



Agency Orientation  
Recorded content – Slide Script

### **Slide 1 – Introduction**

Welcome to our Agency Field Orientation!

We will be using portions of a researched and proven training by Alan J. Detlaff, so if you have been a field instructor before, some of this information may seem familiar as many schools across the country use this training for field instructors and task supervisors.

Guided by EPAS (Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards) of CSWE (Council on Social Work Education) we are mandated to provide an orientation and training to agency based field instructors.

### **Slide 2 – The MSU Denver Office of Field Education**

We would like to introduce you to the Office of Field Education:

Director of Field Education – Susie Ryder – Director of the Office of Field Education.

Assistant Director of Field Education, Placement Development and Support – Amanda Campbell – oversees the student placement process and is a great resource if you have questions about placements for next year!

Assistant Director of Field Education, Student Placement Support – Anne Kim – She assists with organizing employment based internships and helping students, agencies, and faculty field liaisons through our student support process if there are problems that come up during placement.

Next, is our Clinical Field Faculty Leads, they create the curriculum for Field Experience course. All students enrolled in Field take the course.

Karina Benabe – is the current lead for the BSSW program and

Ann Sullivan – is the lead for both the MSW foundation and concentration curriculum.

Krystal Gutierrez – is one of the Field Education Coordinators who oversees the agency onboarding process and ongoing trainings.

Cassie Mullin – is our other Field Education Coordinator who works with our Sonia database system and manages the [Field@msudenver.edu](mailto:Field@msudenver.edu) email. Supervisors will likely see emails from [Field@msudenver.edu](mailto:Field@msudenver.edu) with important, timely information regarding the field placement process, so read these emails!

### **Slide 3 – Department of Social Work Organizational Chart**

This graphic shows the context and structural organization of the Social Work department

The Department of Social Work functions within the College of Professional Studies, and is then divided between four areas. Our MSW Program which is led by the MSW Program Director Dr. Jo Bailey. Our BSSW Program which is led by the BSSW Program Director Dr. Kristin Scherrer. Our Office of Social Work Student

Services which is led by The Director of Student Services Amy Middleton. Lastly, our Office of Field Education which is led by Susie Ryder.

#### **Slide 4 – Stipends**

The Child Welfare Stipend (CWS) is an opportunity for students interested in child welfare social work. The CWS typically awards \$6,000- \$11,500 per student per academic year. In 2019, the CWS awarded 3 BSSW students and 22 MSW students, for a total of 25 stipend recipients.

We also have received several HRSA stipends which are funded through Department of Health and Human Services - Health Resources and Services Administration – This is a workforce development grant which provides \$10,000 for Concentration Year MSW Students- which awards these funds to 30 students between CSU and MSU-Denver. These stipends are provided as commitment to providing behavioral health (substance abuse and mental health).

Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholars (HEALS) typically awards \$5,500 per student, per academic year. In 2019, 2 BSSW and 2 MSW awardees including opportunities for connections with healthcare leaders, conferences, and opportunities for field supervisors.

The department of Social Work also offers several scholarships, such as one for students focusing on gerontology, one for bilingual and bicultural students, and a diversity scholarship.

#### **Slide 5 – Why Field Education**

Our program formally acknowledges the critical role field plays in the professional preparation of social work students. Field education is considered the signature pedagogy per the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). This is truly where the integration of theory into practice takes place and students transform their classroom learning about social work knowledge, values, and skills and their personal experience and values into their professional identity as a social worker.

It also requires us to be more conscious of how we teach students to apply knowledge to the actual practice of social work in the field setting. Students will learn by doing, under your supervision. Their focus turns from acquisition of knowledge that they gain into application of knowledge. Our goal is to help students integrate theory in to practice so that they can serve clients effectively. Keep in mind that students are not learning how to do one specific social work job at your specific agency, but rather are learning the necessary skills, ethics and values regarding what it means to be a social worker in any setting.

#### **Slide 6 – Field Overview**

This information on this slide is also located on our website under the Field Overview handout. Our BSSW/MSW Foundation curriculum are similar with regard to their experience and requirements. Both have the same required number of hours that students must attain by the end of the academic year. The hours per week are a general guideline and not meant to be a hard and fast rule since we understand all of our partnered agencies are set up differently. Both BSSW and the MSW Foundation year are based on a generalist experience, which means students have exposure to micro, mezzo, and macro levels. We do ask students work with you to identify specific examples of tasks/activities at all of those levels. These can be community trainings, client experience, policy work or research.

Our MSW Concentration year students are expected to have a more specialized experience. These should be experiences that are more based in specific areas of social work as students learn to fine tune the skills that they began learning during their generalist experiences. Our Concentration year students include both second year MSW students and Advanced Standing students – anyone who has completed an accredited BSW program can skip over their foundation year (but for all intents and purposes, they are referred to as Concentration students). The reason for this is that BSW coursework and experience is the equivalent of an MSW foundation year experience.

## Slide 7 – Field Seminar

The Field Seminar is designed to help students integrate what they're learning in the classroom with their field experience. Students may be asked to use journaling, presentations, group activities, or discussion to help them during this process. The course is also a way to help with practice-related issues (vicarious trauma, development of a professional identity, social justice in the field). The instructor for this course is the students' Faculty Field Liaison or FFL.

Your student's FFL should introduce themselves at the beginning of the fall semester. They will be your primary link with the school and can be a great resource for you as you and the student navigate the field placement. The student's FFL will also schedule site visits throughout the academic year.

The Initial visit which happens in the fall will be getting to know the student, and getting to know you and your agency. They will do a check in with both you and the student via email between December and February to see how the student is progressing in their field work. The final site visit will happen between March and April to talk through the student's transition of finishing their field placement and to reflection on the experience.

If you don't hear from them in the first two weeks of the semester please email us at [field@msudenver.edu](mailto:field@msudenver.edu).

## Slide 8 – Roles in Field

If you are taking the time to watch this video you may be either a Field Instructor, a Task Supervisor, or an Agency Coordinator. Students and community partners can understandably be confused by the differences between the roles listed on this slide, and some of these roles (including agency coordinators) often overlap. The roles basically come down to what kind of credentials and availability a supervisor has.

**Field Instructors** oversee both BSSW and MSW students in day to day activities and provide an hour of direct supervision weekly to reflect on the student's social work experience. If you have an MSW social work degree as well as two years of post-graduate social work experience you can supervise all student levels. You can still be a Field Instructor if you have a BSSW plus two years post degree experience if you are supervising a BSSW student.

If you are supervising a student and do not have these degree requirements you are most likely a **Task Supervisor**. Task Supervisors do not necessarily need a social work degree but will have a degree within a related field (such as Counseling or Human Services or Behavioral Sciences etc.) or will have significant experience in the field. Task Supervisors oversee the day-to-day learning activities and are responsible for skill development. They also provide students with an hour of supervision every week. Some agencies won't have a task supervisor, as the Field Instructor normally fulfills this role if they are on-site and available during a student's intern hours. Task Supervisors are needed for students who do not have regular supervision from their Field Instructors or only have an Off-site Field Instructor.

**Off Site Field Instructors (OSFI)** -Have a MSW plus two years post-masters degree experience. These individuals are either chosen by the agency or MSU Denver for this role. OSFI help to ensure that every student has access to a supervisor who has a social work degree for an hour of supervision every other week and typically work with students and Task Supervisors to add insight on the students Learning Agreement and Evaluation. This is mandated by CSWE accreditation standards.

We have resources that outline these roles located on our website, and if you are unsure of what the supervision model looks like for your agency please feel free to reach out to our office. As mentioned previously Faculty Field Liaisons also referred to as FFLs, are the instructors who teach the field seminar classes and provides support to students and agencies. They will be your primary go-to throughout the academic year.

## Slide 9 – Field Policies

We are going to cover some of the most commonly referred to field policies. We have a Field Manual located on our website that covers all of this information and more for our field office.

The first is policy we will cover is students “Banking hours”. Our field program is designed so that students complete their field seminar course alongside their placement experiences. For that reason students are not allowed to bank hours over the summer or during breaks in order to end their field placement **early**. While we know that there are always exceptions, the field placement should really be done during that August to May time frame.

The next policy we are going to cover is about University breaks and holidays. Over the course of the academic year students have different breaks such as fall break, winter break, and spring break. We understand that in order to have “continuity of care” some agencies will need students to work over university breaks and/or holidays. While our program does not require that students attend their internship during these times, we ask that you have the conversation now about holiday/breaks with students so they plan accordingly.

Next, our personal use of vehicle policy is that if you do require your student to drive with their personal vehicle, make sure they understand your agency’s policies on driving. While we do cover student liability in field placement, we do not cover anything related to car insurance or the transportation of clients.

Lastly, our program does not provide or require background checks for student in our program. Many of our agency partners have different standards for what to screen for so we leave this up to the agency to determine what type of background checks are needed for them to start their placement. We also ask that agencies communicate their on boarding requirements to students during the interview process especially when they have additional costs that the students need to plan accordingly.

## Slide 10 – Field Placement Orientation

Students in our MSU Denver Social Work program are required to attend Field Orientation. During the Field Orientation, the Field Office explains and debriefs the importance of Field, parameters of our program, expectations of the school, students, and agencies, and who to reach out when in need.

All of our students are required to complete a field agency experience as an expectation of their program. Since our community agencies are an extension of our program, we encourage all of our community partners to provide an agency orientation. Orientations help students understand what is in store for them for the academic year. Just as important as when a new employee receives information about their new place of employment which is crucial for their success.

We understand that there are many different styles of an orientation such as having an internship binder with resources to having interns attend the agency’s new employee orientations. Although there are many ways you can host an orientation they should cover the same topics. Orientations set the tone, they reduce fears, and they save time. Students who do not receive a formal orientation have to spend a considerable amount of time finding information on their own, which may leave them with less time to devote to learning.

Now I will discuss a few themes or considerations that should be addressed before and after the social work students arrives at your agency:

1. Before student arrives at agency please communicate to other staff members the role and purpose of your social work student. It is important that other staff members understand the role of your student, which includes understanding that the student is not an administrative assistant. Please feel free to ask other important staff members if they would like to give a brief presentation about their role at the agency and how they will partner with the intern. In addition, please reach out to HR or the IT

department for access and policies around necessary tools that a student would need at the agency such as a computer and or phone.

2. Once the student arrives at your agency, please show them their designated workspace. Please provide student with information that assists student in learning about the agency:

Please cover the following;

Agency policies and procedures manual.

Telephone, computer, and communication policies.

Office procedures, supplies, and provisions.

Parking details and mileage policy.

Work schedule, including late arrivals, policy around sick time or being absent, lunch-time, and breaks.

Agency, department, and/or program meeting schedule.

Confidentiality, release of information, privileged communication, and informed consent policies and procedures.

Information and referral policies.

Client fees and payment schedule, if applicable.

Client records, charting policies and procedures.

Harassment and discrimination policy

Americans with Disabilities Act policy

HIPAA regulations and legislation.

In addition, please share policy around social media, personal and professional cell phone use, and dress code.

3. Moreover, please provide the student with an agency tour: this will help the students become familiar with the physical location of the placement. Please inform the student where the restrooms are, spaces that are off limits, where communal spaces are, please describe the lunch culture and introduce students to important staff members as part of the tour.
4. Lastly, it is extremely important to cover safety during your orientation. Please cover:

Child or elder abuse reporting laws and protocol

Risk of harm protocols, including suicide or assaultive/combatative behaviors

Client emergency protocol.

Safety and security procedures and protocol

Please address the following four questions:

Question 1, what are the written and unwritten agency procedures pertaining to safety and risk management?

Question 2, what are the student and staff roles in the procedures?

Question 3, how is an event reported and documented?

Question 4, what is the student supposed to do when there is a crisis and the immediate supervisor is not available?

Overall, we know this is a lot of information and can take time to process and execute. We are thankful for your hard work and dedication to our students. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to reach out to the Office of Field Education at [Field@msudenver.edu](mailto:Field@msudenver.edu). As a non-traditional school we have a diverse set of students with various work experience and some of them will be nervous and will rely on their agency supervisor for help and assistance. The orientation process is an amazing way to build rapport with your

student. We encourage our supervisors to have fun with the agency orientation process. Last tip, feel free to include information you wish you would have known when you first started working at your agency.

### **Slide 11 – The 9 Social Work Competencies**

Image of the 9 social work competencies. Here are the 9 social work competencies established by the CSWE that we use to evaluate students on their progress through the social work program. You will see these competencies on the students Learning agreement and Evaluations throughout the year and we will be referring back to these competencies in the next few slides.

### **Slide 12 – Learning Agreement**

The Learning Agreement is form that our program uses to help students map out their projected learning activities that they will be engaging with during their placement. Students will work with their supervisors to develop & implement the Learning Agreement based on the nine Social Work Competencies and their correlated Practice Behaviors.

The outline of learning activities should clearly show how the student plans to meet the learning requirements of the competency based on the activities they participate in during their internship hours. These activities can range from tasks or responsibilities the students have, readings they are given, trainings they attend, conversations during supervision, and so on. Some practice behaviors are more challenging to map out based on the setting of your agency or the work the student is participating in, so we encourage supervisors to help their students be creative when developing these learning activities. This form is also a working document so you and your student can continue to make edits throughout the year. The students learning agreement will help guide students and supervisors during the evaluations, so that everyone can clearly see how the student is progressing in their understanding of the nine social work competencies.

### **Slide 13 – Evaluations**

Students will have two evaluations each academic year, one will be at the end of the Fall semester and the final evaluation will be due at the end of Spring semester. BSSW students also have an additional evaluation that takes place mid Fall semester. Students will complete their self-evaluation in Sonia to rate themselves on their own understandings of the 9 social work competencies and the learning activities they have completed. The student's supervisors will then work together to rate the student on the 9 social work competencies and the associated practice behaviors. It is important for supervisors to collaborate as students may be interacting with different practice behaviors differently based on the supervisor's roles. This is particularly important if the student has an on-site task supervisor and an off-site field instructor. Students should be rated on their demonstrated performance of each practice behavior as one would expect them to perform at this stage of their undergraduate, graduate foundation or graduate concentration year internship.

Once everyone has had a chance to complete the evaluation the student and their supervisors will then meet for an evaluation conference to discuss the evaluation. The focus of the evaluation process should be on providing the student with constructive feedback so that they can continue to work on improving the development of their skills as a social worker.

### **Slide 14 – Integrating Theory and Practice**

Students need to understand how their field experiences are connected to social work practice by answering the following questions:

Where do these actions fit in the overall helping process?

Why was this interaction necessary for effective social work practice with this client and or system? And

How am I acting as an emerging culturally responsive social worker dedicated to social justice?

Students in field are likely to focus on task completion rather than on the reasons behind the tasks. They may be so focused on the task they are completing, that they do not think about social work knowledge and skills- they are simply imitating the actions of their field instructor or others they have observed. Some students rarely critically analyze their actions and when one task is completed, they simply move on to the next.

Students need to be prompted to make the connection between the tasks and the reasons behind the tasks. The process of making these connections is integrating theory and practice anchored in understanding the real lives of clients and systems. It is the role of the field instructor to assist in making these connections.

In order to teach social work knowledge, values, and skills, you need to analyze your own practice and think really critically about what knowledge, values, and skills are necessary for effective practice in your roles at your agencies and how are these values and skills anchored in social justice. It helps to walk a student through your thought process such as, why did I choose to be more confrontive? What assumptions did I make about this client?

It is also important to remember that as supervisors we have to let the students do the work. Here are some examples of ways that as a supervisor you can assist students in creating connection between Social Work theory and their role in field:

1. Have them explain a theory to you and have them connect it to a situation at the agency.
2. Help them with agency based case studies to see how a particular theory applies to a situation.
3. Ask questions on how does social justice and culturally responsive consciousness apply to this particular theory, how are they interacting with this in field?

Remember when talking about integrating theory and practice, it's not just about theory but also values, ethics, social justice, and personal reflection.

### **Slide 15 – Sonia Database**

Sonia is the main database that we in the MSU Denver Department of Social Work use for organizing information for students' placements.

During the Student Placement process, agencies will be interacting with Sonia to update placement information and requesting student interns between December – January. They will also be using Sonia to make official internship offers to notify the field office that a student has secured an internship for the upcoming academic year which happens between February and June. These processes are typically done by the primary contact for the agency. If this position has changed recently for your agency, we ask that you let our office know by emailing [field@msudenver.edu](mailto:field@msudenver.edu).

Sonia is also used by student field instructors and task supervisors during their placement for completing the students Learning Agreement and Evaluation. Supervisors can access these forms through notifications that are sent after the student submits their portion or through the supervisors own Sonia account. Instructions for both of these forms will be sent to agency supervisors prior to their release dates and are also available on our website. Please contact our office at [field@msudenver.edu](mailto:field@msudenver.edu) if you are having trouble accessing your Sonia account or if you have additional questions about the Sonia database.

### **Slide 16 – Supervision Requirements**

There are two different supervision models that a student can have to meet the CSWE accreditation requirements for field.

Option 1 is the student having an hour of supervision each week by a qualified Field Instructor, someone who has a social work degree plus two-year post degree experience.

Option 2 is that the student has an hour of supervision with their Task Supervisor, the individual that oversees the student in their daily tasks but that does not have a social work degree. In addition, they receive an hour of supervision EVERY OTHER WEEK by a qualified field instructor (either on-site or off-site). We ask that agencies that do not have a social worker on staff that can provide direct weekly supervision attempt to identify an Off-Site Field Instructor to work with interns before turning to the field team for support.

Offsite field instructors may be employees who work in a different department than one where student is interning, a former employee, a board member, etc. This can help make the supervision experience more meaningful for the student if their off-site field instructor is familiar with the work the agency does. The agency is responsible for providing a Task Supervisor.

If you have any questions on the supervision model options please reach out to the Office of Field Education at [field@msudenver.edu](mailto:field@msudenver.edu).

### **Slide 17 – Effective Supervision**

First, we thank you for taking on this additional responsibility. We know that providing supervision for a student intern takes time from your already busy schedules. However, we believe that you will also receive a good return on your initial time investments, and even small changes can make a big difference. Now, we want to take a few minutes to talk about the importance of effective supervision. We think it is important for two main reasons:

Reason 1, research on student satisfaction with field-suggests that supervision quality is the main influence for student satisfaction rather than the instructor's personal characteristics.

Lastly reason 2, is that becoming a field instructor or task supervisor requires a "cognitive shift" – you must go from a practitioner perspective, to an educator perspective which is different than even clinical supervision (where often practitioners treat the client through the student or focus on the personal growth of the student). To be a supervisor requires new skills such as helping students developing learning goals, giving effective feedback, nurturing the student's professional identity and integrating theory and practice.

We know that agency supervisors are incredibly busy and so finding an hour a week can be challenging among the myriad other responsibilities. We want you all to reflect on the different strategies you have used to ensure consistent supervision time in the past? Also, how are you planning to build in supervision as you plan for your interns this year?

### **Slide 18 – Effective Supervision**

In general, in social work supervision literature, there are three main functions of supervision:

**Administrative** - Making sure interns are adhering to policies and procedures/doing their job (paperwork, assigning cases, evaluations, etc.)

**Educational** - This is the main function of Field Instructors, teaching social work knowledge and skills (practice skills with clients, how to be part of a multi-disciplinary team, how to develop a social work identity, etc.)

**Supportive** – which Involves helping students to handle stress in their internship and to help prevent vicarious trauma.

Research tells us that there are certain specific topics that students want to discuss during supervision sessions. While they may occasionally want to discuss topics like career development and class assignments, what students want most is direct and practical information.

### **Slide 19 – Phases of Supervision**

There are three distinct phases when it comes to working with students in supervision.

The first is the **Engagement phase**: This early phase of engagement is crucial in setting the tone and laying the foundation for a strong working relationship with the student. Often problems in field can be traced back to the early phase of the internship and lack of clarity around expectations or the working alliance between the supervisor and the student not being properly established. Some ways to work with your student during this phase are: Providing support, understanding the student's learning style, teaching that sharing vulnerabilities is the hallmark of a great social worker, orient the student to your agency, clarifying roles and expectations, and to provide direction and advice. Ask yourself what techniques and behaviors do you plan to utilize in this phase as a field placement supervisor?

Next, is the **Middle or Working Phase**: Since supervision is only as good as the information students share (and most students typically do not talk about the most critical and difficult subjects), it is important for the supervisor to create an environment in which the student feels it is ok to talk openly about the issues and concerns they face in their work with clients. This will come up in the beginning phase, but it is in this middle phase that it is particularly important, since it is during this phase that students are likely to encounter their greatest challenges with client systems as they begin to engage in more autonomous practice. Some ways you can help your student during this phase is to tune into the student's feelings, check for possible feelings of disillusionment, normalize the gaps in understanding and to offer support, link theory to practice, and to assist the student in assessing where they have triumphs and where they have challenges. What techniques/behaviors would you utilize in this phase as a field placement supervisor?

Lastly, there is the **Ending Phase**: During the last several weeks of the placement, student's work will wind down and the relationship with you will change again. It is important toward the end of each semester that you provide time in your supervision sessions for review and reflection (especially at the end of the spring semester). It is important to be intentional about the tasks of ending the field placement. How you end your time with the student is how they will end with their clients. Students may want to avoid goodbyes and may joke, arrive late or be absent. As with clients, this means intentionally reflecting on the prospect of ending and eliciting the student's feelings about it. Students will have difficulty with this, especially if they are ending their formal education with the University. However, endings are important as they provide both the supervisor and the student with the opportunity to reflect on and learn from their time together and discuss what went right and wrong.

Here are some ways that you can help your student through the Ending Phase. Helping student end with client systems – students often don't get a lot of classroom preparation around terminating with clients, so it is particularly important they have your help with this. Talking with your students about how they feel about the ending; Ending with clients can often lead students to feel guilty and like they are abandoning their clients. They may also need help with boundaries as they might want to continue to see clients or vice versa, helping them set professional boundaries during this time is especially helpful for students as they enter the next stage in their social work careers. What techniques/behaviors would you utilize in this phase as a field placement supervisor?

### **Slide 20 – Field Support Process**

Problems are normal in field. We really view this as a student support process, as most students will encounter at least some portion of this process, and that's OK. This process not only supports the student, but supports

the agencies, and functions as a gatekeeping mechanism. We also have a handout of the Problem Resolution Process located on our website.

This process consists of a four step approach:

**Stage One:** This meeting should be focused on the specific issue at hand and not simply tied in to regular supervision. This isn't where you are just giving regular feedback and redirection. It's where, for example, you've told your student several times that their spotty attendance has been an issue, and things still haven't resolved. Now, it's time for a more serious conversation. You don't need to get your FFL involved at this point, but they are available for support and consultation to both. You should after this conversation simply email your FFL and say, "I had a talk with student today about xyz- this is the outcome of the conversation. I don't need anything right now, but I just want to give you a heads up. No need to follow up quite yet." This way the FFL can just keep their ears open for anything that comes up in seminar, and is just aware in case things don't improve.

**Stage Two:** If things still don't get better, the FFL should be contacted. The FFL will talk to student separately, talk to agency separately, and then come to agency for group meeting. The FFL's role is to clarify and help negotiate and problem solve. They are there to support open communication and understanding- reframe situation, etc. After the meeting, the FFL will email everyone a summary of what was discussed, and clear next steps/plan for change.

**Stage Three:** If things still don't get better, we formalize the process more, and invite the faculty advisor at the University, and look at the big picture- is this happening across courses, or limited to field- what else is going on that's impacting this student? And we have a serious discussion about where to go next.

If step three doesn't work, we move to **stage four**, which is the formal University performance review.

## Slide 21 – Stay Engaged

We want to encourage all of our agency supervisors to stay connected to the Office of Field Education. We have several events that as community partners you are all welcome to attend. These include Agency ongoing trainings: We now offer CUs through supervisor trainings that we provide four times a year and are looking to expand on our online training options as well. In addition, our Field Appreciation Event takes place in the spring semester and we invite all supervisors to join us for a catered breakfast and awards ceremony to celebrate all of your contributions to our students learning during the year. If you have any additional questions or concerns around the field process or working with your social work intern please do not hesitate to reach out to our office at [field@msudenver.edu](mailto:field@msudenver.edu). We are always happy to connect with all of you. Thank you so much for taking the time to watch this recorded agency orientation. We appreciate the work that you all do and we look forward to your continued partnership.