



**METROPOLITAN**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY**<sup>SM</sup>  
**OF DENVER**

**Department of Social Work**  
**Field Education Manual**

Revised June 2020

**Mailing Address:**

Department of Social Work  
Metropolitan State University of Denver  
Campus Box 70  
PO BOX 173362  
Denver, CO 80217-9468

**Physical Address:**

Central Classroom 202  
1006 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Denver, CO 80204

**Main Office Number:** 303-615-1655

**Fax Number:** 720-778-5688

**Email:** [Field@msudenver.edu](mailto:Field@msudenver.edu)

**Website:** <http://msudenver.edu/socialwork/officeoffieldeducation/>

**Director of Field Education:**

Susie Ryder, LCSW, LAC  
[sryder@msudenver.edu](mailto:sryder@msudenver.edu)

**Assistant Director of Field Education:**

Anne Kim, MSW, LCSW  
[akim24@msudenver.edu](mailto:akim24@msudenver.edu)

**Assistant Director of Field Education:**

Amanda Campbell, MSW, LCSW  
[acampb56@msudenver.edu](mailto:acampb56@msudenver.edu)

**BSSW & MSW Foundation Year Lead  
Clinical Field Faculty:**

Amanda Marsh Baranski, LCSW, DSW  
[amarsh29@msudenver.edu](mailto:amarsh29@msudenver.edu)

**MSW Concentration Year Lead  
Clinical Field Faculty:**

Ann Sullivan, LCSW, PhD  
[asulli29@msudenver.edu](mailto:asulli29@msudenver.edu)

**Field Education Coordinator:**

Krystal Gutierrez, MSW  
[kgutie13@msudenver.edu](mailto:kgutie13@msudenver.edu)

**Field Education Coordinator:**

Cassie Mullin  
[cmullin@msudenver.edu](mailto:cmullin@msudenver.edu)

## **FOREWORD**

This manual is designed to provide students, Field Instructors, Task Supervisors, and faculty with all the information needed to have a successful internship and field experience. This manual will be available online [here](#).

We would like to extend a deep thank you to all the community agencies and the respective Field Instructors and task supervisors who have volunteered to partner with our MSW and BSSW programs to provide real-life learning opportunities for our students.

This manual may be updated throughout the year, so please check online for the most updated policies, forms, and information.

We wish you all a very rewarding field education experience!

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>I.</b>	<b><u>Introduction to the Social Work Program</u></b>	
A.	<u>Metropolitan State University (MSU Denver) Overview</u>	1
B.	<u>Social Work Program Overview</u>	2
C.	<u>Accreditation Status</u>	2
D.	<u>Social Work Program Mission and Goals</u>	3
E.	<u>Course Requirements</u>	3
<b>II.</b>	<b><u>Introduction to the Field Experience Course</u></b>	
A.	<u>Field Overview</u>	4
B.	<u>Field Requirements</u>	4
a.	<u>Hours Requirements</u>	4
b.	<u>Supervision</u>	5
c.	<u>Site Visits</u>	6
d.	<u>Biweekly Field Seminar</u>	7
C.	<u>BSSW Program</u>	7
a.	<u>Generalist Social Work Practice</u>	7
D.	<u>MSW Program</u>	10
a.	<u>Foundation year Field Placement Overview</u>	10
b.	<u>Foundation year Field Experience Course Learning Objectives</u>	11
c.	<u>Concentration year Field Placement Overview</u>	12
d.	<u>Concentration year Field Experience Course Learning Objectives</u>	13
e.	<u>Grading, Assignments, Learning Agreement, and Evaluation</u>	14
f.	<u>Evaluation</u>	16
g.	<u>Capstone Assignment (Research Project)</u>	17
E.	<u>Completing Evaluations on the Sonia Database</u>	18
<b>III.</b>	<b><u>Field Placement Process</u></b>	

A.	<a href="#"><u>Recruitment of Field Placement Agencies</u></a> .....	19
B.	<a href="#"><u>Affiliation Agreement – Roles and Responsibilities</u></a> .....	19
C.	<a href="#"><u>Criteria</u></a> .....	19
a.	<a href="#"><u>Agencies</u></a> .....	19
b.	<a href="#"><u>Field Instructors</u></a> .....	20
c.	<a href="#"><u>Off-Site Field Instructors</u></a> .....	21
d.	<a href="#"><u>Task Supervisors</u></a> .....	22
D.	<a href="#"><u>Student Placement Process</u></a> .....	23
IV.	<b><a href="#"><u>Field Program Policies</u></a></b>	
A.	<a href="#"><u>Department of Social Work Policies</u></a> .....	25
B.	<a href="#"><u>General Field Policies</u></a> .....	25
a.	<a href="#"><u>Field Disruption Policy</u></a> .....	25
b.	<a href="#"><u>Liability Insurance</u></a> .....	29
c.	<a href="#"><u>Use of Personal Vehicle</u></a> .....	30
d.	<a href="#"><u>Work-Related Injury or Illness</u></a> .....	30
e.	<a href="#"><u>School Breaks and Holidays</u></a> .....	31
f.	<a href="#"><u>Time in the Field Placement</u></a> .....	31
g.	<a href="#"><u>Employment-Based Field Placement (EBFP)</u></a> .....	31
h.	<a href="#"><u>Student Offered Employment by Field Placement Agency during Internship</u></a> .....	33
i.	<a href="#"><u>Student Support Process</u></a> .....	33
j.	<a href="#"><u>Agency Support Process</u></a> .....	36
k.	<a href="#"><u>Safety Procedures in the Field</u></a> .....	38
l.	<a href="#"><u>Social Media</u></a> .....	38
m.	<a href="#"><u>Attire</u></a> .....	39
n.	<a href="#"><u>Distance Field Placements</u></a> .....	39
o.	<a href="#"><u>Early Starts in Field</u></a> .....	39
p.	<a href="#"><u>Longitudinal Field Placements</u></a> .....	40

# I.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

### A. Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) Overview

#### Vision

MSU Denver's vision is to become the preeminent public urban university in the nation.

#### Role and Mission

MSU Denver is a comprehensive, baccalaureate- and master's-degree granting urban university that offers arts and sciences, professional and business courses and programs to a diverse student population in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Excellence in teaching and learning is MSU Denver's primary objective.

MSU Denver's mission is to provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, post-graduate education and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global and technological society. To fulfill its mission, MSU Denver's diverse university community engages the community at large in scholarly inquiry, creative activity and the application of knowledge.

MSU Denver is a fully accredited university offering bachelors and master's degrees on the Auraria Campus in downtown Denver and is home to more than 20,000 current students and well over 95,000 alumni. MSU Denver offers over 100 major fields of study along with eight graduate programs. Founded in 1965, MSU Denver specializes in fostering homegrown talent. One (1) out of every five (5) Colorado undergraduates choose to enroll at MSU Denver, and nearly 75% of alumni stay in Colorado after graduation.

Adjacent to the financial and artistic heart of downtown Denver, MSU Denver and its students reflect the city's rich mixture of ethnicity, economic background, age and culture. MSU Denver's student body is composed of 46 percent students of color. The University has earned the federal designation of Hispanic Serving Institution by increasing Latino enrollment to 30 percent. The University is currently ranked as the fifth most innovative university in the west according to US News and World Report. MSU Denver is also ranked one of the top Colorado colleges for student veterans with 1,207 students with veteran status. Students of all ages go to MSU Denver, from 16 to 70 and beyond. The median age is 25. Visit [this link](#) to learn more.

## **B. Social Work Program Overview**

MSU Denver's Department of Social Work educates social workers to serve the needs of individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations in a multicultural and global society. MSU Denver's program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the sole accrediting body for social work.

Our program combines academic, research, and field experience into a rigorous curriculum that teaches ethical decision making, scientific inquiry, cultural sensitivity, and global awareness as well as clinical assessment and intervention skills, leadership and management skills, and community organizing.

BSSW Program: Students applying to the BSSW program should have completed the prerequisite liberal arts perspective courses and the introductory social work courses, or they should be enrolled with the intent to complete them before the program begins. The major requires 120 credit hours to be completed, including general prerequisites, social work prerequisites, general studies courses, graduation requirements, and required social work courses.

MSW regular (2-year) Program: This program is for students whose undergraduate degree is not in social work. Accepted students will complete 60 credit hours of graduate social work courses. The first year (30 credits) consists of foundation year coursework, and the second year (30 credits) consists of the concentration year coursework. Full-time students will complete the program in two (2) academic years; part-time students will complete the program in four (4) academic years.

MSW advanced standing Program: This program is for students whose undergraduate degree is in social work from a program accredited by the CSWE. Accepted students will complete the 30 credit hours of graduate social work courses in the concentration year. Full-time students will complete the program in one (1) academic year; part-time students will complete the program in two (2) academic years.

**NOTE:** *Students who have advanced standing status have already met the foundation year (1<sup>st</sup> year of the MSW program) competencies through their BSSW coursework. Competencies for all BSSW programs nationwide are equivalent to the foundation year (1<sup>st</sup> year) competencies of all MSW programs nationwide.*

## **C. Accreditation Status**

The social work program is accredited by the CSWE, the sole accrediting body for social work programs in the U.S. Accreditation ensures that professional standards are met in curriculum content and delivery. Accredited programs periodically undergo rigorous review by the CSWE in order to ensure compliance with educational standards.

## **D. Social Work Program Mission and Goals**

The primary mission of the Social Work program is to educate a diverse group of professional social workers to function as advanced clinical practitioners, community leaders, and administrators in a multicultural and global society. The program's faculty, students, and graduates are committed to helping those in need by recognizing the profession's core values; applying knowledge gained through scientific inquiry; promoting human rights as well as social and economic justice; and providing leadership in social, economic and political contexts for the betterment of humanity. The program will prepare students to:

- Conduct themselves as professional social workers who strive for continual professional development, who exercise core values and ethical decision making, and who practice personal reflection and self-correction.
- Engage in evidence-based, culturally sensitive advanced clinical social work practice with vulnerable, diverse client systems and circumstances using scientific inquiry, research-informed practice, and practice-informed research.
- Be advanced, macro-level social workers who are competent, effective, and innovative program designers and developers; political, community and agency leaders; and advocates and researchers in service delivery systems that address the needs of vulnerable and diverse client systems and circumstances using scientific inquiry, research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
- As citizens of the world, be effective change agents and leaders by recognizing the dynamic nature of social problems, policies, agency responses, and opportunities for social change in a diverse context as an evolving ecological system.

## **E. Course Requirements**

You can find course requirements, descriptions, and syllabi through the following links:

- [BSSW Program](#)
- [MSW Program \(foundation, concentration, and part-time program\)](#)
- [MSW Program \(advanced standing\)](#)
- [Course Descriptions and Syllabi](#)

## II.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD EXPERIENCE COURSE

### A. Field Overview

In 2008, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) designated field education as the “signature pedagogy” of social work. The major purpose of the field education curriculum is to develop a social work practitioner who:

- Is grounded in the knowledge and value base of the social work profession,
- Uses the knowledge base to guide his/her/their interventions with clients and client systems, and
- Evaluates the outcome of her/his/their interventions in order to improve them.

(Adapted from [this page on Nanfed.org](#)).

It is in the field placement that students get a chance to apply what they are learning in the classroom to real life practice situations.

As part of the required Field Experience courses, every student in the BSSW and MSW programs will find a placement within a community agency and complete an internship (field placement) under the guidance and supervision of an experienced professional social worker, the Field Instructor.

Each Field Experience course is divided into two (2) required components:

- Field placement (aka internship) in agency
- Biweekly field education seminars facilitated by a Faculty Field Liaison

### B. Field Requirements

#### 1. Hours Requirements

Students will be in the field placement for 30 weeks from the start of the fall semester (mid-August) until the end of the spring semester (mid-May). The total required hours are:

BSSW & foundation (MSW 1<sup>st</sup> year): 16 hours/week (240 hours/semester) = 480 hours/year  
Concentration (MSW 2<sup>nd</sup> year): 20 hours/week (300 hours/semester) = 600 hours/year

The hour requirements are minimum hour requirements. Students must be to complete their field placement in the same agency for the entire academic year (30 weeks).

## 2. Supervision

Each student must receive at least one (1) hour of supervision weekly by a qualified Field Instructor (see below for criteria).

Field Instructors are social work educators and serve in the roles of teacher, guide, challenger, and role model. According to Maypole (1997), supervision is considered to have three (3) components which interact to achieve the goals of the agency and MSU Denver's BSSW & MSW field programs:

- Administrative: To ensure the student's accountability to the agency and to MSU Denver's field program policies and procedures;
- Educational: To support the developing professional capacity of the student as it relates to the transmission of social work knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values; and
- Supportive: To promote student self-care, personal growth, advocate for student learning needs, and provide emotional support.

Supervision may be a combination of individual and group, depending on the learning style and needs of the student. However, at least 50 % of supervision should be individual.

Field Instructors may provide biweekly (every other week) supervision if supplemented by weekly supervision by a Task Supervisor with a related degree (e.g. counseling, psychology, etc.) or significant relevant work experience.

Supervision options:

Option 1:	One hour of <b>weekly</b> supervision from an On-Site <b>Field Instructor</b> AND →	NO TASK SUPERVISOR
Option 2:	One hour of supervision <b>every other week (more if needed)</b> from an On-Site Field Instructor AND →	One hour of supervision <b>every other week (or weekly)</b> from an on-site <b>Task Supervisor</b>
Option 3	One hour of supervision <b>every other week (more if needed)</b> from an <u>Off-Site</u> Field Instructor AND →	One hour of supervision <b>weekly</b> from an On-site <b>Task Supervisor</b>

**NOTE:** 50% of all supervision hours **MUST** be individual supervision. The remaining 50% may be group supervision with other student interns. Some students do well with some group supervision, while others benefit from primarily individual supervision.

### Field Vocabulary Definitions

*Agency Coordinator:* Individual at the agency responsible for establishing the partnership between the University and the Agency. This is typically who the student initially contacts to request an interview for an internship. This may or may not be the same person as the Field Instructor.

*Faculty Field Liaison (FFL):* University instructor who teaches the field seminar class and provides support to students and agencies as well as conducting site visits at agencies.

*Field Instructor:* Individual who has primary responsibility for the student's learning experience in the field placement and ensures appropriate learning experiences are provided that integrate social work theory, values, and practice.

*For BSSW:* Must have a BSSW or MSW degree and at least two (2) years of post-degree work experience.

*For MSW:* Must have a MSW degree and at least two (2) years of post-degree experience.

*Task Supervisor:* A staff member at the field placement agency who is responsible for supervising the day-to-day activities of the student during the internship. While a social work degree is not required, the Task Supervisor must have appropriate level of experience within the field placement agency. Must work in conjunction with the Field Instructor to provide constructive feedback and ensure appropriate learning assignments, tasks, and experiences.

### **3. Site Visits**

Each student will be assigned a Faculty Field Liaison (FFL). The FFL is responsible for teaching the biweekly field seminar in addition to providing at least two (2) in-person site visits per year to each student's agency.

The site visits serve as a means to maintain regular contact with the student and agency supervisor(s) to monitor that placement learning objectives are being met, ensure academic curriculum is infused with practice in the field, and assist with mediating any conflict that may occur in the field. See the field calendar at [Field Calendar](#) for site visit dates.

#### **4. Biweekly Field Seminar**

Each student will participate in a biweekly field education seminar to complement their experiences in their field placement. The seminar will be led by their FFL. No more than 15 students will be in each seminar class. Field seminar classes are offered in face-to-face, online and hybrid formats. The seminar will be a place where students will discuss specific content (e.g. vicarious trauma, crisis intervention, ethical dilemmas, etc.), process what is happening in their field placements, and complete assignments designed to integrate social work theory to practice.

### **C. BSSW Program**

The Field Experience courses required for the BSSW program are: SWK 4500 and SWK 4510. These two courses must be completed consecutively.

Students cannot enroll in any Field Experience course without formal written acceptance into the BSSW Program. Students must adhere to the required sequence of BSSW coursework.

#### **1. Generalist Social Work Practice**

In the BSSW field placement, students are exposed to generalist social work practice. The goal of the generalist practitioner is to enhance human and social well-being, and the goal of the BSSW student is to develop a base of core social work knowledge, values, and skills. Students will work at a variety of system levels - individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities. Students should be engaged in all steps of client work including assessment, planning, intervention, termination, and evaluation. The generalist social worker should take on a variety of social work roles - advocate, broker, networker, counselor, educator, case manager, facilitator, planner, researcher, mediator, and administrator. Depending on the experience and comfort level of each student and the opportunities within the internship site, they may progress from observing and shadowing their Field Instructor to co-facilitating therapy or group sessions and handling a small individual client load. BSSW students will be in their field placements for 16 hours each week over the course of the fall and spring semesters.

Examples of types of learning activities BSSW students may be involved in:

- Psycho-social assessments
- Interviewing and problem-solving
- Supportive counseling with individuals and families
- Co-facilitation of groups
- Completion of agency paperwork
- Resource identification and referral

- Case management
- Advocacy and crisis intervention
- Evaluations (determination of outcomes, data collection, etc.)
- Community development task forces
- Agency board meetings
- Professional and educational workshops
- Developing and presenting training workshops/materials
- Volunteer recruitment
- Policy development and advocacy

## **2. Grading, Assignments, Learning Agreement, and Evaluation**

### ***a) Field Experience Course Grading***

The Professional Field Experience course is broken into two (2) components: the Agency Field Placement and the Field Seminar. A student must successfully complete both components of this class. If a student does not pass the Agency Field Placement portion of the class OR does not successfully complete the seminar portion with a C- or better, the student has not successfully met the requirements of this course and will be considered as having received a failing grade for the entire course. A performance review of the student will take place. Students may be required to repeat the field experience course in its entirety before continuing in the program; complete additional requirements; or be dismissed from the program.

### ***b) Agency Field Placement (50%)***

Each student is required to complete 240 hours of placement in both SWK 4500 (fall semester) and SWK 4510 (spring semester). The agency supervisor will complete an evaluation for the student at the end of the semester. Instructions on how to complete this evaluation are explained on page 18. The feedback from the agency supervisor on the evaluation will assist in determining whether the student receives a pass or fail grade on the Agency Field Placement portion of the class.

- Student must complete 16 hours per week, or 240 hours of field placement each semester, successfully in order to pass.
- Fall Semester Guidelines:
  - If a student receives a marking of Approaching Expectations (AE), Does Not Meet Expectations (DE) or No Opportunity to Evaluate (NO) under any practice behaviors, the student, agency supervisor, and FFL will develop a plan to improve their skill development in any such areas for the remainder of the field placement (through spring semester) .

- If a student receives a Does Not Meet Expectations (DE) on more than 30% of the total practice behaviors, then this will result in a failing grade for the entire course.
- Spring Semester Guidelines:
  - Students may not receive a rating of NO (No Opportunity to Evaluate) during spring semester.
  - If a student receives Approaching Expectations (AE) and/or Does Not Meet Expectations (DE) on more than 30% of the total practice behaviors, then this will result in a failing grade for the entire course.

**c) *Field Seminar (50%)***

The FFL will determine points earned for participation and assignments in the course. The grade received on this portion of the class will be what appears on the student transcript, provided the student successfully completes the Agency Field Placement component.

**(1) Assignments**

Assignment details are outlined in each course syllabus. Assignments are subject to change.

SWK 4500:

- Attendance and Participation
- Learning Agreement
- Written and Interactive Field Journals
- Self-care Plan
- Identity Tree
- Mid-Semester Field Evaluation
- Case Analysis

SWK 4510:

- Attendance and Participation
- Written and Interactive Field Journals
- Self-care Plan
- Case Assessment/Presentation
- Revised Learning Agreement

**(2) Learning Agreement**

The purpose of the Learning Agreement is to provide a framework for planning the student's individualized experiences within the field placement agency. The student and Field Instructor/Task Supervisor should work together to identify learning tasks, activities, and experiences for the student to engage in, in order to assess mastery in the areas listed on the end of semester evaluation. Time frames in which the learning will take place or be completed should also be included in the Learning Agreement. The Learning Agreement is to be completed early in the semester (check syllabus for due date), and the student has primary responsibility for writing and designing the learning activities, which is a product of self-assessment, careful planning, and discussion with the Field Instructor and the student's Faculty Field Liaison.

This document is flexible and may be modified throughout the year to ensure the student is engaged in appropriate learning experiences. Learning tasks and activities should provide opportunity for student to practice all components of the competency. Therefore, at least two learning activities must be included under each objective area. Examples of learning activities and time frames may include:

- *On a monthly basis, attend agency Board meetings for the duration of the field placement.*
- *Beginning January and ending in April, co-facilitate psycho-educational sexual assault support group on a once-per-month basis.*
- *Observe three individual client sessions with various therapists in department and discuss with supervisor to be completed October to November.*
- *By the end of October, meet with two referral agencies to learn about the services they offer and how the agencies collaborate.*

## **D. MSW Program**

The Field Experience courses required for the foundation year course sequence are: SWKM 5625 and SWKM 5675. These two courses must be completed consecutively.

The Field Experience courses required for the concentration year course sequence are: SWKM 6725 and SWKM 6775. These two courses must be completed consecutively.

Students cannot enroll in any Field Experience course without formal written acceptance into the BSSW or MSW program. Students must adhere to required sequence of BSSW and MSW coursework.

### **1. Foundation year Field Placement Overview**

In the foundation year field placement, students are exposed to generalist social work practice. The goal of the practitioner is to enhance human and social well-being and develop a base of core social work knowledge, values, and skills. Students will work with a variety of system levels - individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities. Students should be

engaged in all steps of client work, including assessment, planning, intervention, termination, and evaluation. The generalist social worker should take on a variety of social work roles - advocate, broker, networker, counselor, educator, case manager, facilitator, planner, researcher, mediator, and administrator. Depending on the experience and comfort level of each student, they may progress from observing and shadowing their Field Instructor to co-facilitating therapy or group sessions and handling a small individual client load. Foundation year students will be in their field placements for 16 hours each week.

Examples of types of activities foundation year students may be involved in:

- Psycho-social assessments
- Interviewing and problem-solving
- Supportive counseling with individuals and families
- Co-facilitation of groups
- Completion of agency paperwork
- Resource identification and referral
- Case management
- Advocacy and crisis intervention
- Evaluations (determination of outcomes, data collection, etc.)
- Community development task forces
- Agency Board meetings
- Professional and educational workshops
- Developing and presenting training workshops/materials
- Volunteer recruitment.

## **2. Foundation year Field Experience Course Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of the Field Experience course, students should be able to:

1. Identify with professional values and ethics and evaluate individual strengths and areas for growth via personal reflection, journals and engaged classroom discourse.
2. Integrate the application of knowledge in the academic setting to the practice experiences in the field aligned with current research
3. Integrate the application of knowledge in the academic setting to the practice experiences in the field aligned with current research
4. Apply legal and ethical decision-making skills to issues specific to mental health, child welfare systems and issues specific to community assessment, program design, organizational leadership in a variety of service delivery areas
5. Recognize and continually evaluate one's own attitudes and consciousness toward diversity and social justice, including but not limited to race, gender, ableness, age, size, class, sexual orientation, culture, power and privilege and linguistic differences

6. Evaluate, select and implement appropriate assessment, intervention and evaluation tools for use with diverse target populations
7. Apply policy practice skills to advocate at multiple levels for the promotion of client and community well-being by identifying the risk factors, increasing prevention efforts and equality of access to services
8. Relate mental health theories, models and macro practice theories and research appropriate to client systems and circumstances

### **3. Concentration year Field Placement Overview**

In the Concentration year field placement, students will focus on the development of more specialized skills in direct practice and/or macro practice. The concentration year internship will also allow for increasingly autonomous practice. Concentration year students will be in their field placements for 20 hours each week. Students will also have the option to choose a pathway: Children and Families; Mental Health; or Leadership and Management.

*Micro* or direct practice prepares students for advanced practice with individuals, families, and small groups. Students will utilize a variety of interventions with clients based on various clinical theories. They will apply ethical principles of social work practice to inform their professional judgments. Students learn how to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes of interventions and how to determine which approaches are more effective. They will be expected to carry an individual case load of clients if doing a direct care internship.

Examples of direct practice activities Concentration year students may be involved in include:

- Advanced clinical assessments
- Development of treatment plans
- Specific use of intervention or psychotherapeutic models based on advanced theories
- Developing client satisfaction surveys
- Develop and provide a presentation on a relevant topic
- Raise awareness of mental health issues by developing and disseminating educational materials
- Advocate for client access to social work services
- Plan and facilitate weekly group sessions
- Develop resource guide to address target population needs
- Case management and resource referral
- Evaluations (determination of outcomes, data collection, etc.)
- Community meetings to address gaps in service.

*Macro* practice focuses on community need, program design and development, resource acquisition, program maintenance, leadership and organizational administration, policy and the values and ethics that guide these areas of practice.

Examples of macro level activities Concentration year students may be involved in include:

- Developing and implementing an agency needs assessment
- Interagency taskforce meetings
- Promoting opportunities for citizen action
- Grant writing
- Working with groups for educational, community organizing, or legislative change purposes
- Supervise agency volunteers
- Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.
- Outreach and coalition development with other agencies
- Research, evaluation, and data collection
- Develop and provide educational trainings, workshops, and materials
- Develop and administer a specific program within agency.

There are opportunities which involve work at multiple levels of practice.

#### **4. Concentration year Field Experience Course Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of the Field Experience course, students should be able to:

1. Identify with professional values and ethics and evaluate individual strengths and areas for growth via personal reflection, journals and engaged classroom discourse.
2. Integrate the application of knowledge in the academic setting to the practice experiences in the field aligned with current research
3. Integrate the application of knowledge in the academic setting to the practice experiences in the field aligned with current research
4. Apply legal and ethical decision-making skills to issues specific to mental health, child welfare systems and issues specific to community assessment, program design, organizational leadership in a variety of service delivery areas
5. Recognize and continually evaluate one's own attitudes and consciousness toward diversity and social justice, including but not limited to race, gender, ableness, age, size, class, sexual orientation, culture, power and privilege and linguistic differences
6. Evaluate, select and implement appropriate assessment, intervention and evaluation tools for use with diverse target populations

7. Apply policy practice skills to advocate at multiple levels for the promotion of client and community well-being by identifying the risk factors, increasing prevention efforts and equality of access to services
8. Relate mental health theories, models and macro practice theories and research appropriate to client systems and circumstances

## **5. Grading, Assignments, Learning Agreement, and Evaluation**

### ***a) Field Experience Course Grading***

The Professional Field Experience course is divided into two (2) components: the agency field placement and the Field Experience seminar. A student must successfully complete both components of this class. If a student does not pass the field placement portion of the class OR does not successfully complete the seminar portion with a B- or better, the student has not successfully met the requirements of this course and will be considered as having received a failing grade for the entire course. A performance review of the student will then take place. Students may be required to repeat the field experience course in its entirety before continuing in the program, complete additional requirements, or be dismissed from the program.

### ***b) Agency Field Placement (50%)***

Foundation year students complete 16 hours/week (240 hours/semester) while enrolled in SWKM 5725 and SWKM 5775. Concentration year students complete 20 hours/week (300 hours/semester) while enrolled in SWKM 6725 and SWKM 6775. The agency supervisor will complete an evaluation for the student at the end of each semester. Instructions on how to complete this evaluation are explained in this manual. The feedback from the agency supervisor on the evaluation will assist in determining whether the student receives a pass or fail grade on the agency field placement portion of the class.

### ***c) Field Seminar (50%)***

The FFL will determine points earned for participation and assignments in the course. The grade received on this portion of the class will be what appears on the student transcript, provided the student successfully completes the agency field placement component.

#### **(1) Assignments**

Assignment details are outlined in each course syllabus. Assignments are subject to change, but typically include:

Foundation year:

- Written Reflective Journals (SWKM 5625 and SWKM 5675)
- Interactive Field Activities (SWKM 5625)
- Self-Care Plan (SWKM 5625 and SWKM 5675)
- Learning Agreement (SWKM 5625 and SWKM 5675)
- Process Recording of Micro, Mezzo, or Macro System Interaction (SWKM 5675)
- Critical Case Analysis (SEKM 5625)
- Case Presentation (SWKM 5675)
- Journal Summary (SWKM 5625)
- Course Participation and Attendance (SWKM 5625 and SWKM 5675)

Concentration year:

- Written Reflective Journals (SWKM 6275 and SWKM 6775)
- Self-Care Reflection and Plan (SWKM 6275 and SWKM 6775)
- Case Presentation Paper and Presentation (SWKM 6275 and SWKM 6775)
- Learning Agreement (SWKM 6275 and 6775)
- Professional Agency Presentation and Written Summary (SWKM 6775)
- Professional Development Assignment (SWKM 6775)
- Course Participation and Attendance (SWKM 6275, and SWKM 6775)

**(2) Learning Agreement**

The purpose of the Learning Agreement is to provide a framework for planning the student's individualized experiences within the field placement agency. The student and Field Instructor should work together to identify learning tasks, activities, and experiences for the student to engage in, in order to assess mastery in the areas listed on the end of semester evaluation. Time frames in which the learning will take place or be completed should also be included in the Agreement. The Learning Agreement is to be completed early in the semester (check syllabus for due date), and the student has primary responsibility for writing and designing the learning activities, which is a product of self-assessment, careful planning, and discussion with the Field Instructor and the student's Faculty Field Liaison.

This document is flexible and may be modified throughout the year to ensure the student is engaged in appropriate learning experiences. At least two (2) or three (3) learning activities must be included under each objective area. Examples of learning activities and time frames may include:

- *On a monthly basis, attend agency Board meetings for the duration of the field placement.*

- *Beginning January and ending in April, facilitate a psycho-educational sexual assault support group on a once-per-month basis.*
- *Engage three individuals in counseling sessions using at least two intervention techniques and discuss in supervision by December.*
- *By the end of October, meet with two referral agencies to learn about the services they offer and how the agencies collaborate.*

## 6. Evaluation

### (1) Evaluation

For both BSSW and concentration year students, an evaluation must be completed for each student at the end of each semester by the student's Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor, when applicable). This evaluation will determine whether the student receives a pass or fail grade in the agency Field Placement portion of the Field Experience course. This evaluation is designed to assess the student's mastery of the included practice behaviors.

The FFL will use the information in this evaluation to assign a pass or fail grade to the student.

**NOTE:** *The ratings that a student receives on this evaluation do not translate into a letter grade. Rather, this evaluation is designed to focus on constructive feedback to assist the student in growing as a social work professional while allowing the student to engage in critical self-reflection as they move through their educational journey.*

Student are rated using the following scale:

- EE Exceeds Expectations:** Student has performed at a superior level. Student has proven they have not only fully met expectations of an undergraduate/graduate student, but also have shown mastery of this area significantly above and beyond expectations. Student takes initiative and critically reflects on their performance in this area.
- ME Meets Expectations:** Student has performed at an accomplished level. Student consistently and completely demonstrates competence in this area. Student has used learning activities and supervision to demonstrate full mastery of this area as an undergraduate/graduate student.
- AE Approaching Expectations:** Student has performed at a beginning level and has not yet demonstrated the minimum expectations in this area as an undergraduate/graduate student. Student development is in-progress in this

area- one can see movement and student shows an interest in, and is working towards, growth in this area.

**DE Does Not Meet Expectations:** Student has performed at a low and inconsistent level in this area. Student has had an opportunity to demonstrate this practice behavior and has been unable to. Student performance is unsatisfactory.

*In the first semester only, the 'NO' rating may be used sparingly for unusual circumstances:*

**NO No Opportunity to Evaluate:** Student has not had the chance to demonstrate competence in this area. No attempts to address this area have been made. *This rating may not be used in second semester.*

Fall Semester: If a student receives a DE on **more than 20%** of the total practice behaviors, then this is considered a failing grade.

Spring Semester: If a student receives an AE/DE on **more than 20%** of the total practice behaviors, then this is considered a failing grade.

Evaluations will be completed in the Sonia Field Database (see below).

**NOTE:** *The 'NO' rating may not be used in second semester.*

## 7. Capstone Assignment (Research Project)

Each concentration year student will be expected to complete a single-case research project that evaluates some aspect of their practice. Students will use a client, group, or agency from their field placement as the subject of their research project. The project will span the course of two semesters. Students will complete the project in the following practice courses:

<i>Fall Semester</i>	<i>Spring Semester</i>
SWKM 6700 Capstone I	SWKM 6750 Capstone II

In the fall Capstone course, students will learn about and choose among several options for a project. These options include:

- program-focused evaluation,
- practice-focused evaluation
- practice theory research
- grant proposal
- agency resource
- program curriculum or training manual

- policy revision
- And research.

Once the project is approved by the Capstone professor and Ethics Committee, students will carry out their project in the spring semester and write their evaluation reports.

## **E. Completing Field Evaluations in the Sonia Database**

Evaluations for students in both programs will be completed through Sonia as follows:

**Step 1:** Student completes self-evaluation, including all required comment sections, through the Sonia field database. After recording a response for all required items, student clicks on “Save Draft” and then on “Student 1<sup>st</sup> Submit”.

**Step 2:** Agency supervisor(s) (Field Instructor/Off-Site Field Instructor and Task Supervisor together, (when present) will receive notification of student’s completed portion of evaluation. They will then complete the evaluation of student via the Sonia field database. Comments may be made under any section. If a student receives a rating of ‘EE’, ‘AE’, or ‘DE’, comments are required to indicate in which areas the student is exceptionally strong or in which areas the student needs improvement. Agency supervisor(s) click on “Save Draft”.

**NOTE:** *Agency supervisors and OSFIs should maintain communication while completing the agency portion of the evaluation. Please add on information to comment sections but do not delete the other supervisor’s answers. If both supervisors are working on the form simultaneously from different accounts, the most recent version of the form will be saved (please coordinate your drafts so that no one’s feedback is left out of the evaluation)*

**Step 3:** Evaluation Conference: Agency supervisor(s) and Off-Site Field Instructor (when appropriate) and student schedule a one-hour meeting to have the evaluation conference. This conference is intended to be used as a mechanism for dialogue to give the student feedback about their performance. Students and agency supervisor(s) should both explain their ratings and provide examples to support their selections. Agency supervisor(s) may choose to adjust their ratings and comments based on this dialogue. The student and agency supervisor(s) ratings and comments do not need to be in agreement. Agency supervisor(s) click on “Agency Submit”.

**Step 4:** After the conference, students may enter any additional comments or feedback into the dialogue box. They will also check that they have completed all the required hours. Then students will click “Student Final Submit”. The finalized evaluation is then available for review by the FFL.

### **III.**

## **FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS**

### **A. Recruitment of Field Placement Agencies**

The Office of Field education is responsible for recruiting and developing relationships with community agencies for them to become field placement sites. Field placements should provide students with new educational experiences and allow students to meet the prescribed learning objectives for each year. Each agency is carefully screened to ensure they can do this. New agencies interested in being affiliated with the field program should contact the Office of Field Education.

Community agencies interested in having a student intern at their agency are welcome to contact the Department of Social Work's Office of Field Education. An interest form to start the process can be found [here](#).

**NOTE:** *In order to maintain the integrity of the placement process, and to preserve ongoing relationships with field agencies, students **are not** allowed to contact new agencies to propose placements or inquire about availability.*

*If a student would like to suggest an agency be added to the database of affiliated field placements, simply contact the Office of Field Education. Please provide contact information for the agency. When suggesting a new agency, please know that this process takes time, and there is never a guarantee that a given agency will be approved as a field placement.*

### **B. Affiliation Agreement – Roles and Responsibilities**

All agencies must submit a signed Affiliation Agreement that outlines roles and responsibilities of all parties in order to become a field placement agency. Agencies can review the Affiliation Agreement by contacting the Office of Field Education at [field@msudenver.edu](mailto:field@msudenver.edu).

### **C. Criteria**

#### **1. Agencies**

Agencies will be selected to be an affiliated field agency for the MSU Denver MSW and BSSW programs based on the following criteria:

- The agency provides social work services to “enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.” (NASW Code of Ethics, 2008)
- The agency is able to provide learning assignments and practice opportunities for students that allow them to achieve mastery of the core or advanced behavioral learning objectives appropriate to the student’s educational sequence.
- The agency is responsible for identifying a qualified Field Instructor and/or task supervisor (and Off-Site Field Instructor) to provide a meaningful and consistent learning experience to the student.
- The agency signs an Affiliation Agreement and agrees to the responsibilities set forth in the agreement.
- The agency has a commitment to active participation as a partner in professional education for social work. They demonstrate an acceptance the NASW Code of Ethics and the basic mission, values, and goals of the School’s educational program.
- The agency is responsible for identifying qualified Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor and Off-Site Field Instructor in collaboration with the MSU Denver Office of Field Education.

## **2. Field Instructors**

Field Instructors within the practice setting are essential partners and on-site teachers in the endeavor of helping the student to develop the requisite competencies/advanced practice behaviors of professional practice. Field Instructors must meet the following criteria:

- For MSW level students:
  - Hold an MSW degree with at least two (2) years post-graduate experience.
- For BSSW level students:
  - Hold a BSSW or MSW degree with at least two (2) years of post-degree experience.
- Agree to attend and participate in the Field Agency Orientation provided by the Office of Field Education in the Department of Social Work.
- Commit to provide educationally focused experiences and opportunities for student learning appropriate to the student’s educational sequence.

- Able to provide one-hour of individual supervision per week, and ongoing supervision and consultation as needed.

*Exceptions:* In certain circumstances, Field Instructors may provide bi-weekly supervision to their students IF this is supplemented by regular weekly supervision by an experienced Task Supervisor.

- Agree to all responsibilities set forth by the Affiliation Agreement with the University. Field Instructors understand and support the mission, values, and goals of the University's educational program.
- Willing to be in constant and clear communication with the Department of Social Work at all times and complete all necessary student evaluations and other required paperwork.

### **3. Off-Site Field Instructors**

When qualified agencies do not have a MSW staff member on staff, the agency is responsible for identifying an Off-site MSW Field Instructor to work in collaboration with an on-site agency staff member (*if there are challenges in identifying a qualified individual, please contact the Office of Field Education*). In these situations, an agency staff member will serve as the Task Supervisor (see below) to direct the day-to-day activities of the internship as well as provide constructive feedback and supervisions. The Off-site MSW Field Instructor must meet the following criteria:

- For MSW level student: Hold an MSW degree with at least two (2) years post-graduate experience.
- For BSSW level student: Have a BSSW or MSW degree with at least two (2) years post-degree experience.
- Have a thorough understanding of the agency's mission, services, and daily workings.
- Agree to attend and participate in the Field Instructor orientation and training, which is provided by the Department of Social Work.
- Assume responsibility for the student's overall learning experience and ensure that a social work perspective is reinforced throughout the educational process.
- Commit to maintain constant and clear communication with the Task Supervisor regarding the student's progress.
- Off-Site Field Instructors will provide bi-weekly (every other week) supervision to their students if this is supplemented by regular weekly one-hour supervision by an experienced Task Supervisor with appropriate level of experience within the field placement agency.

- Field Instructors understand and support the mission, values, and goals of the University’s educational program.
- Willing to be in constant and clear communication with the agency and the MSU Denver Department of Social Work always and complete all necessary student evaluations and other required paperwork.
- Off-Site Field Instructors who are not contracted employees of MSU Denver are required to have professional liability insurance.

#### **4. Task Supervisors**

If an agency does not have a qualified MSW Field Instructor on staff, a Task Supervisor should be designated for the student.

Additionally, even when there is a Field Instructor, it may be beneficial to also assign a student to a Task Supervisor(s) to assist with the learning experience (*this is NOT mandatory when a student is working with a qualified, On-Site Field Instructor*). This Task Supervisor will work with the Field Instructor to provide an effective field placement by meeting the following criteria:

- Be a skilled and capable professional in his/her/their field and is very knowledgeable about the agency.
- Agree to attend and participate in the Field Instructor orientation and training provided by the Office of Field Education in the Department of Social Work.
- Direct the day-to-day activities of the internship, and in coordination with the Field Instructor, identify educationally focused experiences and opportunities for student learning appropriate to the student’s educational sequence.
- Commitment to maintain constant and clear communication with the Field Instructor regarding the student’s progress.
- If the agency is using an Off-Site Field Instructor OR if the Field Instructor is using a biweekly supervision model, the Task Supervisor must assume responsibility for scheduling regular one-hour weekly supervision meetings with the student in order to provide assistance with planning, managing, and completing field assignments and provide ongoing feedback and support.
- Task Supervisors understand and support the mission, values, and goals of the University’s educational program.

- Willing to be in constant and clear communication with the MSU Denver Department of Social Work at all times and complete all necessary student evaluations and other required paperwork.

## **D. Student Placement Process**

1. Students will attend a Field Information Session and learn about the field placement process. Students will then be directed to the Sonia Field Database to access the *Application for Field Placement* in the early spring before the academic year in which their field placement will take place.
2. Students submit their completed *Application for Field Placement* through the Sonia Field Database to Office of Field Education by date listed on application. The application and attached resume will assist the Office of Field Education in assessing each student's interests, goals, and background.
3. Students have the option to research placement opportunities available through our partner agencies using the Sonia database. They may preference up to five (5) agencies to discuss with their assigned Placement Navigator from the Office of Field Education.
4. Students meet with their assigned Placement Navigator (Office of Field Education staff) to discuss their field application and potential placement sites.
5. Students will receive options and contact information for up to three (3) potential field placement agencies from the Office of Field Education via the Sonia Field Database.
6. Students contact each assigned agency to submit application materials and request internship interviews. These interviews are to be treated as professional job interviews. It is a chance for the student to learn more about the agency, potential learning activities, and Field Instructor to determine if this will be a suitable agency for them to be placed at. Similarly, it is an opportunity for the agency and Field Instructor to determine if the student will be a match for their agency.
7. Agency will determine whether to offer or decline the internship to the student. The student will decide to accept or decline the agency's internship offer.
8. Once a mutually determined field placement is agreed upon, agencies will send students a notice of acceptance, "an internship offer", through the Sonia Field Database and then, with the agency, students will complete the Field Confirmation Form through Sonia.

Once a student has accepted a field placement, they are expected to follow through with that plan. Students may not accept an offer and then go back on their commitment to the agency. This is unprofessional and reflects poorly on the individual as a student and a representative of our social work program.

**NOTE:** *Under no circumstances are students allowed to interview with an agency without prior permission from the Office of Field Education. The goal of the field placement is to learn and practice social work knowledge, values, and skills in order to become a more effective social work practitioner. While we will work hard to ensure that each student's placement is in line with their future career interests, the emphasis remains on the educational value of a placement site.*

If you would like to suggest a new agency to add to the database, please contact the Office of Field Education. Providing the office with contact information may help expedite the process. The screening and approval process takes time and there are no guarantees as to an agency being approved.

## IV.

# INTRODUCTION TO FIELD EXPERIENCE

### A. Department of Social Work Policies

Policies are subject to change at the departmental level. For the most up-to-date policies, students should refer to the Department of Social Work website:

[BSSW Program Policies](#)

[MSW Program Policies](#)

The BSSW and MSW student handbooks also contain relevant policies, including the attendance policies, grievance policy, Grade Appeal Policy, APA Policy, Late Assignment Policy, Online Course Policy, and Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism Policy.

[Download the BSSW Student Handbook](#)

[Download the MSW Student Handbook](#)

### B. General Field Policies

#### 1. Field Disruption Policy

Students are required to complete two (2) consecutive semesters of field experience at the same agency under the same Agency Field Instructor. This provides students with an in-depth experience in which they can move toward more independent social work functioning over the course of 10 months.

However, there are unique circumstances in which students cannot remain at the same agency or continue working with the same agency supervisor.

Any disruptions in field must be done in consultation with the Faculty Field Liaison and the Office of Field Education. Students must adhere to the Field Student Support Process. If a student encounters an issue with their field placement, the first step must always be to seek the support of the Faculty Field Liaison to assist in addressing any concerns.

Students may not end their internships. Students who leave an internship without prior approval of the Faculty Field Liaison and/or the Office of Field Education may receive a failing grade in the Field Experience Course and a full Performance Review may be initiated. Students are not to initiate a search for a new field placement without the approval of the Office of Field Education. All new placements must be initiated by the Office of Field Education.

*a) Same Year Changes in Field Placement*

1. In situations where disruptions in field placement occur due to circumstances beyond the student's control, efforts will be made to allow the student to continue in field placement in a different agency during the current academic year. Such disruptions include:
  - Agency is experiencing a period of reorganization or instability that prevents them from providing the student with a suitable learning experience.
  - Agency supervisor leaves the agency or is no longer able to provide supervision in keeping with University standards, and the agency is unable to identify other qualified staff who are able to serve in the supervisory role.
  - The agency closes down or relocates to a location that substantially increases a student's commute (30 minutes or more)
  - The agency is unable to provide the student with suitable learning activities or with an environment that is conducive to learning.
  - The student has moved to a new location that is more than a 30-mile drive from the field placement agency.
  
2. If a student needs to change field placements mid-year due to a "goodness of fit" issue, and the Office of Field Education approves a change of placement, the student will be permitted to transfer to a new agency, provided there is one available. Goodness of fit issues may include:
  - The student and agency, in consultation with the Faculty Field Liaison, identify irreconcilable conflicts that prevent a productive student-supervisor relationship (and these issues have been attempted to be addressed, unsuccessfully, via the Field Student Support Process).
  - The student has individual learning needs that are not being met at the agency.
  - The student has experienced a family/personal crisis which makes working with the current client population or in the current setting unmanageable.

The Faculty Field Liaison, in consultation with the Office of Field Education, determines whether a situation warrants initiating a change in field placement. Any student who switches field placements due to a goodness of fit issue, will go through a Level 3 review (Field Student Support Process) in order to ensure a successful transition to a new agency field placement.

Any situation in which a student switches placements mid-year will require the student to complete an additional 30 hours in their new field placement for orientation purposes.

The student must also work with their Faculty Field Liaison to determine an appropriate plan for termination with their previous placement. Students may be required to complete additional requirements in order to facilitate student growth and learning.

If a different agency or supervisor cannot be secured, the student may need to continue in field in the following academic year. In this case the Office of Field Education may ask the student to complete additional requirements to ensure learning goals are achieved.

***b) Discontinuing Field Mid-Year and Returning the Following Year***

There are some circumstances in which a student may need to withdraw temporarily from the program or switch from a full-time to part-time program status due to medical or life-cycle issues.

In these circumstances, if the student must discontinue field after completing the fall semester of field successfully AND all required courses in the semester were also completed successfully, the student may return the following academic year to resume the Field Experience Coursework in the spring. The student will be required to complete an additional 30 hours in their field placement in the second semester (spring) field experience course to ensure adequate time for orientation to the agency and to resume the role of a student learner in the field experience.

***c) Removal from Field due to Academic Performance in Other Coursework.***

Students who successfully complete the fall semester of their field course, may still be removed from the Field Experience Course sequence due to:

- Failing to complete co-requisite or pre-requisite coursework;
- falling out of line with required course sequencing; or
- failing to maintain overall required academic standing.

Students who are removed from Field for these reasons, may resume the Field Experience Course sequence in the spring semester the following academic year if:

- the fall semester Field Course was completed successfully AND
- students have met all other academic requirements (course requirements and GPA).

Students whose placements are disrupted for this reason will be required to complete an additional 30 hours in their agency when they resume in order allow additional time to demonstrate that classroom learning can be fully integrated with their field experience.

***d) Field Time Frame Requirement***

Any student who allows more than one academic year to pass between completion of the two consecutive Field Experience courses will be required to complete the full two semester Field Experience course sequence over again.

***e) MSU Denver Field Education Plan for Interruption of Field Placement Due to National or Local Events***

MSU Denver has developed a plan to address temporary disruption to students' social work field placements due to national or local events such as communicable diseases, natural disasters, and/or civil unrest.

If students are advised by their agencies and agency supervisors, and/or government to not attend their field placements, or if safety concerns warrant a temporary disruption in field placements, students should immediately consult with BOTH their MSU Denver Faculty Field Liaison and their Field Supervisor(s) (Task Supervisor and/or Field Instructor).

In efforts to fulfill the intern's hour requirements and educational competencies during temporary field placement stoppages, we are providing alternative field learning activities that can be completed off-site.

This policy is meant to address short term field placement disruptions, with a maximum of 30 days. If the field placement stoppage continues beyond a 30-day period, a review will be conducted by the MSU Denver Office of Field Education to determine the most appropriate response to support students in completing their field placement requirements.

**Confidentiality and the Use of Technology**

In many cases, students may be able to continue portions of internship work using technology. All students must comply with relevant laws, regulations, ethical standards, and organizational policies to ensure the confidentiality of clients. Students and agencies are encouraged to utilize the standards listed in the Technology in Social Work Practice guide to inform their use of technology. [Here is a link to NASW's technology standards.](#)

While each agency should develop their own protocols around the use of technology and confidentiality, the following best practices should be followed by all students:

- Take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate boundaries when using personal phone numbers or other electronic communication. For example, consider temporarily hiding your caller ID when making outgoing calls, through your phone's settings.
- Position web cameras so that others can only see your face- all visible confidential data should be removed from camera view.
- Conduct all sensitive conversations in a private space. Be mindful of the potential for family members or bystanders to overhear any portion of your discussions.

**Alternate Learning Activities**

Field Instructors and Task Supervisors should assign student's off-site alternative field learning activities that the student may complete in the event of a temporary field disruption. Examples of alternative field learning activities that build upon current learning are listed below.

- **Supervision:** Weekly supervision using Zoom or other teleconferencing applications.
- **Meetings** with individuals, families, and groups: Utilizing teleconferencing applications that can be accessed via computer, tablet, and/or telephone; provided teleconferencing applications meet any agency requirements regarding HIPPA o (or FERPA for school settings) /or confidentiality.
- **Trainings for Agency:** Develop trainings that will benefit the agency (ex- self-care, ethics, etc.)
- **Groups/Workshops for Clients:** Research and develop curriculum for future implementation with clients (ex- life skills, grief, trauma, domestic violence, etc.)
- **Written Materials for Clients or Community:** Develop handouts/flyers/brochures (ex- explain voting rights, informed consent policies, etc.)
- **Organizational Policy Review:** Review agency policies with suggestions/recommendations where appropriate (ex- safety policies, diversity policies, use of social media, utilization of technology, etc.)
- **Legislative Policy Review:** Review relevant laws and policies impacting the population students work with (ex- Indian Child Welfare Act, Emergency Mental Health Holds, Homeless Camping Ban, etc.) and provide a synopsis of key takeaways or prepare advocacy materials (letter to editor, develop key talking points, etc.)
- **Literature Review:** Conduct a literature review on a specific topic relevant to field placement (ex- effectiveness of an intervention, how interruption of services impacts mental health or economic stability, etc.); Read a book regarding a certain therapeutic modality that would be beneficial for your clients/population/community (DBT Book or Workbook, Working with people with co-occurring disorders, etc.)
- **Grants:** Research potential grant opportunities and/or prepare aspects of the grant writing.
- **Community Networking/Resource Development:** Teleconference with various service providers, participating in resource mapping, and develop a list of resources for clients with services offered, referral process, etc.
- **Complete online trainings:** Complete assigned trainings and provide a certification of completion and/or a short reflection paper and/or prepare a presentation to disseminate knowledge gained. Examples may include topics such as:
  - [Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs \(Free, 1 hour\)](#) (Course ID 1080982)
  - Building Resiliency: Supporting Youth Affected by Trauma and Community Violence. Each free recorded webinar presentation is 1.5 hrs.
- Field Instructors and Task Supervisors may come up with **other activities or trainings**, in addition to the ones listed on this page. All activities should be pre-approved by their agency supervisor.

## 2. Liability Insurance

Students who are completing their field placements in approved field agency sites, and who are formally enrolled in a Field Experience course may be covered by MSU Denver's liability insurance through the State of Colorado. For coverage to be in effect, the student must be:

1. enrolled in MSU Denver;
2. registered for, and currently taking, the field experience course;
3. placed in an approved field agency;
4. and practicing in accordance with agency policy and within the guidelines of the Department of Social Work as set forth in this field manual.

MSU Denver shall provide students who participate in the program with indemnity against liability for their covered acts and omissions through the Colorado Risk Management Division, pursuant to section 24-30-1501 CRS, et seq. and in accordance with the provisions of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, section 24-10-101 CRS, et seq.

MSU Denver is an entity covered by the State of Colorado's self-insurance program pursuant to Part 101 to 120, Article 10 of Title 24, Colorado Revised Statutes. Liability for claims for injuries to persons or property arising out of acts or omissions of MSU Denver and certain covered individuals is controlled and limited by the Colorado Constitution, the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, (C.R.S. §§ 24-10-101 et seq.), and the Risk Management Act (§§ 24-30-1501 et seq.). The University provides coverage via the State Liability Fund with a Combined Limit \$150/600,000 per CRS 24-10-114.

### **3. Use of Personal Vehicle**

All students are required to find their own transportation to and from their field placement. Students without cars will be placed in an agency accessible by public transportation (no more than a one-hour commute time from MSU Denver or their home, as appropriate). Many agencies will require that students have access to their own transportation for the purposes of home visits, community work, etc. It is up to the student to inquire about the agency's vehicle requirements during the interview process. Each agency will have its own policies regarding proof of driver's license and insurance. **Students' use of personal or agency vehicles will not be covered** under the Department's insurance, nor will the Department reimburse students for the use of their vehicles. All issues regarding transportation, including the transportation of clients, must be discussed between the student and the Field Instructor prior to beginning placement. The Department will not be responsible for any decisions regarding transportation in the field.

### **4. Work-Related Injury or Illness**

*All students who are enrolled in a Field Experience course and are completing their field placement in an approved agency must sign an MSU Denver Worker's Compensation Acknowledgement form.*

This form allows them to be covered under MSU Denver's Worker's Compensation Policy for internship-related injury or illness while in the field placement. Students who are completing an approved employment-based field placement should follow their employment agency's Worker's Compensation policies.

Except in the case of a serious or life-threatening emergency, students must be treated by one of MSU Denver's designated providers. Students must also notify MSU Denver Human Resources Office and the Field Director within 48 hours of injury.

Specific information regarding worker's compensation procedures and designated providers is available on the MSU Denver HR website found at [MSU Denver Human Resources](#) under the Student tab.

## **5. School Breaks and Holidays**

The Department of Social Work does not require students to be in placement during regularly scheduled school holidays and breaks. However, school holidays may differ from agency holidays. In this case, students must arrange their field placement schedule in coordination with their agency supervisor. Some agencies may require students to continue field placement hours during breaks and holidays to ensure continuity of care. Any agency requirements for the student to be in field during school breaks and/or holidays should be discussed during the field placement interview.

## **6. Time in the Field Placement**

While students may work extended hours over winter break, they may not terminate from their field placements before May. This may mean students will accrue more hours than the required hours.

**NOTE:** *The required hours are a minimum number. Any student who wishes to terminate from field placement before the official end date must gain approval in advance from the Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and the Office of Field Education.*

*Students are expected to be in their field placements from the beginning of the fall semester through the end of the spring semester unless an alternative plan is negotiated. An alternative plan must be discussed between the field agency, student, and the Office of Field Education. Final approval of an alternative plan must be obtained from the Office of Field Education prior to the student starting at their field placement.*

## **7. Employment-Based Field Placement (EBFP)**

The Employment-Based Field Placement is a placement of students in an agency in which they are already employed is an exception rather than a standard student option and must be evaluated closely and approved by the Director of Field Education or Assistant Director of Field Education.

In a paid internship or internship with a stipend, students are solely completing an internship role while being compensated for their time in the agency (either hourly or as a stipend) and are not otherwise employed at the agency. They do not need to complete the Employment-Based Field Placement Application.

Students must consider carefully the option of completing their internship in their place of employment as the Field Experience is not about simply completing hours, but rather a well-rounded educational experience. It is very easy for there to be role confusion around work being

done as a student versus work being done as an employee. In some cases, changes to employment could also impact the student's internship and vice versa. However, in recognition that such a placement is sometimes the best option, the following guidelines have been developed:

- a. The agency must be approved by the Director of Field Education or Assistant Director of Field Education and assume all the responsibilities required of any other Field Agency.
- b. Students must have an appropriate field placement for their student level. BSSW and MSW Foundation year students' field placements should provide a generalist experience, including exposure to the three levels of work (micro, mezzo, and macro practice). MSW concentration level placements should reflect advanced social work practice.
- c. The agency must agree to provide an educational experience which is new to the student and separate from regularly scheduled employment duties. This differentiation will be clearly outlined in the student's Application for Employment-Based Field Placement in the Sonia Field Database. The Application **MUST** also include a full job description for the student's current employment position.
- d. Supervision for the student's field placement must be provided by a professional BSW or MSW-level Field Instructor (depending on student level) that has at least two (2) years of post-graduate work experience, and has been employed by the specific placement agency for at least one year.

The Field Instructor must be on-site and available for supervision during the student's internship hours and must provide field instruction in accordance with the School's curriculum and policies for field placement.

a **NOTE:** *This Field Instructor MUST be a different person than the student's current supervisor and may not have supervised the student at any time in the past.*

- e. The agency Field Instructor must attempt to provide an environment in which the student is not constrained by the requirements of employment but is free to reveal feelings/concerns regarding their work, and to explore new personal growth as well as new professional learning.
- f. Internships hours should be scheduled for at least a four (4) hours at a time.
- g. Students must attend one of the employment-based information sessions (in person or online) in addition to attending a general information session.

In order to qualify for the EBFP:

- a. Student must be employee at least 3 months prior to the application due (July 15<sup>th</sup>) at their placement of employee.

- b. Students must notify the Office of Field Education of their interest in EBFP by July 1<sup>st</sup> prior to entering field
- c. The full EBFP application (application and Letter of Support) must be submitted by July 15th (no exceptions) in order to be considered.

The Application for Employment-Based Field Placement must also include a signed letter from the Agency Director indicating his/her recognition and support for the value of the student's educational experience. They must state a commitment in helping ensure that an appropriate environment for learning be provided, which includes time and opportunity to be involved in specific learning activities that are in accordance with the objectives of the Field Experience curriculum.

*NOTE: Students who are completing an approved employment-based field placement should follow their employment agency's Worker's Compensation policies.*

## **8. Student Offered Employment by Field Placement Agency during Internship**

### Accepting Employment at the Field Placement Setting During Academic Year

Students are occasionally offered employment at their field placement agencies during the course of their internship. If students are offered employment at their field placement agency after the field placement begins and more than 6 weeks prior to the completion of their field placement, they may only accept the offer of employment upon approval of the Director of Field Education Office. In order to be approved, students need to meet the Employment Based Field Placement requirements and guidelines when completing the EBFP application, as indicated in Employment-Based Field Placement section of the Field Education Manual.

## **9. Student Support Process**

The Office of Field Education is committed to ensuring that students are placed in quality learning environments in order to complete their field experience. Regardless of that, there may be times in which problems arise during a field placement. It is best that these issues are addressed openly and immediately. Issues may be brought forth by the Student, Agency Field Instructor/Task Supervisor (Agency Supervisors), Faculty Field Liaison, or Office of Field Education. In any circumstance, the following steps should be taken. It should be noted that depending on the nature of the concern, a referral to higher levels of support is possible at any point in the process should concern warrant.

This process is intended to address issues that may create present obstacles to student success during a field placement. Metropolitan State University prohibits discrimination and/or harassment against any employee or student based on the individual's race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability, age, veteran or marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or based on those aspects in an individual's relatives, friends or associates.

Any allegations of discrimination by a faculty or staff member should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity at (303) 615-0036, JSSB 336. You can also file a report online [here](#).

Allegations of discrimination, including sexual misconduct, against a student can be reported to the MSU Denver Dean of Students Office by calling (303) 615-0220, visiting Tivoli 311, or filing a report online [here](#). Allegations of discrimination, including sexual misconduct, by a member of a student's field placement agency should be reported to the student's Faculty Field Liaison and may initiate the field student support process with the assistance of the Assistant Director of Field Education.

***a) First Level Support – Supervision meeting between student and Agency Field Instructor/Task Supervisor***

In this meeting, problem area(s) and issues(s) will be clarified. The student and agency field supervisors will identify strategies (specific activities and/or steps) for improvement and expectations for change. Although the Faculty Field Liaison does not have to attend this meeting, they must be informed of the meeting prior to its occurrence and of the problem areas/issues to be discussed. The Faculty Field Liaison may attend the meeting if requested by the student or agency supervisor(s).

In most cases, the issues identified can be resolved and the placement can continue. If the concern persists, then the following additional step must be taken (move forward into the second level of support).

***b) Second Level Support – Conference between student, Field Instructor/Task Supervisor, and Faculty Field Liaison (FFL)***

In this step of the problem-solving process, all parties will meet to discuss the specific issues at hand and explore additional support and steps that might be required. The FFL will consult individually with both the agency field supervisor(s) and the student prior to the conference.

The goal of this level of support is to develop a plan for success in the field. The plan should outline three (3) to four (4) clear, concrete steps the student can complete to be successful in the placement.

The FFL will inform the Office of Field Education of the conference and provide a copy of the written summary to the student, Agency Field Instructor, and the Office of Field Education. This summary will be documented in the student file.

The Office of Field Education will also notify the student's faculty advisor so they may provide additional support, as needed.

If the concerns continue to persist, then the issue may be elevated to the third level of support:

***c) Third Level Support – Field Placement Re-evaluation***

The third level of support involves a meeting that includes:

- the student,

- a representative from the Office of Field Education (Assistant Director OR Director of Field Education)
- the director of the student's program (BSSW or MSW Program Director)
- the faculty advisor (may or may not attend, as applicable)

Agency supervisor(s), faculty field liaison, or other pertinent individuals may be invited to attend as needed. If the faculty advisor is also the student's Faculty Field Liaison, an alternative faculty member may be identified to fulfill the role of advisor.

The goal of this meeting is to discuss, and problem solve solutions to the challenges preventing success in the field placement.

The faculty advisor or Office of Field Education representative will gather information from relevant faculty and staff concerning the student's performance academically and professionally in all areas of the program.

The group will examine:

- The factors that may have contributed to the current situation
- The conduct or behavior that requires change or adjustment
- The available supports to address any noted issues
- The student's and agency's willingness to utilize supports and make necessary changes for improvement

These discussions will determine whether the student is able to continue in field placement. The following decisions may be made:

1. The student and agency will work together to make the placement successful. The student will be placed on Performance Notice and a specific Performance Plan will be developed including specific goals to be met, dates for goals to be met, and dates for progress meetings. A timetable for successful completion and indicators of success will be outlined.

OR

2. The placement is not suitable for the student to continue their field placement, and efforts will be made to re-assign the student to an alternate field placement for the remainder of the year, if possible, and under what parameters this may occur (this can include the assignment of additional hours of field experience required). The student may be placed on a Performance Notice and a specific Performance Plan created which would be a part of the new field placement.

OR

3. The student must be terminated from the field experience course. If a student is terminated from the field experience course, they may be referred for a Full Student Performance Review through the Social Work Department.

Any Performance Plan will be signed by the advisor, the student, the program director, and the representative from the Office of Field Education. At this time, the student is placed on the Performance Plan and receives a copy of the signed form. The original Performance Plan is placed in the student's file. The successful completion of the Performance Plan will result in the removal of the Performance Notice.

***d) Fourth Level Support – Full Student Performance Review***

If the Performance Plan is not completed successfully or if a student is terminated from the field experience, they may be referred for a Full Student Performance Review.

The procedures outlined in the Department's Student Performance Support and Problem-Solving Process will be followed. The process can be found in both the BSSW and MSW Student Handbooks.

## **10. Agency Support Process**

Challenges or concerns can occasionally arise related to an agency or a supervisor that will be addressed directly by the field team because the issues are beyond the scope of what is deemed appropriate for a student to address with his/her/their supervisor or the agency without assistance. The field internship is an integral part of the student's educational experience and preparation for professional practice, and the experience, training and supervision provided by the internship agencies are critical to this process. It is important that any higher level concerns related to an agency's ability to provide a quality learning experience for a student or appropriate levels of safety are discussed and addressed, and that a plan for resolution of the concerns at the agency is mutually agreed upon by the Office of Field Education and the agency, and implemented by the agency.

Concerns related to an agency may be raised by students, Faculty Field Liaisons, field supervisors, the agency itself or the Office of Field Education. It is expected that students communicate any concerns they have directly to their Faculty Field Liaison. Once a concern has been raised, the field team will take steps to address and resolve as appropriate. Concerns may become known as a result of a Faculty Field Liaison's observation of the student and the internship, a student's report of their experience while at the agency, as a result of others involved with the agency in some fashion or as a result of information shared by the student at the end of the year in the program evaluations they complete. Concerns may include but are not limited to: inadequate supervision, inadequate or inappropriate tasks or responsibilities, safety concerns, ethical concerns, micro-aggressions or anything that is seriously impacting the student attaining his/ her /their learning goals. The goal of the Office of Field Education at MSU Denver is always to assess accurately and work collaboratively with the agency to resolve concerns and in a fashion that maintains the quality of the professional relationship between the agency and MSU Denver if possible.

The Office of Field Education will take the following steps to resolve problems or concerns with a field agency:

1. Once a concern is brought to the attention of the Office of Field Education, the designated field team member will consult with the Faculty Field Liaison assigned to the agency and other involved field members to get accurate and thorough information to assess the nature of the concern and what would be required for resolution. When appropriate, a student will be consulted.
2. If a student is currently at an agency, it will be determined whether the concern is serious enough to take immediate action.
3. If appropriate, the Faculty Field Liaison will have a discussion with member(s) of the agency to work towards a solution of the problem or concern.
4. If, in consultation with the field team, it is deemed out of the scope of the Faculty Field Liaison's role due to the seriousness of the concerns, a field team member will develop a plan for addressing the concern which could include any or all of the following:
  - a. Field team member talking with the appropriate individuals at the agency.
  - b. Field team member scheduling a meeting with the individuals at the agency, which may or may not include the Faculty Field Liaison.
  - c. Temporarily changing the status of the agency to "under review" or "temporarily not accepting students" in the Sonia Field Database so there is opportunity to resolve the concern prior to another student accepting an internship there.
  - d. Assessing whether the concern is serious enough to warrant removing the student from the internship because of safety concerns or significant compromises to the learning goals or learning environment.
  - e. Assessing whether there has been a pattern of concerns at an agency with previous attempts to resolve.
5. A plan for resolution of the concern is to be mutually agreed upon by the agency and the field team and implemented by the agency. Specifics of this plan will be documented in their notes section of the Sonia Field Database. If resolution is reached, the agency will be made "active" for other students to explore as an internship site. Resolution plans could potentially include any of the following and/or any other adjustments that would respond to the presenting concerns:
  - a. Adjusting the supervisory plan to meet the needs of students and the requirements of MSU Denver.
  - b. Adjusting the tasks and responsibilities a student will be given so as to be able to meet the expected competencies.
  - c. Reducing the number of students at an agency.
  - d. Requiring field supervisors participate in orientation and/or training to promote a supportive learning environment.
6. In the event that a concern is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the field team, and the concerns would seriously impact the quality of the learning or safety for a

student, the Leadership Team of the Office of Field Education may decide to “close” an agency for future students unless or until a satisfactory solution can be agreed upon. It will also be assessed whether further actions are necessary.

7. If necessary, additional meetings may also occur with the Director of Field Education.
8. Once a resolution has been reached, ongoing evaluation will occur to assess the efficacy of the plan. This will occur in consultation with the agency, the Faculty Field Liaison and the Leadership Team of the Office of Field Education.

## **11. Safety Procedures in the Field**

The Department of Social Work recommends the following safety guidelines for students in the field. When a student initially joins an agency for the internship, the student and agency staff should review the agency’s established policies and procedures for handling specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as client’s threat of harm to self, others, or locations, medical emergencies, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons.

Additionally, the following practice suggestions are intended to assist the student in developing a plan to address safety concerns:

- a. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings or left in cars;
- b. Students should notify appropriate agency staff when community visits (i.e. home visits) are planned, and provide information about who will be visited, the address and the expected length of time for the visit;
- c. Students should always be alert to their surroundings and of any potential risks that would put them at risk of harm;
- d. If the student is meeting with a client whom the student does not feel safe with, it is important to discuss the situation fully with agency staff and develop a plan for addressing safety concerns;
- e. Take a cell phone, if available, on home visits, especially when there are indications of a possible domestic dispute, physical violence, vicious animals, or if the client lives in an isolated or high crime area;
- f. Seek out training opportunities to identify typical responses to emergency or hostile situations and plan of action related to these types of situations;
- g. Avoid sharing personal phone numbers with clients or discuss with agency staff and instructors prior to distributing the number.

## **12. Social Media**

The use of social media (i.e Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, texting, SnapChat, etc.) can be helpful in building connections with colleagues and maintaining relationships with friends and family. However, as a result, the boundary between personal and professional matters has become increasingly blurry. It is important for students and agency staff to continually assess how the use of social media impacts ethical duties.

While social media tools may present innovative ways to service clients, the features that enable these benefits also present potentially serious challenges in a professional setting and within the context of field placements. Privacy, confidentiality, and establishing professional boundaries, can be hindered when the necessary precautions to protect the student/employee and clients have not been taken. Students should familiarize themselves with and follow the [NASW Technology Standards](#).

As a part of a student's orientation to the agency, agency staff should review any applicable policies on social media use. In the event an agency does not have its own formal policy, the agency should set, and communicate to student interns, clear guidelines and expectations for social media use at the field placement. Students should refrain from using personal social media during time spent at field placements agencies.

### **13. Attire**

While expectations vary from agency to agency, students must follow the same dress code that is required of agency employees. Agency policies including, but not limited to dress, tattoos, and/or body piercings, must be adhered to. During the student's orientation to the agency, agency staff should review any pertinent policies or guidelines related to dress code.

### **14. Distance Field Placements**

There may be times when a student, due to necessity or desire, completes their field placement at an agency outside of the Denver-metro area or in another state. The Office of Field Education will work with students to identify distance field placements and to ensure that all Department of Social Work Field Education policies as well as CSWE standards can be met in the distance field placement. In these circumstances, students are responsible for making all travel, lodging, food, and other living arrangements, including any associated expenses. Curriculum expectations for placements outside of the Denver-metro area or in other states are the same for those within the Denver-metro area. Students, Agency Field Instructors, and Faculty Field Liaisons may be required to utilize technology (i.e. Skype or Zoom) as a part of the distance field placement in order to conduct field site visits, evaluations, supervision, or other field placement requirements.

### **15. Early Starts in Field**

At MSU Denver, social work field placements start at the beginning of fall semester around the third week of August and finish with the end of spring semester in the middle of May. The field placements are designed to run concurrent with the field seminar class so that a Faculty Field Liaison is available to support the students in their field placements. However, when there are requests for a student to begin their field placement prior to the start of the fall semester, i.e. an early start, the following criteria needs to be met:

1. The request for the early start must be initiated by the agency. The early start request is not to be at the discretion of the student.

2. A Field Affiliation Agreement needs to be in place between the agency and MSU Denver, Department of Social Work.
3. The student must be registered for a fall section of the appropriate social work Field Experience course.
4. Someone from the Office of Field Education will need to be available to be in the role of temporary Faculty Field Liaison for the time in the summer. This person will be available if the student needs support with their internship in the summer. However, there will be no site visits during the summer unless the student support process is needed. At the start of the fall semester, an on-going Faculty Field Liaison (the student's Field Seminar professor) will be assigned for the rest of the year.
5. Students may accrue up to, but no more than 40 field placement hours during the summer. However, students who start early will still need to complete the remainder of their field placement hours from August to May as determined by what level student they are in the social work program:
  - **BSSW Students: 16 hours/week (480 hours/year, 240 hours/semester)**
  - **MSW foundation year Students: 16 hours/week (480 hours/year, 240 hours/semester)**
  - **MSW concentration year Students: 20 hours/week (600 hours/year, 300 hours/semester)**
6. The early start plan needs to be put in writing through the Field Confirmation Form and approved by the Assistant Director of Field.

## **16. Longitudinal Field Placements**

Sometimes students request to remain in the same agency between the BSSW or MSW foundation year internship and the MSW concentration year internship and this needs to be vetted using the concentration year Same Agency Placement Request which can be obtained through the Office of Field Education. Through this form, students and agencies can outline how staying at their current internship is beneficial to the student's learning and that certain criteria as described below are met. This request is reviewed by the Director of Field Education and students will be informed of the decision regarding the request.

Additional resources for field education can be found on the Office of Field Education [website](#).