advisor assists students who need to increase their competence in the field or classroom by developing or revising the educational plan for completion of work. The advisor reviews recordings (logs, journals, etc.) to assess the learning process. The advisor meets with the student and field instructor in order to advance opportunities for student learning during the field practicum. The advisor reads the evaluation of student performance. The advisor submits a grade for the field practicum at the end of each semester.

**Contact with the Advisor**

Depending on the students’ year, advisors meet with them two or three times each semester in group advisement. The Field Education Department and advisors will inform students of the schedule of meetings. In addition, the advisor will meet individually with each advisee at least twice per semester. When the student is in the field practicum, the advisor maintains contact with the field instructor by telephone and/or e-mail and through a scheduled site visit, preferably in the first semester. The advisor is expected to respond quickly to student or field instructor concerns and questions.

**Problem Solving Role of the Advisor**

When students encounter difficulties in placement, the first step is for the students to raise the issue with the field instructor. The School encourages self-advocacy. However, if the student’s efforts do not lead to a resolution of the problem, the student should notify the advisor to get support and coaching and to discuss problem-solving strategies.

It is the student’s responsibility to contact the advisor immediately about unresolved concerns in
the field placement or problems affecting performance in the program. The advisor may contact
the field instructor by telephone or, if necessary, will coordinate a three-way meeting (field
advisor, student, and field instructor) to discuss the concerns. The student and the advisor may
need to meet with an Assistant Director in the Field Education Department for further assistance.
If the situation cannot be resolved or remedied, the advisor may need to develop a new
educational plan.

If the student is encountering problems affecting academic performance, the student should
notify the field advisor and seek help from an Academic Advisor.

**Monitoring of Assignments**

The faculty advisor monitors the quantity, diversity, and appropriateness of the assignments to
the student’s method concentration to ensure the quality of the field education experience during
the field practicum. An Educational Plan, written by the Field Instructor and the student, should
be submitted by the end of the sixth week of the semester to the faculty advisor.

For the Educational Plan form, please see the following link:
http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/educational-plans

If the advisor, after extensive discussion with the agency field instructor, determines that the
assignments in the placement are not meeting the student’s educational needs, a recommendation
for replacement with a new agency may be made.

**Student Performance**

When there are concerns about the student’s field performance, the advisor is expected to be
involved early in working with the field instructor to provide opportunities to effect significant
improvement. The advisor has the responsibility to coordinate a three-way conference including
the field instructor and student to develop a plan, which often takes the form of a written
Performance Agreement with recommendations for remedying the situation. All parties should
review the recommendations, and a time frame for re-assessment of the situation should be
established.

In some cases, a significant extension of the field placement may be indicated. If the
performance indicates the need for an extension beyond the end of the semester, a grade of
Incomplete is given at the end of the semester. The grade will be changed to Credit or No Credit
upon completion of the extension period.

A student who receives a grade of No Credit in the field practicum or is otherwise not in good
academic standing will be referred by the advisor to the Educational Review Committee (see
section on Academic Standing in the Student Handbook).

**Change in Advisor**

Students requesting a change in field advisor should make the request directly to the Director of
the Field Education Department. A request for a change of advisement assignment is predicated
on a serious problem or concern that can be remedied only by a change in the assignment.

**Evaluation of Advisors**

At the end of each semester, students complete a written evaluation of their advisors in order to assist the Field Education Department in identifying the strengths and limitations of the advisement system, to facilitate improvements, and to give recognition to this component of faculty performance.

**Evaluation of Agency Effectiveness**

The faculty advisor plays a vital role in monitoring the effectiveness of the agency and the field instructor. Each advisor reviews all of his or her assigned agencies yearly in an Agency Evaluation form that is submitted to the Field Education Department. The advisor is expected to discuss any concerns about the effectiveness of the field instructor or any aspect of the agency’s practice that might lead the school to question its affiliation with the agency. At times, it may be necessary for the faculty advisor and Field Education Department Director (or assistant directors) to meet with a field instructor, educational coordinator, or agency director to address concerns and to suggest ways in which the agency or field instructor can become more effective.

**Disaffiliation Between the School and the Agency**

If the advisor recommends discontinuance of affiliation with either a field instructor or a practicum agency, the advisor is responsible for discussing this appraisal with the field instructor and, where applicable, the agency’s educational coordinator. The first step is always to consider a plan for remedying problems; in extreme situations, a decision to disaffiliate may be taken. Serious concerns that might lead to disaffiliation should always first be discussed with the Director of Field Education.

**Replacement of Students**

Requests for replacement may be made by a student, field instructor, or field advisor. It may be useful for all parties to meet to discuss the request in a three-way meeting. If the request derives from an administrative issue in the practicum (e.g., the field instructor is leaving the agency) or failure of the original educational plan (e.g., the student has insufficient practice assignments), the Assistant Director or the Director of Field Education will consult with the involved parties and make a decision regarding termination, replacement, and extension of the practicum. If a student has been asked to leave any two placements for reason of poor performance, he or she will not be replaced until the issues that were raised were resolved. These students will be referred to The Educational Review Committee for disposition and recommendations.

Occasionally, students do not receive credit in their practice class and cannot proceed in the practice sequence. Because of the School’s requirement of concurrence of practice method and practicum, these students must leave their field practicum (even if their performance in field is creditable).
ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Students are expected to maintain high levels of achievement in both: (1) academic performance in courses and in the field practicum, and (2) professional comportment in relationships with faculty, staff, peers, clients, and field practicum personnel. Evaluations of students’ academic performance in courses and in the field are based on criteria stated in course syllabi and in the Field Practicum Manual. Academic dishonesty is regarded as serious ethical misconduct that may affect the student’s continuation in the program. Students may not present the work of anyone else as their own achievement. Students may not submit a written assignment prepared for one course as original work for another course. Work prepared for one course must be clearly cited if included in an assignment for another course. (See Appendix B, Hunter College Statement on Academic Integrity)

Social work students are expected to conduct themselves according to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 1997) Code of Ethics (Appendix C, and on the Silberman School of School of Social Work website). Violation of this code may be reason for disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the School. Examples of violations include the following:

1. Conduct that is potentially dangerous to current or future clients.
2. Unprofessional behaviors as covered by the NASW Code of Ethics. Violations include but are not limited to the following:
   • Sexual harassment
   • Sexual interaction with clients
   • Physical threats and actions directed at clients, students, faculty, or staff
   • Acceptance of gifts or money from clients that are not standard payment for services received
   • Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty

Social work students are expected to act in accordance with professional social work ethics and values. Students should also demonstrate tolerance and respect for human diversity. Finally, social work students are expected to strive to attain the NASW Standards outlined in Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice (Appendix D of the Field Practicum Manual).

Resources which may be utilized by students include the following:

• Office of AccessABILITY, Hunter College, Room 1124, East Building, Hunter College East Building, 695 Park Avenue, NY, NY 10021.  
  www.hunter.cuny.edu/studentservices/access.
• The Silberman Writing Program, SB 602.  
  http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/studentservices/writing-program/
• Counseling Services and Wellness Center, Hunter College, Room 1123 East Building,  
  695 Park Avenue, NY, NY 10021.  
  http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/studentservices/counseling-and-wellness

Students are expected to comply with the College’s policies and regulations outlined in the
In accordance with the emphasis on ethical conduct in the social work profession, students are expected to incorporate the highest ethical standards in every element of their work and to conduct themselves in ways that manifest the maturity and emotional stability necessary to function as professionals.

Examples of poor academic performance and misconduct that will subject the student to disciplinary action or dismissal from the program include the following:

- Violations of the College policy on Academic Integrity (e.g., plagiarism).
- Behavior determined to be a violation of College or School policies or regulations.
- Behavior determined to be a violation of the profession’s ethics (e.g., the NASW Code of Ethics).
- Behaviors that do not meet professional expectations and standards, which include the generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity, or emotional stability.
- Behaviors determined to be unprofessional conduct towards colleagues, faculty, or staff.

**STUDENTS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY MASTERING PRACTICE AND/OR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES**

When students are evaluated as not having met Practice Competencies assessed as part of their Field Practicum (or Professional Competencies assessed in a course or in another school venue), a Performance Agreement will be instituted. The Performance Agreement is completed by the Field Advisor with input from the Field Instructor and the Student. It is a written document that describes how the student’s professional behavior violates one or more Core Professional Performance Competencies and identifies the corrective action to be taken and the time frame for its completion. The problematic behaviors must be behaviorally described, using examples. It is the responsibility of an Assistant Director of Field Education to ensure that all related documents are made a part of the student’s file.

**Procedures:**

- The Performance Agreement is submitted to the Director of Field Education for review. An Assistant Director of Field Education returns the signed form to the originating individual (academic advisor or field advisor) and ensures that a signed copy of the Performance Agreement is given to the student.
- It is the responsibility of the field advisor to closely monitor the student’s performance and to evaluate the student’s compliance at the end of the agreed-upon time frame.
- If the student improves satisfactorily, the plan is signed by all involved parties at the end of the specified period and forwarded to the Director of the MSW Program.
- Based on the student’s progress in meeting competencies identified in the Performance Agreement, the Director of the MSW Program may arrange a consultation with the student, the academic advisor and/or field advisor, and the Interim Director for Student
Affairs and/or the Director for Field Education before rendering a recommendation about the need for further improvement and assistance. Within 10 business days of the specified end of the Performance Agreement, the Director of the MSW Program reviews the recommendation, makes a determination, and informs the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs of the outcome of the performance agreement. In cases where the improvement has not been sufficient, the Director of the MSW Program may ask that the Educational Review Committee to review the student’s performance. The Educational Review Committee will meet within 10 business days of the Director of the MSW Program’s referral.

**Exceptions to the Performance Agreement**

A student may be dismissed from the program without having first engaged in the Performance Agreement in the event of the following:

- The student’s behavior poses an imminent danger to clients, other students, faculty/staff, and/or self and others (e.g., threats and/or use of violence, and/or abusive language toward clients, colleagues, students, and/or faculty and staff).
- The student’s behavior represents an egregious breach of core performance standards and ethics (e.g., plagiarism, drugs and/or alcohol on the premises, theft, and dishonest, unethical, and/or disruptive behavior).

The Educational Review Committee provides formal review of questions about student and field. The Committee is composed of faculty members, an administrative representative, and students. The student whose performance is being reviewed may invite either a student or a faculty member to attend the meeting in the role of advocate.

In issues involving a student's practicum performance, the student and advisor must meet with the Committee. The field instructor is also expected to attend the Committee meeting. The Committee reads statements prepared by the student, faculty advisor, and field instructor, which must be submitted to the Committee Chairperson 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. The Committee does not review process recordings or practicum evaluations.

At the convened meeting, there is opportunity for objective discussion of the identified issues. The Committee, which is knowledgeable about performance expectations, attempts to assess the nature of the difficulty and makes a binding recommendation for disposition. Possible recommendations include the following:

- The student continues in class and practicum with no changes; the student continues with conditions which may include a change in practicum assignment, field instructor and/or faculty advisor; a testing out period to be followed up with a progress report; an extension of time beyond the planned ending date for the practicum; a change in field placement; repetition of the year of the field practicum; or termination from the program.
- All decisions of the Educational Review Committee are final but subject to review in an appeals process.
EXPECTATIONS OF AGENCIES

The agency will select qualified staff to serve as field instructors. Field instructors must be competent and are expected to be licensed to supervise within the particular scope of practice of the student’s assignment and have adequate time to carry out their educational functions.

In order to provide for the educational needs of the student in the field practicum, the School expects that the agency and its administrators will accept and support arrangements for the field practicum made between the School’s coordinator and the agency’s designated educational coordinator. Other expectations include the following:

- The agency maintains policies and procedures that are consistent with those of the School, including non-discrimination and sexual harassment policies. *For the Statement of Nondiscrimination, please see this link:* [http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/](http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/)
  *For the Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures, please see this link:* [http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/](http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/)
- The agency maintains policies, procedures, and practices in accord with the NASW Code of Ethics and NASW Standards for Cultural Competence. *For the NASW Code of Ethics and NASW Standards for Cultural Competence, please see this link:* [http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/](http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/)
- The agency provides a program that has a clear purpose, sufficient stability, and a structure that enables it to carry out its mission, and it conveys this to the student.
- The agency is committed to developing the competence of its staff and improving its services through means such as staff development, self-evaluation, and the establishment of professional personnel practices and policies.
- The agency agrees to treat all information about students as confidential, including evaluations.
- The agency provides a range of assignments on an on-going basis that are consistent with the objectives of the School, including practice opportunities that should enable students to acquire core and advanced practice behaviors.
- The agency provides privacy and physical supports for students to carry out their professional roles and responsibilities, including office and storage space, access to a telephone, and reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of assignments.
- The agency will select qualified staff to serve as field instructors (*See Criteria for Selection of Field Instructors*) and provide them with adequate time to carry out educational functions (See also *Expectations of Field Instructors*).
- In the event of student performance which does not achieve the standard for competence in the practicum, the School expects full participation of the agency in educational assessment and in the mechanisms established for review of problems in academic standing (See *Educational Review Committee*).
• The agency recognizes the importance of timely submission of a written field practicum evaluation prepared by the field instructor for both the ongoing educational experience of the student and as a major reference for the field advisor assigned by the School in determining a grade for the practicum.

**EXPECTATIONS OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

The field instructor plays a key role in the development of professionally competent graduates and careful consideration is given to their selection. Basic criteria include an MSW degree, three years of post-master’s social work experience, a high level of professional competence, and licensure and current registration as either an LMSW or an LCSW or its equivalent (unless exempt by New York State Education Law, effective September 1, 2004, as noted above). In some instances, some exemptions can be made by the Field Education Department for field instructors with two years of post-MSW experience.

Additional criteria include the desire and ability to teach students, including the capacities for conceptualization and articulation of knowledge and for the assessment of competency; the self-awareness and discipline to function as a professional role model; and adherence to the values, ethics, and standards for cultural competence of the profession. Field instructors are asked to adhere to the following:

• If new to field instruction, willingness to fulfill the requirements of the Seminar in Field Instruction (See Section on SIFI).
• Familiarity with the educational philosophy of the School.
• Knowledge and skill in the student’s method concentration and additional practice methods (when applicable) and the ability to teach and assess practice core and/or advanced competencies.
• Readiness to supervise a student’s practice throughout the period of the practicum.
• Preparation for a student’s entry into an agency, including selection and development of beginning practice assignment for the student.
• Orientation of the student to the agency’s policies and services and to the student’s responsibilities within it.
• Engagement of the student in a learning process and establishment of clear expectations for the student’s participation in the process, including the development of appropriate on-going assignments designed to acquire core and advanced practice behaviors.
• Provision of regularly scheduled formal supervisory conferences of one and one-half hours’ duration weekly. Instructors are expected to be prepared for supervision by having read recordings, logs, or journals prior to the meeting and to provide students with topics for field instruction. Topics for field instruction include both educational and administrative/task issues.
• Development of an Educational Plan in the first six weeks of the semester, based on an educational assessment of the student. The Plan should include goals, teaching method, and range of learning opportunities for the student.
• Participation in an ongoing evaluative process with the student which includes formal
oral assessments at mid-semester and written evaluations at the end of each semester.

- Collaboration with the assigned field advisor to enhance the student’s educational experience in the practicum.
- Acknowledgement of the student’s status as an intern and identification of the student as such to agency personnel and clients.

**Guidelines for Use of Task Supervision**

Task supervision is defined as teaching in a specific area of the student’s learning. In general, task supervisors have expertise in an area pertinent to a student assignment. They may be qualified field instructors, other social workers, or members of other disciplines. In implementing a task supervisory plan, the following guidelines may be useful:

- The field instructor is expected to retain overall responsibility for administration of the student’s practicum and remain accountable for the quality of all teaching and for imparting basic information about the knowledge, skills, and values of the social work profession.
- The field instructor should continue to meet with the student for one-and-a-half hours per week, review the student’s recording in advance, and maintain primary responsibility for evaluation of the student’s performance.
- Task or secondary supervisors generally meet regularly with students individually for one half to one hour a week and as needed.
- It is important for the field instructor to maintain ongoing communication with the task supervisor to administer a student’s overall assignment and deal with issues that may arise in shared teaching.
- It is suggested that the student, field instructor and task supervisor meet to assure agreement on respective roles, student assignments, expectations, and assessment.
- At the time of formal written evaluation at the end of each semester, the field instructor should confer with the task supervisor. While it is the field instructor who has the sole responsibility for writing the formal evaluation, the task supervisor should impart his/her impressions to the field instructor.
- If the task supervisor is not a social worker, the field instructor should identify professional issues and differences between social work and other disciplines that require particular attention.

**EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**

- Adherence to the values, ethics, and standards for cultural competence embodied in the *NASW Code of Ethics and NASW Standards for Cultural Competence*. For the NASW Code of Ethics and NASW Standards for Cultural Competence, please see this link: [http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/](http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/)
- Active and responsible participation in an ongoing learning process in the field practicum, including the preparation of an agenda and timely presentation of required recordings, logs, or journals.
- Availability for learning as evidenced by attention to time and attendance and standards for professional dress and behavior as required by the agency.
• Readiness to become a self-reflective learner and to be able to evaluate both use of self and the learning opportunities afforded by the agency.
• Accountable to the School and agency for achieving learning goals, objectives, and core and advanced practice behaviors in the practicum.
• Adherence to the policies and procedures of the agency, which are be consistent with the ethics, values, and standards of the profession.
• Accountable to the School and agency for completion of hours required for the field practicum (a minimum of either 600 or 900 hours yearly, depending on program).
• Participation in the advisement process, including attendance at regular meetings with the field advisor and presentation of recordings (logs, journals, etc.) to the advisor (as requested).
• Maintenance of professional confidentiality in all of the student’s activities. Agency material being used for class assignments should be disguised. Audio and video tapes of practice can be used for teaching in the classroom only with written permission of clients and the agency (See section on Confidentiality).

**It is the policy of the School and a professionally ethical principle that students identify themselves as students or interns in their work with clients and agency representatives.**

**Confidentiality**

Strict adherence to confidentiality is essential to ethical social work practice. The confidential nature of all information about clients or community members must be respected whether provided orally, in writing (such as a medical or agency record), or in an agency’s electronic information system. If placed in a hospital or other similarly regulated setting, students must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the confidentiality of patient information and medical records, including but not limited to HIPAA regulations. Access to recordings and their contents needs to be considered in relation to protecting clients’ privacy. All information which could compromise client confidentiality must be obliterated or disguised.

**Students With Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are entitled to support services and reasonable accommodations in their academic work and in the field practicum if they register with the Office of AccessABILITY at Hunter College. Services vary and are highly individualized, but they may include the following: program adaptation, extensions on papers or other written work, registration assistance, notetakers or sign interpreters, specialized computer software, information on legal entitlements, counseling, and support. Documentation of disability is required but is kept confidential. Reasonable accommodations consistent with the requirements of the field practicum can be implemented only for students who have registered.
**FIELD PRACTICUM POLICIES**

Days and Duration of the Field Practicum

Student schedules in the field practicum are determined by the program in which they are enrolled. Students in the full-time and **Advanced Standing Programs** spend a minimum of **600 hours** in the field during each year in which a field practicum is required. Students in the **One-Year Residence Program** and the **Dual Degree Program** complete a **900 hour** practicum in one academic year.

Students in the Two-Year Full-Time and **Advanced Standing Programs** spend **three days a week** (21 hours) in practicum agencies during each year of the program: (a) First-year students are in the field Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and (b) Second-year students are in the field Monday, Thursday, and either Tuesday or Wednesday.

**One-Year Residence and Dual Degree Program** students are in placement **four days a week**. The day in school for these students is determined by major practice method and area of practice: All OYR students are in class primarily on Tuesday or Wednesday during the residence year.

Practicum Hours and Policy About Absences, Religious Observance, and Vacations

Regular attendance in the field placement agency is expected of all students. Chronic lateness (or leaving early) is unacceptable. Students must inform the agency of planned absences or lateness.

Students observe agency hours and the calendar followed by agency staff. Students follow the field practicum calendar, depending on their program, for Thanksgiving, Winter or Spring recesses, and designated holidays. Students in the OYR Program and in the Bank Street Dual Degree Program generally follow their agency’s schedule. Students should not plan to take vacation time during the field practicum.

*For Field Education Calendar(s), please see this link:*
[http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/](http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/)

Students should be excused for the observance of major religious holidays that fall on field placement days. If absences due to religious observance cause the student to fall short of the practicum requirement, the student must make up the time in accord with the agency’s schedule.

**If absences for illness, religious observance, or personal emergencies exceed three days during an academic year, the additional time should be made up in order to meet the practicum hour requirements.**

The School considers student participation on official committees such as the Curriculum Committee to be a part of the educational program and asks the agency to release students who hold committee positions to attend such meetings, generally held once a month. Students are expected to discuss a plan for appropriate coverage of their responsibilities with the field instructor well in advance of the planned absence.
Common Time

Two days are set aside each semester for the student body and faculty to meet around issues of shared concern and interest. Students take the lead in preparing the program on Common Time. Meetings of the Faculty-Student Senate, student alliances, and the Board of Student Representatives are held on Common Time. Advisement is sometimes held on Common Time. Students in the two-year, accelerated, advanced standing, and dual degree programs should be excused from the field practicum to attend Common Day with the recognition that plans need to be discussed in advance so that their absence does not interfere with professional agency and client responsibilities. If the Common Time falls on the OYR student’s day in school, the student is expected to attend Common Time activities.

Labor Disputes in Agencies

The School recognizes that employees may sometimes take job actions (such as a strike or a slowdown). Since student safety may be jeopardized and/or the educational environment compromised, students in programs other than the OYR program or employment-based field practicum are NOT permitted to continue the practicum under such circumstances. The Field Education Department should be notified by the field instructor, educational coordinator, or agency director of pending job actions or interruptions in agency services. Students will be given substitute assignments by the Field Education Department when the interruption in the field practicum is prolonged. Students in the One-Year Residence Program, who are employed by their practicum agencies, should discuss their individual situations with the field advisor. Generally, employee status takes precedence over student status at such time.

Guidelines for Home Visits

The provision of effective service implies that students be prepared to undertake all activities necessary to understand a client’s life situation and to intervene appropriately toward a resolution. Home or community visits are important aspects of service provisions. The following guidelines are intended to insure that they continue to be utilized when indicated under reasonable safeguard:

- Students should consider visits between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Visit with an escort or co-worker in high risk areas.
- Plan a route in advance. Use main streets for walking and stay away from entrances.
- In subway travel, enter the middle car of the train where the conductor is present.
- Consider meeting a client in a community meeting place (e.g., church, community center, etc.) if it is appropriate and also feasible for the client.
- If it is unsafe to enter a building alone, ask a community member or client to meet and accompany you.
- Carry official identification or a letter that establishes your status as an agency representative. Use care in carrying purses and avoid expensive jewelry.
- Use caution in entering empty elevators.
- In planning trips for client groups, arrangements should be made to have persons available to help in emergencies (e.g., another worker).
Transportation and Reimbursement

Some agencies provide car service or escort service for home visits. Be sure to check the agency policy on transportation. Agencies are expected to reimburse students for expenses incurred as part of any field assignment if they similarly reimburse staff. If a difficulty emerges in reimbursement, contact the Director of Field Education. Students should not use their own vehicle to transport clients. Students may, however, drive an agency-owned vehicle if they have the appropriate license, agency approval, and appropriate insurance coverage.

Liability Insurance

All students enrolled in or auditing the field practicum must purchase liability insurance coverage in the School’s Professional Liability Insurance Program; a small fee is attached to the tuition bill during the semesters when students are enrolled in the Field Practicum.

**MSW DEGREE PATHWAYS**

The Silberman School of Social Work offers several pathways leading to the master of social work degree. The MSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (See their website: [www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org)). Note: No academic credit is given for life experience or previous work experience.

**Two-Year Program**

The **Two-Year Program** is available for students who can devote themselves to full-time academic and field study in social work. During the first year of the program, all students participate in a foundation curriculum, which introduces them to the knowledge, values, processes, and skills essential for the practice of social work. During the second year of the **Two-Year Program**, students are exposed to an advanced, specialized curriculum intended to prepare them for entry level master’s social work practice. Most full-time students enter in the fall semester. A few students who can manage continuous matriculation of both field and class begin in January in an accelerated program which allows them to complete the program in 18 months. These students follow the same curriculum as other full-time students.

**Field Practicum Requirements for the Full-Time Two-Year Program**

The field curriculum for students in the two-year program consists of 1200 hours of agency-based practice, divided into two field placements of a minimum of 600 hours each (concurrent with coursework) for a total of 12 credits. The first placement provides opportunities for students to apply learning acquired in the foundation classroom curriculum with recognition of a range of interventions to address problems in transactions among individuals and between people and their environments. Students are assured the opportunity to develop beginning skills in their chosen method as well as the opportunity to gain experience in one or more additional practice methods.
Specialization in the second or advanced year is achieved by placement in an agency offering practice opportunities in the major method. It is expected that the second-year placement will provide a richer and more complex practice environment. Agencies with which the School is affiliated are generally able to provide a range of practice opportunities for all students. The school encourages agencies to provide opportunities for students to develop research assignments during the second and OYR field year.

**One-Year Residence Program**

The **One-Year Residence Program (OYR)** initiated in 1971 provides professional social work education for individuals with considerable experience in social agencies who demonstrate commitment to their work and the profession. The program is open to applicants who meet all admission requirements and, additionally, have a minimum of two years of full-time, paid, post-baccalaureate employment in a social work position in a social welfare agency.

The **OYR Program** has provided increased access to professional career ladders for many qualified baccalaureate-level agency workers. Agencies have also used this program to retain valued staff and to help workers advance to leadership positions.

The program sustains the same requirements, educational challenges, and demands as the Two-Year program. It is organized around three “time frames” made up of both part-time and full-time study. **Time Frame I** is completed in evening or day classes over two semesters and one summer. Most students complete this first frame in one year, earning at least 15 credits. In **Time Frame II**, the student attends classes one day a week and pursues a field practicum in the employing agency four days a week. The remaining credits are taken in the evening in **Time Frame III**. The program covers five semesters and two summers. OYR students are admitted in both the fall and spring semesters.

**Field Practicum Requirements for the OYR Program**

The practicum for **OYR** students follows completion of 15 or more credits of course work and occurs during the second year of matriculation. The requirement for a single practicum is based on the student’s prior knowledge of social service organizations and delivery of social services on a pre-professional level. Prior to admission of the student, the current social agency employer agrees to provide an internship approved by the school.

Students in the **OYR Program** have a single practicum of 900 hours (four days a week) taken during their second or residence year in the master’s program, concurrent with one day of classes. Wherever educationally sound, OYR students fulfill practicum requirements in their employing agencies. The school requires a significant change in the focus of the student’s assignment. Supervision must be provided by a qualified field instructor who has not previously supervised the student. In addition, the field instructor cannot be the student’s current work supervisor.

**OYR** students are evaluated at the end of the first semester of their practicum by the same standards applied to students completing the foundation or first-year practicum in the **Two-Year**
Program. At the end of the second semester of their practicum, OYR students are evaluated by the same standards applied to students completing the advanced or second-year practicum in the Two-Year Program.

Advanced Standing Program

The Advanced Standing Program is an intensive program for a limited number of outstanding students who have graduated from a CSWE (Council on Social Work Education) accredited baccalaureate social work program. Applicants must have received their undergraduate degree within the last five years and must meet all other admission criteria for acceptance into the graduate social work program at Hunter, including above-average performance in their undergraduate social work major and the attainment of core competencies as assessed by their Senior Year Field Instructor and Faculty Advisor. Applicants accepted into the program will be waived from some courses required in the first year of the MSW program. Hunter’s Advanced Standing Program begins in the summer, followed by one academic year of full-time study, including a three-day-a-week field placement.

Field Practicum Requirements for the Advanced Standing Program

Advanced Standing students follow the curriculum for the second year of the Two-Year Program. Students in the Advanced Standing Program complete a single 600-hour field practicum, selected and approved by the school. The practicum is concurrent with advanced practice method course work. Assignments are consistent with those provided to second-year students in the Two-Year Program.

Dual Degree Program: Silberman School of Social Work and the Bank Street College of Education Infant and Parent Development Program

The Dual Degree Program is a three-year program designed to prepare social workers to understand and work with the special needs and vulnerabilities of children from birth to age three and their families. The program prepares social workers for professional roles that combine both educational and clinical skills. The program design incorporates theoretical and practice aspects of each degree into a cohesive educational program.

Field Practicum Requirements for the Dual Degree Program

Both Silberman School of Social Work and Bank Street require a supervised field practicum. At Silberman, the practicum is 900 hours and is taken concurrently with the courses in the major method (Clinical Practice) sequence.

Curriculum

The MSW curriculum prepares its graduates for advanced practice through mastery of the core competencies, augmented by knowledge and practice behaviors specific to a concentration. The program is a 60-credit master’s degree comprised of 16 three-credit courses and a requirement for the field practicum designed to assure that students master the foundation practice and
advanced practice behaviors. The curriculum is organized into content areas; each area includes one to three courses required for degree completion.

Each curriculum area provides essential elements to assure that students achieve competency. Students develop core/foundation knowledge and abilities in Policy, Human Behavior, and Ways of Knowing in the first year of enrollment and develop core/foundation practice behaviors through essential Practice courses: Social Work Practice Learning Lab and beginning practice method. Research competencies are begun in the Ways of Knowing first-year course and strengthened in two Research courses in the second year.

Students are expected to master core practice behaviors by the end of their first Field Practicum. Most core competencies and practice behaviors are introduced in the first semester field experience and extend through the second semester. In the second semester, students are also introduced to advanced practice behaviors in their concentration, though mastery of advanced competency is not expected until the end of the second-year practicum.

Organization of the Curriculum

- Human Behavior and the Social Environment
- Social Policy
- Social Work Ways of Knowing and Communicating
- Social Work Practice Learning Lab
- Research
- Methods Concentrations
- Professional Seminar
- Field Education
- Fields of Practice

For the Curriculum Course Description, please see Appendix A or this link: http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/

Field of Practice Specializations

As an additional means of deepening learning and preparing students for advanced social work practice, students currently may elect a field of practice specialization organized around a problem, population, or institutional setting following completion of the foundation year.

The School has defined and recognizes five broad areas of specialization: Aging; Child Welfare: Children, Youth, and Families; Global Social Work and Practice With Immigrants and Refugees; Health and Mental Health; World of Work.

A field of practice specialization consists of enrollment in two courses, a research or professional seminar, and a field practicum that must be related to a selected field of practice.

For complete description of all Field of Practice Specializations please see Appendix B or this link: http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-practicum-manual/
Social Work School’s Orientation to Field Practicum

The School provides an orientation to the field practicum prior to the student's first day in field placement. The aim of the orientation includes preparing students to learn about the agency’s function, its social work role, and its clients’ needs and perceptions; teaching them about the use and nature of field training, field instruction, and other consultation; and acquainting them with field practicum policies, expectations, and student supports.

Orientation Program in the Agency

An orientation program in the agency/community program should be viewed as an ongoing process during the first few weeks in placement, concurrent with the students moving into their beginning assignments. It is helpful if students are offered information about agency function, services, and procedures but not overwhelmed with data. The students will especially want to know “What will I be doing here?” Therefore, information about the kinds of assignments and specific tasks they will be carrying out will be useful and should be provided in uncomplicated and understandable terms. Students should feel welcomed. The students’ office space and supplies should be prepared and ready for use. Students should have the opportunity to meet alone, in conference, with their field instructor on the first day in placement.

Guidelines for Practice Assignments and Recordings

The faculty in each practice sequence have developed guidelines for student assignments in the field which will help students to learn the knowledge and skills and to gain core and advanced competencies consistent with the curriculum taught in the classroom.

Guidelines for student recording in each practice method are provided to assist the field instructor. Field instructors are encouraged to consult with the faculty advisor or major practice method chairperson regarding these guidelines.

Educational Plan

On or before the sixth week of the first semester, each student and his/her field instructor should complete an Educational Plan and submit the signed plan to the faculty advisor. The Plan should describe the type of assignments and projected number of assignments (cases, groups, projects). In addition, the Plan will identify the manner in which competencies will be acquired (i.e., how assignments will contribute to the student’s acquisition of practice behaviors as described in the Field Practicum Evaluation). The Plan should also identify anticipated challenges to learning or completing assignments that will have an impact on successful performance in the field.
Sample Workload Distribution for the Practicum—Three-Day Field Practicum Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments in the method concentration and minor method (if applicable); this will include direct client contact, telephone calls, meetings of and preparation for groups, collateral work, completion of agency paperwork, home visits, organizing, and administrative assignments</th>
<th>9-12 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Supervision</td>
<td>1 1/2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Recording</td>
<td>2-3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/Team Meetings, Conferences, Trainings</td>
<td>4-6 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Workload Distribution for the Practicum—Four-Day Field Practicum Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments in the method concentration and minor method (if applicable); this will include direct client contact, telephone calls, meetings of and preparation for groups, collateral work, completion of agency paperwork, home visits, organizing, and administrative assignments</th>
<th>12-15 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Supervision</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Recording</td>
<td>2-3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/team Meetings, Conferences, trainings</td>
<td>4-6 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rule of thumb in the field practicum is that about half the time should be spent in client contact as described above. Second-year students will typically spend more time than first-year students in carrying out practice assignments. A greater number of clients and groups and more extensive and complex assignments are assigned to second-year students. If there are questions about the quantity or quality of assignments, students and field instructors should consult the field advisor.

Assignments

Field instructors should prepare students for each new assignment, helping them to “tune into” and anticipate client’s perceptions and feelings or those of other staff or community representatives. Students should not be asked to meet with clients on the first day of the field practicum and should be moved into assignments sequentially over a period of time. Students should meet with their first client or begin their assigned project no later than the 4th day of the field practicum. Field instructors should initiate contact with the field advisor if there are delays in making assignments. Students learn from doing and delays in beginning work further affect the ability to learn in the classroom and to complete assignments.

EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE OF STUDENT RECORDING

Recording is an essential social work practice tool that furthers accountability in learning while enhancing social service delivery. Recording is an educational tool available to students and field instructors to be used purposefully with specific learning objectives in mind. Recording allows the student to demonstrate both core and advanced competences in many aspects of practice under the supervision of the field instructor. Recording is a method of communication between the students and field instructor and between the students and themselves. The process of writing
itself stimulates an internal dialogue. It reflects the full range of a student’s activities in the agency, including telephone calls, collateral contacts, and agency meetings as well as client/worker interactions.

There are some important educational goals for recording in field instruction: (a) to provide information which furthers the student’s understanding of client needs and available resources, (b) to provide written documentation which serves as a stimulus for reflective practice, (c) to provide information about the student as a practitioner and learner which is the basis for the educational assessment of competencies and learning plan, (d) to provide information about the student’s collaboration with other practitioners, (e) to provide content for teaching about communication within the profession and with other disciplines, (f) to provide content for teaching about ethics, including privileged communication, informed consent, and confidentiality, (g) to provide an opportunity for a student to learn systematic accountability for practice, and (h) to provide materials for classroom teaching.

Recording requirements and recording format vary with practice methods concentration and the nature of the student assignments. Recording requirements in terms of format and quantity vary according to the student’s educational needs and stage of development as a social worker, the agency’s accountability needs and service goals, and the social work program’s goals and objectives.

### Time to Complete Assignments

Students will need the appropriate and expected period of time to complete recordings at the agency and a quiet place to prepare them. Pressing agency records may need to be completed outside of the agency, but students should not be required to do so on a regular basis. Any difficulties in meeting this requirement should be discussed with the advisor.

### Confidentiality in Recordings

Adherence to confidentiality is essential in all recordings. Access to recordings and the content in recordings needs to be considered in relation to protecting clients’ privacy. All information which could compromise the client’s confidentiality must be obliterated or disguised thoroughly in recordings which will be viewed outside the agency by the faculty advisor or the classroom teacher. **The name of a client should not appear on a recording that will leave the agency.** Furthermore, it is advisable to utilize a generic means of identifying the agency in which the client was seen (e.g., a large metropolitan hospital, a community-based organization, a family service agency) when the material is brought outside the agency. Students should adhere to agency protocols and HIPAA regulations when working on agency documents. When the recording is a learning tool and is not part of the agency record or client record, it should be destroyed at the end of the academic year.

### Agenda for Supervision

Students should prepare an agenda that includes questions or topics for discussion in field instruction conferences about engagement, assessment, interventions, evaluation of practice,
resources, and general practice concerns or learning needs. The agenda is primarily student generated, but field instructors can contribute additional topics for discussion. Beginning students will need help in learning how to formulate an agenda.

GUIDELINES FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND GROUPS: ASSIGNMENTS AND RECORDINGS

Assignments

Assignments for first-year students should provide opportunities for developing competence in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation. The student should have assignments that provide learning about interventions with individuals, couples, families, and small groups, using a variety of modalities such as intensive case management, crisis intervention, and other time-limited approaches. All assignments should have a social work purpose (which could include advocating for a client, developing a service plan, or accessing concrete services for the client). Assignments should give students an opportunity to formulate a biopsychosocial assessment and to use the professional self purposefully toward a mutually defined goal.

Although we recognize that some agency interventions may involve case finding and outreach services, students need to have in-person contact with clients and be assigned to some cases where they are exposed to the beginning, middle, and end issues of the worker-client relationship. Students may also be involved in performing intakes as part of their student workload. When fully engaged in the work, students should be spending a minimum of fifty percent of their time in direct client and collateral contact.

Assignments for second-year students may increase in volume and will also increase in complexity and in expanded use of professional self. Students should be presented with more challenging practice situations in the second year to deepen practice competence. In addition, second-year assignments can offer the student an opportunity to use a greater variety of frameworks such as psycho-dynamic, cognitive-behavioral, family systems, narrative, and play therapy approaches. Assignments should move students to work from an assessment base to identify the complexity of variables influencing a situation and to use their own selves reflectively and purposefully.

Assignments for students in the residency year of the OYR program should include both a beginning and an advanced focus. In the residency year, assignments should offer opportunities for students to apply their understanding of the many variables in clinical assessment and to increase self-awareness about their clinical interventions.

Recordings

Field instructors encourage meaningful use of recordings by reviewing their students’ recordings in advance of the conference and being prepared to discuss the student’s questions and concerns, which become the basis for the student’s agenda for field instruction conferences. Conferences are based on previously submitted recordings and an agenda prepared by the student and shared with the field instructor during conference or in advance.
A certain amount of risk taking is inherent in recording one’s work. Students are asked to “go on record” about aspects of their work which may seem vague or confusing at times and about which students may lack confidence. Field instructors can reduce the feeling of risk by communicating expectations clearly and specifically at various points in the learning process. Students should know why recordings are requested and what the field instructor is looking for. Students need to understand that effective recordings include information about their interventions, thoughts, and feelings. Recordings can also assist the student in integrating theory with practice by having the student identify concepts that guide particular interventions.

Beginning students will need help in learning to prepare a process record. They will often worry about being judged. Field instructors helping students to use their records to think and reflect will better help the students to understand how recording can be a tool for learning.

**Variety of Recording Assignments**

Variations in recording assignments should assist students in moving through the learning process and reflect progress in reaching learning objectives. Initially, students may be asked to record beginning activities until the middle of the first semester in the agency. For the second half of the semester, students and field instructors should determine what interviews and contacts they should record. For on-going practice experiences, students might be asked to use summary recordings or critical incident recordings. Two process recordings per week should be assigned, and field instructors should contact the field advisor if students are not completing the required amount of records to ascertain the problem. Students are expected to continue the use of recordings in each semester they are in the field.

**Guidelines for the Format of Recordings**

Recordings can appear in various formats from process recordings, summary recordings, critical incident recordings, records-of-service, biopsychosocial assessments, and audio and video tapes. On a written recording, a wide margin can be left on each page for the field instructor to note agenda comments or questions for him or herself.

Field instructors should prepare for supervisory conferences by writing notes for themselves, not for the students. By giving students comments on their records prior to the conference, field instructors take over the agenda for the conference. Students often read the comments and try to figure out what they did “wrong.” The comments take away the spontaneity of the conference and the chance for the field instructor and student to explore together. When field instructors take over the agenda for the conference, they minimize the opportunity for students to take the initiative to identify their own questions and take responsibility.

The Field Education Department suggests caution in relying too much on verbatim records. We note that total recall does not exist and that asking a student to write full verbatim transcripts of an encounter results in the student needing to unwittingly fabricate dialogue. Supervision is then based not on the actual words of the interview, but rather on the words a student constructed to meet recording expectations. Also, students’ preoccupation with total recall following an
interview may keep them from remaining fully client focused during the interview. Instead, students should selectively include remembered and relevant dialogue in their records.

The following are suggested forms the recordings may take along with the advantages and disadvantages of each format. Aspects of different formats may be combined. The variations possible are limited only by one’s imagination and educational needs.

- **Summary Recordings:** Summarizes major themes and content of sessions but provides details of selected interactions between the student and client system. It generally follows the outline of structured recordings.

- **Agenda:** Include questions or topics for discussion in field instruction conferences about recordings, assessment, intervention, resources, and general practice concerns or learning needs. Primarily student generated, but field instructors can contribute additional topics for discussion.

*For a Guide to Assignments and Recordings for Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups, please see Appendix C or this link: [http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/guidelines-for-assignments-and-recordings/](http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/guidelines-for-assignments-and-recordings/)*

Many different formats are possible, but all recordings should include identifying information such as the date of the meeting, members present and absent, new members, pertinent descriptive information, group purpose, and length of the session. Where relevant, contact with individuals, sub-groups, or collaterals from other systems may also be included, ideally in summary form. There are a sample process recording and several templates available on our website which can be downloaded as Word documents and completed on a computer.

Regardless of actual format, the student’s reactions and critiques/reflections should be kept separate from the actual description of what took place in the group. It is also useful to request a summary paragraph at the very end with student reflections, insights, general impressions of the meeting, and ideas about a possible plan for the next meeting.

**GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION, PLANNING, AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Assignments and Recordings**

Field assignments should be developed by the field instructor (with input from the field advisor and student) and reviewed periodically as the year progresses. Where possible, assignments should be consistent with COPD course objectives.

**COP&D Recordings**

Field recordings are an essential learning tool and are required to complete the field practicum for credit. There are four written field recording assignments used to assist in student learning and to monitor and help evaluate students’ progress in the field. All recordings are expected to
be shared with the field instructor on a regular basis and, periodically, with the faculty advisor. Field instructors may ask students to do additional written work as related to specific assignments. Sample COP&D recordings are available from the Chair of the COP&D sequence and in the School’s library.

*For Guide to Assignments and Recordings for Community Organization, Planning, and Development, please see Appendix F or this link: [http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/guidelines-for-assignments-and-recordings/](http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/guidelines-for-assignments-and-recordings/)*

**ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP:**

**ASSIGNMENTS AND RECORDINGS**

**OML Assignments**

The agency and the assignments generated from its service objectives form the foundation for student practice. The Field Instruction Plan—in which goals, objectives, expectations, and timelines are described—should be initiated by the student in draft form and then discussed, revised where necessary, and agreed to by the Field Instructor. At the conclusion of this process, a final copy should then be sent to the Field Advisor.

What follows are suggested sample task assignments for Administration students (field instructors are encouraged to augment them as necessary). Students should receive a variety of assignments in different areas. Some assignments may be short term (e.g., one time only or of a few days or weeks duration), others will be medium term (two to three months in duration), and others may be long term (one or two semesters). This guide represents some of the particular kinds of assignments that the agency can provide for students specializing in Organizational Management and Leadership.

**Recording for OML Majors**

During the academic year students are expected to complete field recording Assignments. These assignments must be reviewed by the student’s field advisor. Recording assignments help build reflective, strategic practitioners and increase the element of planning in the student’s work. Recordings are also an essential component of the field practicum and the evaluation of the student’s field performance. Timely, high quality completion of the assignments is one component of the grade for the field practicum.

*For a Guide to Assignments and Recordings for Organization, Management, and Leadership, please see Appendix G or this link: [http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/guidelines-for-assignments-and-recordings/](http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-education/guidelines-for-assignments-and-recordings/)*

**GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

The evaluation of student performance for the MSW degree is the culmination of a process which begins with placement of the student in the practicum agency and continues through the ongoing planning, orienting, and teaching that takes place in the agency, in the supervisory
relationship, in the classroom, and with the field advisor. The written evaluation should not be a surprise to the student.

**Evaluation Workshop**

At the mid-semester, all field instructors are invited to attend an Evaluation Workshop. The workshop is an opportunity for field instructors, whether new to the school or experienced, to gain assistance in completing the competency-based evaluation instrument.

**Oral Evaluation**

In **mid-November** and again in **mid-March**, evaluation materials are distributed to the field instructors. Utilizing the evaluation instrument, field instructors should review in supervisory conference the competencies in each area of the evaluation. By reviewing the competencies, students and field instructors will have a clear understanding of expectations. The School expects that field instructors will hold oral evaluation conferences with students at the mid-point of both the first and second semesters. The oral evaluation often coincides with the field visit of the advisor and can otherwise be an occasion for discussion between advisor and instructor.

**Written Evaluation**

The first-semester written evaluation is due in early **January**; the second-semester written evaluation is due at the end of the second semester (early **May**). The written evaluation should be the occasion for additional contact between faculty advisor and field instructor.

For Written Evaluation(s), please see this link:
http://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/field-evaluations/

**Practicum Grade**

The faculty advisor has the sole responsibility for the practicum grade. The grade is based on the advisor’s review of the written evaluation and the field instructor’s recommendation as well as the advisor’s review of student assignments and recordings.

**Field Practicum Evaluation**

The school employs a model of field practicum evaluation in which the field instructor rates the student on a 1-5 scale of competency-associated practice behaviors each semester of the field practicum. The evaluation also includes descriptions of the student’s field practicum assignments, illustrative examples to support the competency rating, and a summary rating of the student’s practice competency overall and in the student’s advanced concentration area. Because we expect students to progress in their mastery from core (foundational) practice behaviors to advanced methods practice behaviors, we use two different field practicum evaluation forms:

- **Field Practicum Evaluation Form I** is used to assess core-competency-associated practice behaviors at the end of the first year for Two-Year and Accelerated Program
students and at the end of the first semester of the One-Year Residency Program and Dual Degree Program students. It also includes assessment of beginning advanced-methods practice behaviors because the advanced concentration begins for most students in their second semester of enrollment.

- **Field Practicum Evaluation Form II** is used to assess core and advanced methods-practice behaviors in the second year of field instruction for Two-Year and Accelerated students, second semester for One-Year Residency Program and Dual Degree Program students. This second evaluation highlights the advanced practice behaviors identified by each of the Method Concentrations. The student’s performance of core/foundational practice behaviors is also reassessed.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE EVALUATION

#### The Evaluation Format

The Field Evaluation (see Appendix) is based on student performance with respect to competency and associated practice behaviors grouped into three general areas: **Development of Professional Values and Ethics, The Student as Learner**, and **Knowledge and Skills for Agency-Based Practice**, including competencies in each of the four practice methods concentrations as applicable to the student’s assignment.

#### Description of Agency and Assignments

The field instructor should provide (in brief narrative form on page one of the evaluation form) information describing the planned learning opportunities of the practicum. The learning opportunities should follow from the **Educational Plan** submitted in October.

#### Rating Scale

The Rating Scale includes five evaluative options ranging from the following:

1. Unacceptable Performance
2. Needs Improvement to Achieve Standard
3. Achieves Standard
4. Standard Exceeded
5. Outstanding Performance

The instructor should use the rating **No Significant Opportunity** if the student has not been observed or supervised in a particular area of practice. The field instructor is expected to rate students in every item on the evaluation unless there has been no significant opportunity for practice related to that item:

1. No significant opportunity
2. Unacceptable
3. Needs improvement
4. Achieves Standard
5. Exceeds Standard
5. Outstanding Performance

Each item on the rating scale is stated in the form of a performance competency which, if achieved, will meet the standard in that area. The school expects students to achieve the standard by achieving the competency objectives on the rating scale. Thus a rating of (3) is the norm and is necessary as an overall rating if the student is to receive credit for the semester.

- **Unacceptable Performance (1):** The student who fails in every way to achieve the competency should be rated.
- **Needs Improvement to Achieve the Standard (2):** The student is attempting to achieve the competency but is not yet achieving it at a satisfactory level should be rated.
- **Achieves Standard (3):** The student achieves the standard is rated. This is the expectable rating for demonstration of an average level of skill.
- **Exceeds the Standard (4):** The student exceeds the standard and is recognized for better-than-expectable performance or skill.
- **Outstanding Performance (5):** The student demonstrates outstanding performance and is recognized for exceptional achievement of the standard.

The student’s performance should be rated for all relevant items in each of the areas of competence: **Development of Professional Values and Ethics, Student as Learner,** and **Knowledge and Skills for Agency-Based Practice.**

**Summary Rating**

After rating each individual item, the instructor should give a summary rating at the end of each category of the evaluation. The summary rating is based on an assessment of the student’s average performance on all of the items; there is some discretion in giving a summary rating. For example, not all items must be rated as (3) in order to receive a summary rating of (3).

**Descriptions**

At the end of each of the major categories of the evaluation, in addition to providing a summary rating, the field instructor must provide a brief written description detailing how the student has demonstrated competence in one or more items in this area. Instructors should give an example from a direct observation, a process recording, or a discussion in supervision. Only one description is required for each summary area. The description section may be used to highlight a student’s outstanding performance or to provide evidence of a less-than-expectable performance rating and may be used to explain unevenness in a student’s performance across the items in that category.

**Overall Rating**

At the end of the evaluation, the field instructor must provide an Overall Student Rating using the same scale (1-5) used previously in individual ratings and summary ratings.
Student’s Major Strengths in Learning and Directions and Goals for Student’s Future Learning

This section allows the field instructor to describe unique characteristics of the student’s learning and goals for the next semester or beyond. In consultation with the field instructor, the student is expected to contribute to the assessment of his or her learning and to develop objectives for future professional development.

Student’s Self-Evaluation of the Field Learning Experience

The students have the opportunity to rate their own participation and performance in one or more of the areas of competence and to write a brief narrative. Completion of this page gives the students an opportunity to provide feedback to the field instructor, the agency, and the advisor about the overall field practicum experience.

Signatures

The field instructor and the student are required to sign the last page of the evaluation. The student’s signature indicates that he or she has read and discussed the evaluation with the field instructor; signature by the student does not imply agreement with the contents of the evaluation.

Examples for Completion of the Rating Scale

1. Ratings Within Areas of Competency

Within each area of competency (i.e., Student as Learner, Development of Professional Values and Ethics, and Knowledge and Skills for Agency-Based Practice), there are a number of items to be rated. The field instructor can utilize the range of evaluative options from 0 to 5 on these items.

**EXAMPLE** (note the highlighted ratings):

| Capacity to recognize learning patterns, needs and goals in collaboration with the field instructor | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Initiative in seeking instruction, support, and constructive criticism from the field instructor to enhance practice skills | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Initiative in the evaluation of own practice effectiveness | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. Use of Unacceptable and Needs Improvement Ratings

The field instructor may rate the student’s performance as Unacceptable on an individual item within an area of competency and give a summary rating of Achieved Standard for that area. The field instructor may rate the student’s performance as Needs Improvement on one or more
items within an area of competency, and give a summary rating of Achieved Standard for that area.

EXAMPLE (note highlighted ratings):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to recognize learning patterns, needs and goals in collaboration with the field instructor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative in seeking instruction, support, and constructive criticism from the field instructor to enhance practice skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative in the evaluation of own practice effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Summary Ratings for Each Area of Competency

SUMMARY FOR STUDENT AS LEARNER: (Please circle a rating for the student’s overall performance in this category.)

EXAMPLE (note highlighted rating):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Faculty Advisor must be contacted when (1) the field instructor gives an Unacceptable summary rating of student performance in one or more areas of competency or (2) when the field instructor gives a Needs Improvement summary rating in one or more areas of competency.

4. Indications for Contacting the Faculty Advisor

- An Overall Student Rating of Outstanding Performance reflects an evaluation of superior student performance and should be brought to the attention of the Field Advisor, particularly if the Field Instructor wishes to recommend a grade of Honors.
- An Overall Student Rating of Exceeds Standard reflects an evaluation of better-than-expectable performance.
- An Overall Student Rating of Achieves Standard reflects an evaluation of expectable student performance and is necessary to achieve a grade of Credit.
- An Overall Student Rating of Needs Improvement reflects an evaluation of student performance that is less than expectable. An assessment that the student needs improvement in all aspects of performance in any semester may reflect the need for a revised educational plan for the student, an extension of placement, or other accommodations. The Advisor must be immediately involved in discussion with the Field Instructor and the student if such an evaluation is contemplated.
- An Overall Student Rating of Unacceptable is an indication of failure in the practicum, a grade of No Credit, and referral to the Educational Review Committee. The Faculty Advisor must be immediately involved in discussion with the Field Instructor and the student if such an evaluation is contemplated.