



# The Heart of Social Work: Field Education Overview

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**Purpose:** Field education is often called the “heart of social work”. This is because it is an integral piece of your social work education. Our own accrediting body (CSWE) has called field the “signature pedagogy” of social work education. What does this mean? It means it is the main way that social work educators socialize you into the profession and teach you how to be social workers.

Field is the internship portion of your degree and it is where all of the knowledge, skills and values you are learning in class come to life in an agency setting! All across the country in social work programs it is recognized that social work education should be equally focused on classroom learning and field placement.

**More Than  
Putting in  
Work Hours!**

What social work values inform my decision?

What skills do I need in this situation?

What social work knowledge informs my decision?

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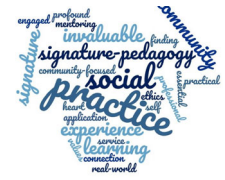
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Field is more than putting in work hours and learning a specific job at a specific agency. It is about integrating classroom learning with real work practice and developing skills to become a competent social worker that are applicable in any setting. So this means you will constantly be reflecting on and evaluating:

What skills do I need in this situation?  
What social work knowledge informs my decision?  
What social work values inform my decisions?

# Field Placement Settings



- Schools
- Hospitals & Medical Clinics
- Departments of Human Services
- Public Libraries
- Office of State Representatives
- Community Non-Profit Organizations
- District Attorney's Offices
- Mental Health Clinics
- Counseling Centers
- Domestic Violence Shelters & Advocacy Organizations
- Youth Mentoring Programs
- Hospices
- Homeless Shelters & Services
- Advocacy Agencies
- Skilled Nursing Facilities



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Our Field Office has relationships built with over 700 agencies in communities both near and far in Colorado and beyond. Here are some of the types of agencies that students complete their field placements in.

In order to secure a field placement, after enrolling in the program, each student works with a designated member of our Field Team called the Placement Navigator to assist them through the entire search process for a field placement. We walk with students side-by-side to help them identify their interests, skills and professional goals and then to guide them through the application process at agencies which align with their goals. Students play an active role in their search during the spring and early summer before entering the program.

Given COVID-19, field sites and students are having to be more flexible and creative than ever before. Many field placements are taking place virtually or in a combination of on-site and remotely. Safety is a key priority so all agencies that are requiring on-site work must follow CDC guidelines for PPE and guidelines for social distancing, etc.

# Field Education Structure

## Foundation Year Generalist Experience

16 hours/week

240 hours/semester

480 hours/year

Biweekly Field Seminar

Weekly supervision

## Concentration Year Advanced/Specialized Experience

20 hours/week

300 hours/semester

600 hours/year

Biweekly Field Seminar

Weekly supervision



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Parameters for field placements:

- Two consecutive semesters (fall/spring) concurrent with field seminar class
- Field placement starts and ends with academic year
- Placement and Agency must stay the same all year
- Students receive weekly supervision with a social work professional to help guide their learning and development

It is important to begin thinking and planning now about how you will plan to fit this time into your busy lives. While there are some agencies that offer evening or weekend hours, the majority of agencies operate during typical business hours and so it's good to think about what adjustments may need to be made to accommodate these hours.

# Search Process Overview



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Students will use our Sonia Field Database to guide their search. If students are out-of-state, it's important to know that there will be additional work around researching and identifying agencies that they'll be involved in with the support of our Field Team.

It's important to start the application process as soon as you are accepted and confirm your enrollment to get the best access to internships as many agencies secure interns in early spring (March and early April).

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