



Next Steps for Securing a Field Placement

After determining a list of approved agencies with your Placement Officer within the Field Office, you are well on your way to securing a field placement! Here are the next steps in preparing for your interviews with these approved agencies.

You are only permitted to interview at agencies provided to you by the Field Office. Failure to comply with this may result in removal from the field program. Do not contact agencies prior to February 6, 2019, unless specifically requested to do so by the Field Office.

1. Contact each agency to arrange for an interview.

Unless instructed otherwise by the directions for the agency on the Sonia field database, email your cover letter and résumé to the agency contact provided to you.

Make sure your cover letter includes the following information:

- you are a social work (**BSSW/MSW**) student at **MSU Denver Department of Social Work**
- you are a student who will be entering their BSSW/MSW Foundation/MSW Concentration-level internship in the 2019-20 academic year
- the purpose for your contact - that you are interested in a social work internship with their agency from August 2019 - May 2020
- why you are interested in the agency
- any relevant coursework or volunteer/internship/work experience that may set you apart from the rest of the applicants
- the number of hours required (16 hours a week or 20 hours a week – based on your student level)
- any specific skills or areas of focus that may pertain to the field placement

2. Check-in.

While securing an internship is a priority for you, it may not be the first priority for an agency, as they also have regular business to conduct. Please be patient and professional when following-up with an agency. It is appropriate to contact an agency a week or two after submitting your application materials to restate your interest, acknowledge their busy schedules, ask if they have received your materials, inquire into their interviewing timeline and procedures, and thank them for their time. It is NOT appropriate to pester agencies with repeated daily inquiries or admonishments for not responding. Talk with your Placement Officer if you are experiencing challenges with communicating with agencies.

3. Prepare for the interview.

Do your research!!! Make sure you learn as much about the agency as you can beforehand. If a website is available, become familiar with the agency's mission and services. Jot down focus points that may help you in showcasing your skills aligned with the agency's mission prior to the interview. Think about why you want to work for the agencies you have chosen, and be prepared to passionately elaborate on this during your interview. Additional resources and documents, including those listed below, are available on our website:

<https://msudenver.edu/socialwork/officeoffieldeducation/fieldplacementsearchprocess/>

- **Potential Interview Questions** - Look over and be prepared to answer the sample interview questions. Use the list of sample questions to prepare a list of questions of your own to ask each agency.
- **FAQs** - This document will answer many questions about field policies including vacations, driving requirements, and more.

4. Interview and follow-up.

Treat each interview as you would a professional job interview. Dress professionally, bring a clean copy of your résumé, and arrive on time. Make sure you are familiar with directions and parking instructions beforehand. Make sure to ask what the agency's timeline is for making a decision. After the interview, **send a personal email** to each person that you met with during your interview thanking them for their time and commitment.

5. Decision time!

After you interview with each agency, it is time for you to weigh your options and decide which field placement would be the best match for you. Keep in mind that each agency is interviewing several students to select the student(s) that would be the best match with their program.

- If the agency of your choice offers you a field placement**, feel free to accept. Congratulations! You will need to notify the Field Office via the Sonia field database by accepting the agency's offer in Sonia. After accepting an offer, you and the agency will complete the Field Confirmation Form through the Sonia database. You will receive additional information regarding how to complete this form in the spring. Field Confirmation Forms are due no later than July 3, 2019. Your placement is not secured until this form has been turned in. In keeping with professional standards, you must e-mail any other agencies that you have interviewed with and inform them of your decision.
- If an agency offers you a placement, but you still want to interview at another agency or are waiting to hear from another agency**, tell them tactfully what is going on (*ex. "I am very interested in this internship, but have been encouraged by the Field Office to interview with all three agency options that were provided to me to ensure that I am carefully considering which opportunity can best meet my learning goals*), and ask if you can let them know your decision in a few days. Agency staff will respect both your desire to choose the best place for yourself and your honesty. While it is not mandatory to interview with all agencies you have been assigned, it is recommended, in order for you to make the most informed decisions.
- If for any reason, you need additional placement options**, please contact your assigned Placement Officer. Remember, you are only permitted to interview with the agencies that have been provided for you by the Field Office.

6. Complete Field Confirmation Form.

You must have confirmed your field placement and completed your Field Confirmation form through the Sonia field database by **July 3, 2019**. Keep an eye on your email for specific instructions about this step.

7. Attend mandatory Student Field Orientation.

ALL field students MUST attend the mandatory Field Orientation during the first week of classes. We will notify you of the exact dates as the semester approaches. Field Orientation will take the place of their regularly scheduled Field Seminar Class during the first week of school. Note: Student Field Orientation is a separate event from the social work New Student Fall Assembly.